

## CHAPTER 4

### *The Painting*

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

#### 4.1. Introduction

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

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

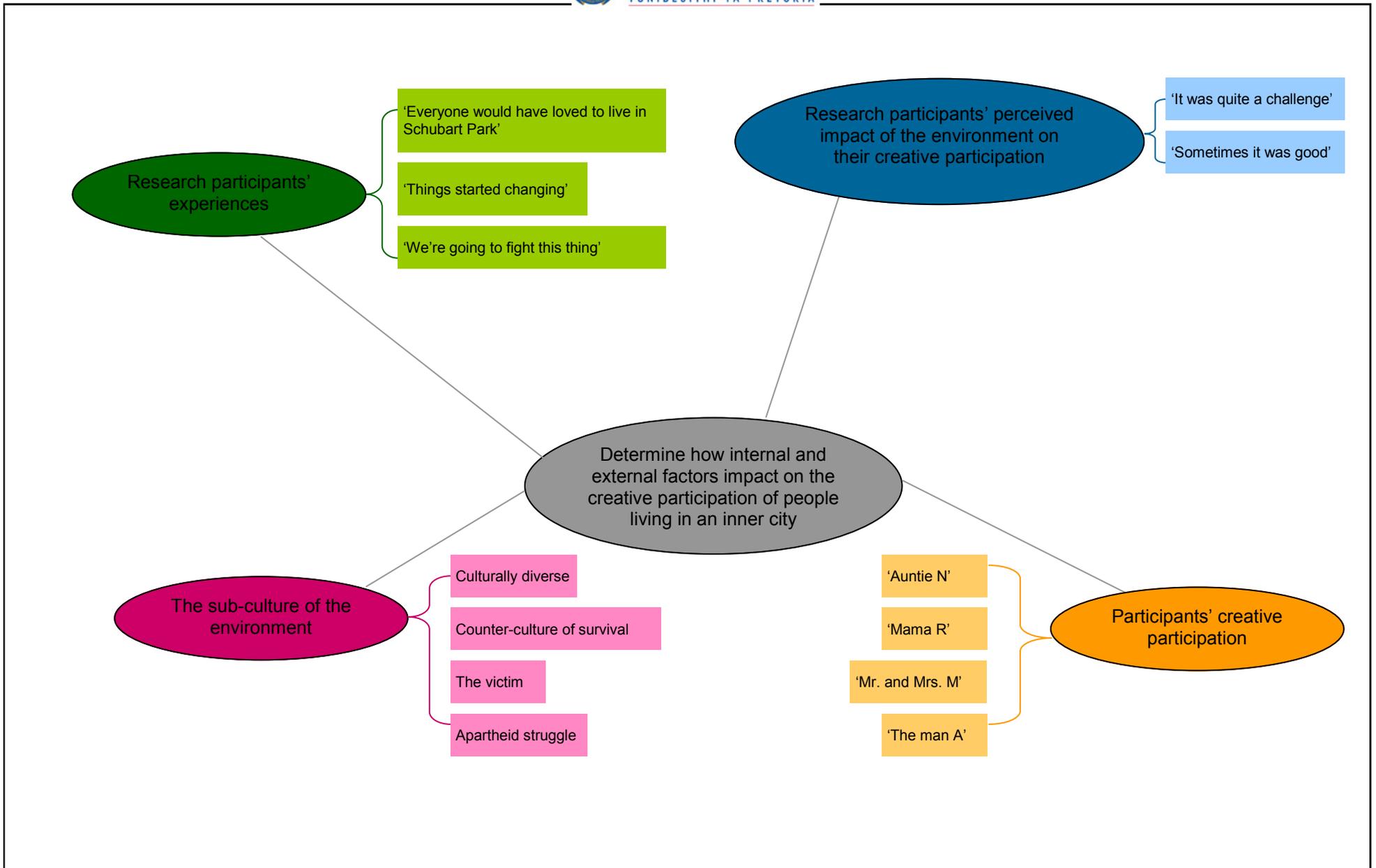
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Figure III provides an overview of the themes that were identified, and hence also a summary of the findings. A detailed mind map of each theme is included before its analysis.

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† Brackets mine



**Figure III—A summary of the research findings**

## 4.2. Participant profiles

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

### 4.2.1. *The iron lamb*

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

### 4.2.2. *The mother who moved*

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

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

#### *4.2.3. The city-slick cowboy*

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

#### *4.2.4. The blaming bunch*

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

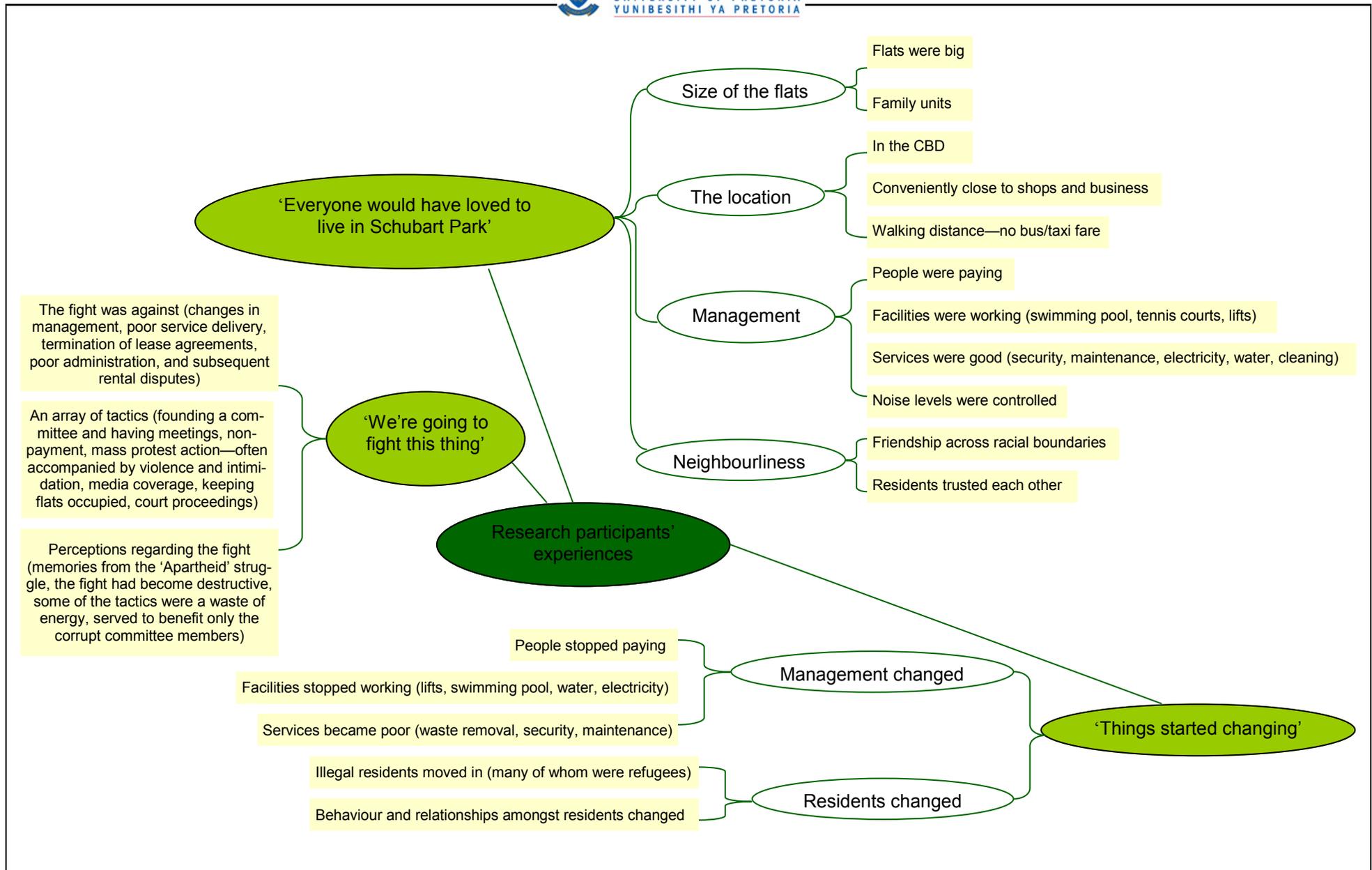


Figure IV—A summary of the analysis of the participants' experiences

### 4.3. Participants' experiences of their environment – Focal point

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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<sup>‡</sup> Refer to 4.5. Objects in the background for a detailed discussion in this regard.

<sup>§</sup> A commonly used South-African term, referring to a protest march accompanied by the singing of protest songs and dancing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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*Tyres burning in Schubart Street (Losi, 2011)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

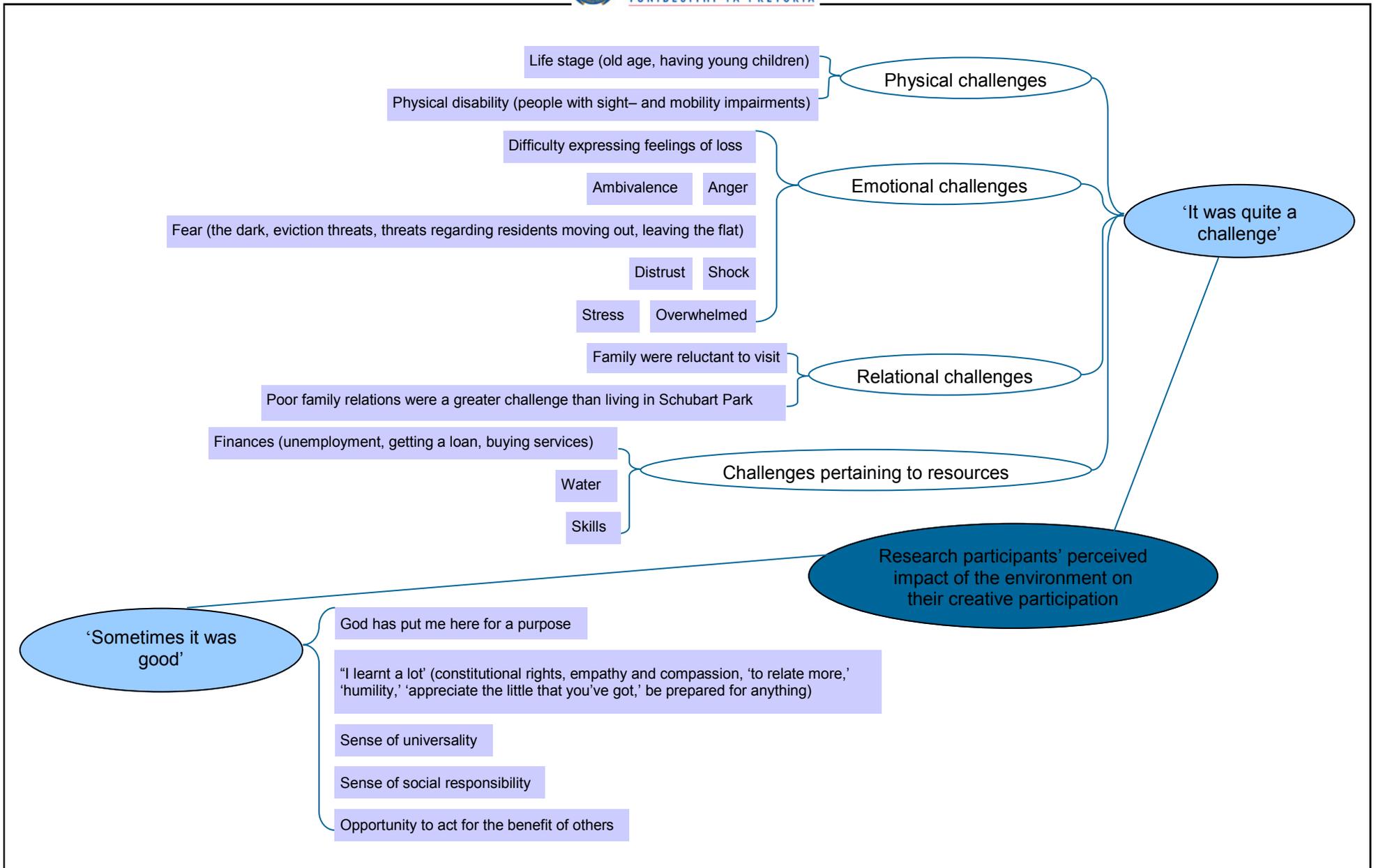
only...four questions that we have for them. If these questions can be answered then...we are willing to leave that place immediately. The first question was the issue of the Kruger Park...which has been empty since last year. We said: “Renovate it first, so that we can see that you are really interested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

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

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

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

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



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

#### 4.4. The environment and its perceived impact – Tonal Value

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

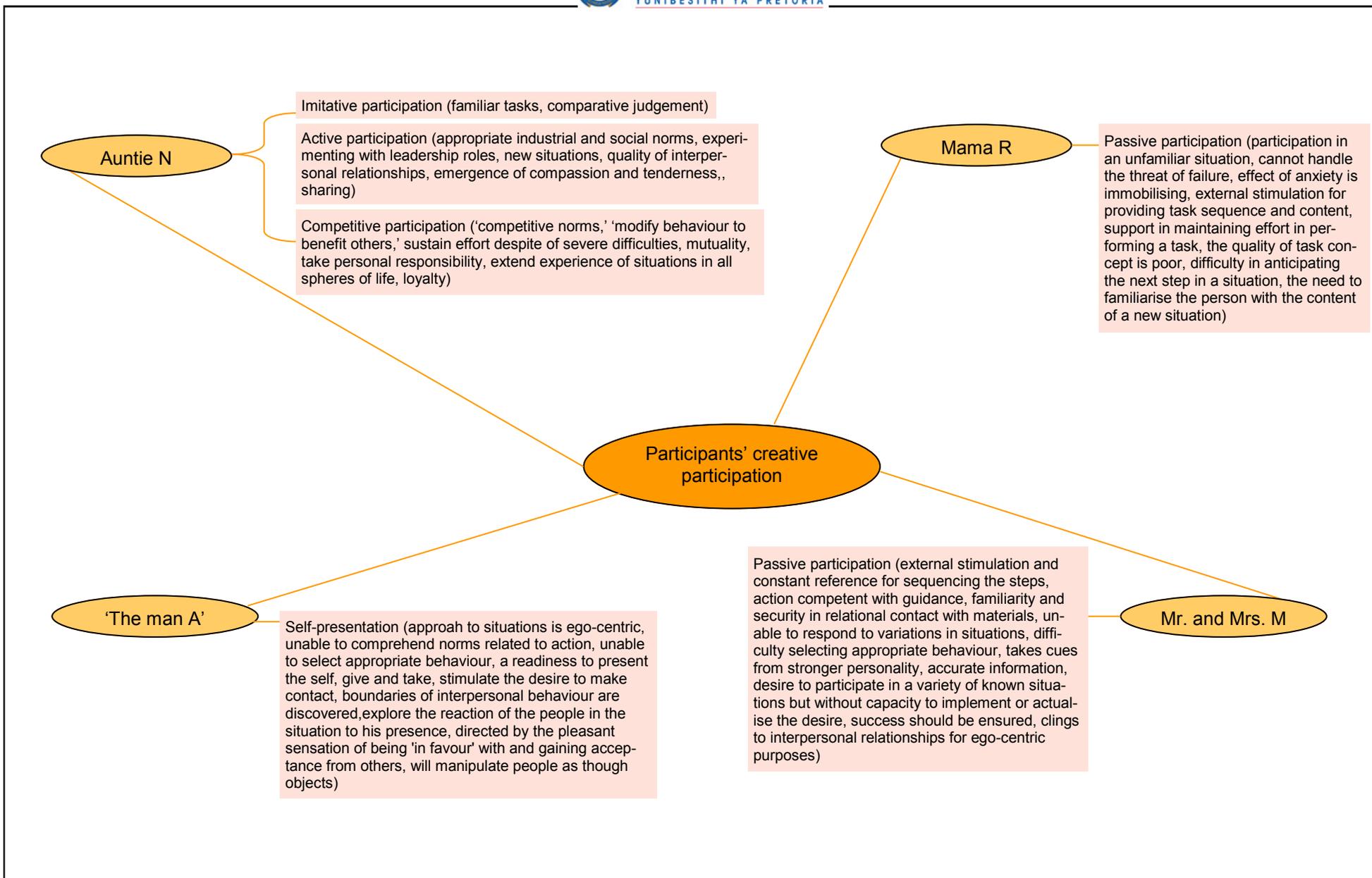
With water, electricity and other basic resources being a luxury, she learnt to be prepared for anything – even in her new home outside of Schubart Park: 'We have a gas lamp...we always have candles...and we have buckets and things here... It's not to say that because we're here now (in their new home)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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

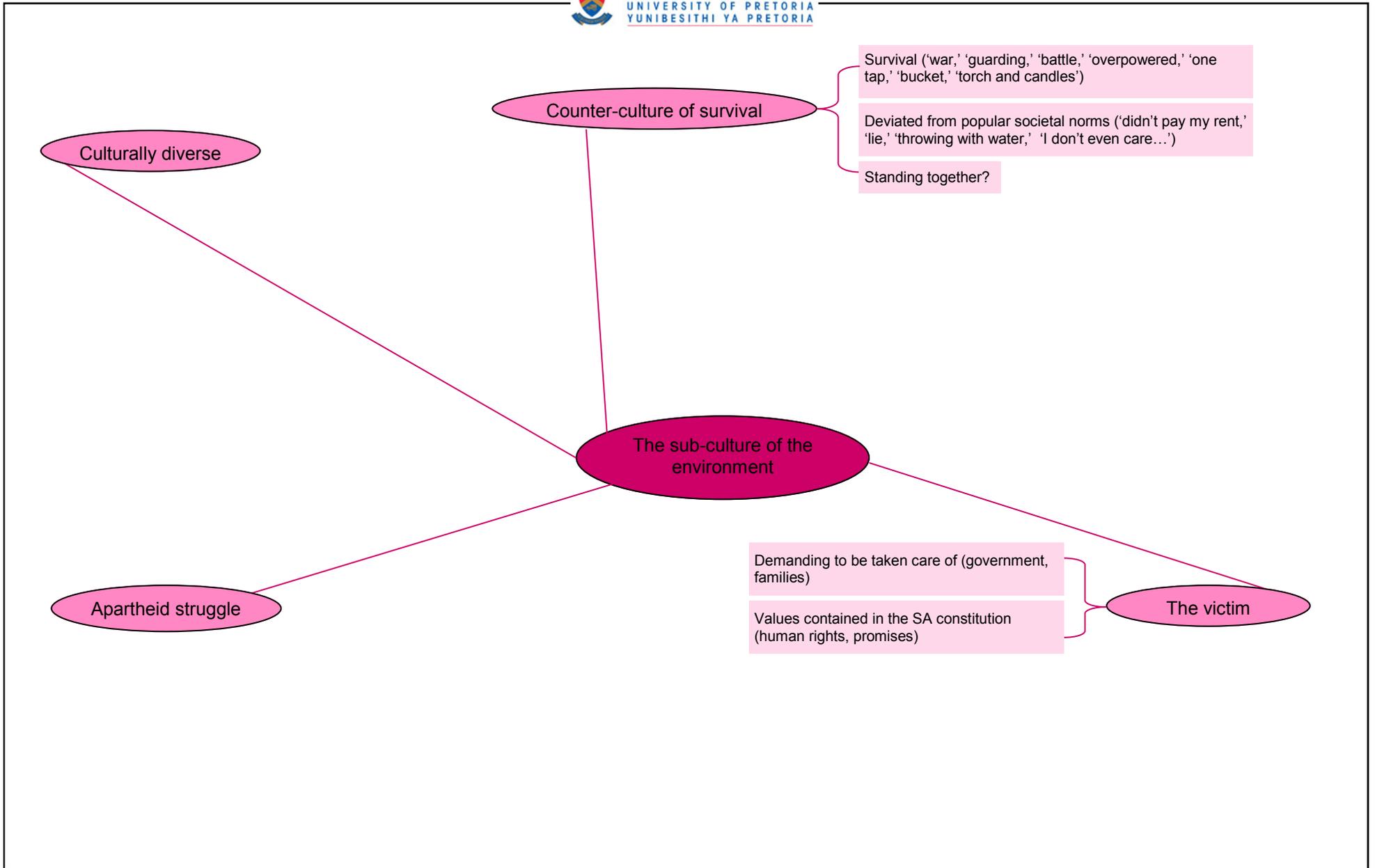
His flat, in the D block of Schubart Park, continued to deteriorate until the walls of his flat – seemingly made of dry walling board, rather than bricks – literally fell off like sheets of wet paper! It took this event, something that drastically affected himself and his comfort, to stimulate in him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

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

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

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

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



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

#### 4.6. The sub-culture – Objects in the background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **4.7. Concluding Remarks**

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

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