

**THE PARABLES OF JESUS AS SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN
A CRITICAL VIEW OF FOOD INSECURITY SYSTEMS FOR VULNERABLE
HOUSEHOLDS IN URBAN TOWNSHIPS**

by

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And open side, like a beast at a sacrifice:
When He is stripped naked like us,
Browned and sweating water and blood in the heat of the sun,
Yet silent,
That we cannot resist Him.
How like us He is, this Jesus of Nazareth,
Beaten, tortured, imprisoned, spat upon, truncheoned,
Denied by His own, and chased like a thief in the night.
Despised, and rejected like a dog that has fleas, for
NO REASON.

(“I am an African”. Part of a poem by (Rev) Gabriel Setiloane, published in Cry Justice, 1986, p. 49).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is informed by the transformative imperatives of the parables of Jesus the Nazarene¹, as critical tools of analysis and mediation of social transformation articulated by Van Eck. The prevailing conditions of food insecurity in our country necessitates that a focussed attempt be undertaken to identify the root causes, their impact on the well-being of those trapped in poverty, and as such advancing possible solutions for the malady of hunger bedevilling township² communities.

¹ This study is inspired and rooted in the biblical perspectives of the personality and self-consciousness of Jesus as the *Nazorean*. The Nazarenes of Galilee in the times of Jesus cultivated a deep rooted consciousness for liberation against Rome and temple discrimination in Jerusalem, (See, *Judas of Nazareth: How the Greatest Teacher of First-Century Israel Was Replaced by a Literary Creation*, Daniel T. Unterbrink, 2014, Bear & Company Toronto, Canada). Daniel Unterbrink in tracing the formative stages of resistance against Rome and the temple domination, seeks to present how the local context in Nazareth gave birth and ultimately nurtured the values and Kingdom vision(s) that later influenced the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth. We must appreciate that the self-consciousness (against Rome and temple exploitation) of the historical Jesus of the Gospels is well attested in the commentary of the *"African Bible: Biblical Text of the American Bible"* (1999:1637, Paulines Publications Africa, St Paul Communications/Daughters of St Paul, Nairobi, Kenya). The significance of the conceptualization of Jesus the *Nazorean* as preserved in Matthew 2:23 serves as the frame of reference for the ideals, hopes and dreams of the early followers of Jesus, with regard the transformative role of the Messiah. Hence the commentary links Matthew's constructs with the Old Testament traditions (Zachariah 9:9) pointing to the Ruler who will emerge in the house of David to govern the world with justice and righteousness. In this tradition of Matthew we appreciate that "the evangelist is playing on Hebrew *nazer*, "a branch", as in Is 11:1. Cf. also Jer 23:5; 33:15, where the Davidic Messiah is also described as a branch but by a different term, *zamah*, the name of the Messiah. Nazareth in the Lower Galilee is 24 km southwest of Tiberias, a little north of the Great Plain of Esdrealon".

These theological constructs of the transformative role of the Messiah brings to the fore the fact that Jesus perceived himself as the fulfilment of the historical demands for justice for the oppressed. They tell us that the main focus and the centre of gravity of the ministry of Jesus the *Nazorean*, were primarily about social transformation, justice and the radical demands of the kingdom of God against Roman Imperialism and temple domination system(s). The liberative and struggle consciousness of the Jewish peasants against Rome and the temple elites is manifested in the attitude of Jesus embedded in his Kingdom message. Hence Jeffrey Archer and Francis J. Moloney (2007) in their collaborative effort, *"The gospel according to Judas Benjamin Iscariot"*, regards the teachings of Jesus as informed by his deep sense of justice and solidarity with ordinary members of society. Archer and Moloney (2007:24) makes a reference of the attitude of Jesus about the levels of injustice visited upon the masses by the Jewish elites. Thus in Chapter 8:14-15, the critical mind-set of Jesus the Nazarene, is articulated in that "Jesus was aware of the injustices the local people were suffering at the hands of a foreign power. Every town and village was administered by a group of corrupt Jewish leaders who were becoming wealthier by the day, while the Romans remained their paymasters". It is this social reality of domination mediated by native Jewish collaborators that shaped the struggle mind-set and the Kingdom teachings of Jesus against Roman Imperialism, the exploitation and discriminatory ritual practices representing the temple worship. Therefore as modern readers of Scriptures, we have an obligation not to spiritualize, tone down or sanitize the radical demands for justice as articulated and represented in the life, ministry and the political death of the historical Jesus.

² This study further derives its imperatives from the experiences of attempting to lead meaningful lives within the township context(s). It is therefore significant that we come to terms with what living in the

It is in that regard that the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its 2015 November report has elevated the question of food insecurity in our country, including the Southern African region, to crisis levels. Hence it has identified a number of aspects as contributory factors to the given food challenges, namely: unpredictable weather patterns such as the persistent drought affecting the region, the perpetuating after-effects of 2008 global economic crash in regional economies, and the growing number of low income households who are struggling to break the burden of high inflation and weak buying power. The same report purports that almost 14 million people, mostly women and children are harshly exposed to food shortage. It is significant to appreciate that WHO has reached the conclusion that food insecurity has become “a global health crisis” with dire consequences for the vulnerable³ (Makhubu 2016:5).

townships means from the perspective of the township residence than merely engaging in an academic exercise. It is in that regard that we must appreciate how a young woman in her early twenties, Ms Khanyisa Mngqibisa (in the 2016-2017 eNCA television series, ‘South African Heroes-Waves for Change’) from Khayelisha Township in Cape Town defines what the township is. Ms Khanyisa Mngqibisa speaks in her capacity as a Surf Coach and Mentor of township kids how to do surfing as a sport. Thus as part of her motivation of her learners, she reminds them that “the ocean is a powerful monster, much like a *township* (italics mine). It has a way of drawing you into the madness and it can be scary at times. It has a life of its own. It can chew you up and spit you out, or you can learn to ride its waves.” It is fascinating in how Ms Mngqibisa’s definition of the township paints a picture that captures the imaginations and emotions of the reader. Her definition implies that living in the township is a dangerous venture. Any township is a monster. Township living entraps one into its crazy and fear driven escapades. Indeed any township has a definitive and unique life of its own. She further alludes that township living gives one only two options and definitive choices: survival or death. However, Khanyisa driven by her sense of determination and resilience against all odds of being born and raised in the township insists that one has to learn to live one’s life above the realities of destitution and marginalization. This is the approach and perspective that must inform our attempts of engaging issues of food shortage in South African townships, twenty two years in our democracy.

³ We need to appreciate how various South African constitutional perspectives are wrestling with the identity and the position of the marginalized in the post-apartheid era. Hence Chief Justice Chaskalson (1995:34-36), in the matter of the *State versus T. Makwanyane and Mchunu*, (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S_v_Makwanyane) argued that the poor are subjected to positions of “significant disadvantage” and have become “the most vulnerable” sector of society, who do not benefit from the rights and privileges embedded in our human rights constitutionalism inaugurated in 1994. The same sentiments are conveyed in the Constitutional Court judgment by Justice Sandile Ngcobo in the matter of *Hoffmann v South African Airways* (viewed 26th October 2015, at <http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZACC2000/17.html>.) in his reference to the question of “systematic disadvantage and discrimination” as a permanent category of the socially vulnerable. Our constitutional perspectives reflect contending positions regarding the deliberate socio-economic construct and positioning of this new emerging class of the marginalised, the “most vulnerable groups in our society” (Sachs 2009:195-197). This new class are the “vulnerable amongst us”, who are being “rendered destitute” by all levels of governance systems up to Parliament, as attested by the Deputy Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Justice Moseneke (2013:4, 16) in his judgement, where he engages the social constructs and patterns of systemic-social vulnerability in the matter of the “*South African Informal Traders Forum and Others v City of Johannesburg and Others; South African National Traders Retail Association v City of Johannesburg and Others* [2014] ZACC 8”, (viewed on the 10th May 2014 at www.Constitutional Court, South African Informal Traders and Others/ [2014]

Our reading of food shortage points to the deepening “systemic corporate governance failure” (Public Protector 2014:34) of our democracy, and further reveals the entrenchment of gross human rights violation and economic injustice⁴ against those living with hunger in the past twenty two years of democratic practice in South Africa.

ZACC 8). This perspective is further endorsed by Chief Justice Mogoeng (2016:14) in the matter of *“Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others”* (viewed on the 8th April 2016, at https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Economic_Freedom_Fighters_v_Speaker). Chief Justice Mogoeng’s judgment show how the position of the marginalized have worsened in the twenty two years of our democratic practice to an extend that the vulnerable have become “the poor, the voiceless, and the least-remembered”.

We can only concur with Thomas Piketty (2014:2) in his major work *“Capital in the Twenty-First Century”*, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, London) that the social constructs of vulnerability we are witnessing in South Africa are a reflection of a “deep structure of inequality, the way it was justified, and its impact on individual lives”, and more so how it has negatively affected communities and entire villages across the country. In our context the deep effects of inequality manifest with “intra-generational” dynamism. Piketty (2014:8) premise his presuppositions of inequality on deliberate and calculated “increasing concentration of wealth” in the net-works of privileged among the elites that serves as the custodians and the drivers of domination and exploitation. These drivers of inequality have made it possible that the majority of black South Africans remains at the margins of the economy due to the fact that “the wealthiest 10 percent control about 60-65 percent of national income...even worse: the vast gap between the top 10 percent (who remain overwhelmingly white) and the bottom 90 percent has widened further since the end of apartheid” (Piketty 2016:168).

Our argument is that “this pattern of growing inequality” (Piketty 2015:18) is rooted in the colonial, old apartheid and metamorphic-post apartheid corrupt patronage systems of economic exclusion and exploitation. Any outcomes such as poverty, unemployment, cheap labour and hunger are at the periphery, and becomes mere symptoms of the “historical evolution of income inequality” and social engineering definitive of post-apartheid South Africa (Piketty 2014:vii).

The pain and the social dislocation of the vulnerable is well articulated in the stage play on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission by John Kani, *“Nothing but the Truth”* (Macmillan, & Wits University Press, Johannesburg). John Kani (2001:57-58) playing the main character of Siphosiso expresses his anguish about unfulfilled liberation promises in his recollection of the role of the masses in the struggle against apartheid. He cries out that “I was part of the struggle. I too suffered as a black person. I went to the marches like everyone else. I might not have been detained. I might not have been on Robben Island. I did not leave this country, but I suffered too. The thousands that attended those funerals on Saturdays, that was me. The thousands that were tear gassed, sjamboked by the police, mauled by Alsatian dogs, that was me. When Bishop Tutu led thousands through the streets of white Port Elizabeth, that was me. I WAS THOSE THOUSANDS! I too deserve some recognition, didn’t I? No! No more! It’s payback time. The taking stops right here and now. I want everything back.”

⁴ See the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1998:3), Recommendations, Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 38, 44*, in its assertion about the refusal of the business sector to implement restitution for its share and benefits in apartheid economic crimes. The business sector’s agenda has been the deliberate and calculated exclusion of blacks in the economy, the promotion of migrant labour and its slave wage systems, job reservation for whites and exclusive exploration and control of mineral resources for the benefit of the whites. Whereas since 1990 white capital has been pushing down our throats the token Black Economic Empowerment projects that further deepens and surrenders the control of our economy to the hands of few white elites, “towards greater inequality” as contended by Thomas Piketty (2014:22). The apartheid economic crimes have been premised on “one-dimensional” intent to render the Africans subservient to white domination and exploitation (Froneman 2014:17), (See the Constitutional Court judgment on the matter of *“AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Others v Chief Executive Officer of the South African Social Security Agency and Others (No 2) [2014] ZACC 12”*), (viewed on the 11th June 2015 at [www.Constitutional Court/AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings \(Pty\) Ltd and Others case&cpf=903](http://www.Constitutional Court/AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Others case&cpf=903)).

We have undertaken this study fully aware of the fact that affected communities have to contend with the day to day realities of destitution and experiences of being a distinctly socially marginalised class, located in structural systemic patterns definitive of social and economic vulnerabilities. Therefore the empirical study we have conducted (elaborated in Chapter 4) brings to the fore our contention that food shortage points to the constructs of the “context of structural poverty” and its consequential systems and net-works of vulnerability (Jacobs et al 2010:1-25). We are further convinced that the given constructs of vulnerability are responsible for the generational transmission of poverty among poor black communities, as attested by Kate Bird (2007:v).

This Chapter will reflect on the problem statement and the methodological processes followed in conducting the empirical research of the study. Thereby deliberating on the construction of research and development instruments we have applied in gathering data that was incorporated as part of this work. We will further discuss the factors that motivated the undertaking of the study as well as the broader overview of the study. We will also make reference to the rationale and processes undertaken in constructing the following Chapters.

We will close this Chapter by making a reference on a number of research projects that have specific focus on the life issues affecting the community of the South Western Townships (Soweto). We locate our current research in the footprints of the previous work as an attempt to link and expand the scope of our current work with the documented views and experiences of the people of Soweto and to reflect how such views are shaped by food shortage.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The multi-facetted issues and the challenges of living with hunger in urban townships do not inform policy formulation processes for social development. The causes of hunger are generally perceived as the results of unemployment rather than the social structural systems that entrench, perpetuate poverty and social marginalisation. On the global stage, the emerging crisis of food insecurity systems reflect the deficit of spiritual consciousness and sensitivity in drafting policy instruments that govern international and state-to-state economic agreements. The current geo-political

instruments that defines state to state agreements, mostly imposed or reluctantly adopted by the so-called developing countries reflect the deficit of local and regional spiritual and moral compass of the recipients of the those policy positions constructed in developed countries. Policy formation processes are mostly informed by political-economic power arrangements, rather than spiritual categories definitive of the peoples' experiences of the exploitative global economy.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Scope of methodological aspects⁵

⁵ (See Stephen B. Bevens, 2009, *Models of Contextual Theology: Faith and Culture (Revised and Expanded Edition)*, Maryknoll, New York, U.S.A.). In this work we were given an exposure on contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches that are significant in research work that has theological aspects and relevance. Thus in our endeavour's we have deliberately adopted and made an attempt to apply the theoretical and methodological perspectives research tools espoused by Bevens. We have implicitly highlighted his approach as a definitive tool we have adopted. However one will be in a position to detect Bevens' influences and perceptual construction in both the formulation and articulation of our theoretical and methodological instruments definitive of the content of our work. Therefore it is imperative to appreciate that right on the onset Bevens (2009:xvi) brings to our attention the fact that the construction of theological related knowledge systems need to take into account two complementary aspects, namely: "the experience of the *past*" and "the experience of the *present*". The former aspect refers to those experiences, recollections and traditional practises that were deliberately preserved for the benefit of posterity. The preservation of such body of knowledge systems, collective memories and its re-enactment and repetition, keeps it alive and in turn it serves as a medium, or rather as ways and means of connecting the present generation to the lived reality of its forebears. We have demonstrated the significance of "the experience of the past" particularly in Chapter 2 when dealing with the historicity of the patterns of systemic vulnerability that shaped the categories of vulnerabilities that are currently manifesting as food insecurity.

The second dimension in knowledge construction demands that we take into account the prevailing and ever changing realities of living and experiencing life in a given "context" characterised by the specificity of cultural consciousness and its peculiar expressions. It is in Chapter 4 that we have made an attempt of engaging the empirical aspects emerging from the data gathered from the participants, whereby we have consciously located our reflections on the data in the given "context" of contemporary South African township life. The research design in Chapter 4 made a provision for the participants to register their experiences of poverty and hunger by submitting both an objective quantitative responses to specific questions, whilst providing qualitative suggestions and opinions about their understanding with regard the root causes and possible solutions to the issues of food insecurity. In this instance we can attest to the fact that the body of work at our disposal suggest that the participants perspectives and perceptions about the reality of food insecurity "are themselves products of particular, contextual experiences" (Bevens 2009:xvi) that are verified by the research instruments employed to ascertain the truthfulness, reality and subjective encounters of food insecurity.

It is our contention that our present work of engaging the realities of vulnerabilities informed by food shortage will require of us to duly seek to incorporate the dual theoretical and methodological dimensions of knowledge construction that will correctly articulate the past as well as the present experiences and positions definitive of food shortage in urban townships. Bevens (2009:xvi) would insist that the current context(s) of food shortage need to take into cognizance "(individual and social experience, secular or religious culture, social location, and social change)" that have made it possible for whole communities to be subjected to poverty, social marginalization and systems of oppression that are part of the democratic dispensation in our country that has failed to account for the rights to dignity of the poor electorate.

Bevens takes his debate and analysis to significant depths by alluding to the fact our endeavours of locating our processes of context driven knowledge outputs need to be framed by an understanding

This study employed a biblically oriented approach in reflecting on the needs, perceptions and suggestions of affected communities. In this regard we sought to apply critical models⁶ of interpretations embedded in the parables of the historical

that research outcomes contain more than “normative” character. Rather the reader must make a room and avail necessary capabilities for much needed analysis and interpretation of the “given data”. In that regard our analysis raises the level of appreciating the body of knowledge before us with “even broader understanding”, and as such giving credence and meaning to our search for truth “when the experience of the past engages the present context” (Bevans 2009:xvii). We can argue that Bevans is raising the bar and duly elevating our understanding of the modalities of knowledge production by suggesting that credible encounters with any given reality would yield some depth and weight when such endeavours allow past experiences to shape and be shaped by present contextual “expressions” of being and becoming. We would therefore hope that the “shorthand expressions” of food insecurity embedded in our study will stretch the imaginations of the reader to be carried to a “virtual” space that would make it permissible to allow the present contextual demands of those living with food shortage to radically actualize change categories of the systems that facilitated their oppressive status.

⁶ We hold the opinion that the theoretical and methodological constructs of the critical models of interpretation (parables of Jesus) espoused in our work bears resemblance to Bevans demand for theological articulations that can only be meaningful when done “in terms of a particular context” (Bevans 2009:3). Thus our appropriation of Bevans suggestions will imply that the attempts of critically engaging food insecurity must factor in the particularity of the context, and as such duly pointing “to a contextual imperative” that has given birth to such conditions (Bevan 2009:9). We are therefore inclined to argue that this theoretical and methodological critical model is presented by Bevans (2009:26) as a “contextualization” exercise, in that in its essentiality it consciously “broadens the understanding of culture to include social, political, and economic questions” that cannot be separated from the issues of food shortage and its detrimental consequences in affected communities.

It is our intention to locate the contextuality of food shortage within the scope and the definitive features of the paradigmatic trajectory and context driven models that will facilitate a transformative discourse, in this regard an interpretive critic model located within a specific sociological paradigm against vulnerability. The same train of thought advanced by Turner and Beeghley (See *The Emergence of Sociological Theory*, The Dorsey Press, Illinois, U.S.A. 1981:372) in their reflections on the question of sociological grounding of human experience. They allude to the need for proper model(s) to be context driven in articulating given realities. Therefore they advance an argument to the effect that “a model is an analytical accentuation of what are considered to be critical elements, and the interrelations among these elements, for some specific domain of reality”.

This conceptualization of critical systems against social vulnerability requires that our reading of food shortage must bring into the surface all the “critical elements” and the exact locus point of “interrelations among these elements” that mediate food shortage in urban townships.

Bevans (2009:30) would respond to Turner and Beeghley by asserting that the use of models as critical tools of analysis implies that models serves as entities that “are disclosive of reality”. He further argues that “using models is a way of dealing with a complex, highly differentiated reality”. Bevans is aware of the limits associated with the utilization of models in interpretive processes, however he accentuates the fact that “even though they cannot bring the whole picture into focus, they can provide an angle of vision”. Therefore if we take Bevans argument to its logical conclusion we cannot help but appreciate that our critic of food insecurity through the lenses of the parable material (as symbols of social transformation) will assist us to bring “into focus” the fundamental issues and levels of vulnerability represented by food shortage. In that regard it would be prudent of us to take into heart Bevans’ (2009:30) admonitions that models “as images and symbols, provide ways through which one knows reality in all its richness and complexity. Models provide a knowledge that is always partial and inadequate but never false or merely subjective”. Hence the empirical aspect on our research depicted in Chapter 4 presents to us “images and symbols” of post-apartheid oppression that cannot be wished away by the democratic era we are part of.

Bevans (2009:30) takes the debate further by pointing out that the usage of models can have two aspects, namely: “exclusive or complementary”. Whereas on another level models can also be engaged as “either systemic or descriptive”. Thus at this level of argument, Bevans suggest to the reader that it would not be beneficial to opt for an “exclusive” use of a particular model in engaging any given reality. His opinion is that one would rather opt for a balanced application of different models as demanded by the facts under scrutiny. Therefore it would make sense for us in our study to align

Jesus of the Gospels. In Chapter 2 we focused on the constructs of the patterns of systemic vulnerability as reading scenarios of food shortage. We have also considered our countries' Truth and Reconciliation Commission conceptualization⁷ of

our theory and methodology with Bevans accentuation that “if one model points to certain aspects of experience, another model or other words can be employed to bring other aspects of experience to light. Because of the complexity of the reality one is trying to express in terms of models, such a variety of models might even be imperative”.

⁷ In this study of food shortage we have made an attempt to bring into the fore the perspectives of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, particularly its four notions of truth: namely the “factual or forensic truth”, “personal and narrative truth”, “social or dialogical truth”, and lastly the “healing and restorative truth” (See, *Concepts and Principles, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1998, www.justice.gov.za/Report/Final, viewed 30 May 2016*). It is our considered view that the deliberate positioning of theoretical and methodological framework of this study on the given conceptual and philosophical constructs of truth will serve as “interpretational lenses” (Van Eck 2013:226) of the broader issues of systemic vulnerability embedded in food insecurity issues. We hold the view that “factual or forensic truth” will empower us with critical skills and required objectivity to correctly identify and bring to scrutiny the root causes of food shortage.

We also believe that in “personal and narrative truth” dynamics, this work has made it possible for those who perceived themselves as victims of oppressive systems to muster the courage to find a voice within themselves to honestly present their case of vulnerability without fear, knowing fully well their narratives of food shortage and calls for redress are legitimate and deserves to be attended to. Furthermore, through the critique of the “social or dialogical truth”, we are persuaded that it will make it possible for those who will be exposed to the facts of our empirical study to engage all the factors emanating from the responses of the participants as part of a collective dialogue to advance corrective solutions. Ultimately we can be encouraged by the interpretive critique of “the healing and restorative truth” that serves as a moral and a conscience sensitising tool to those living in hunger, to open themselves up to possibilities of restoration and wholeness in their struggle against hunger (Dioxtader *et al.* 2009:93).

We also hold the view that the history of our country demands that we propose the symbolic or imaginative truth as a tool to mediate transformation and social justice for the past wrongs. We advocate for the kind of truth that is “*archetypal*” in terms of Jungian categories, owing its origins from the collective consciousness’ construct of ancient Africa (Nabudere 2006:16, “Towards an Afrikology of Knowledge Production and African Regeneration”, *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, Unisa Press, Pretoria, Vol 1, No1, Pg, 1-32). We are espousing the kind of truth that seeks to link our generation to the inspirations “concerning the contributions to civilizations of the ancient black races” as advanced by Rudolph R. Windsor, (1969:7), “*From Babylon to Timbuktu: A History of Ancient Black Races Including The Black Hebrews*”, Windsor Golden Series, Atlanta, USA) This is the kind of truth that must be unapologetic about its “historical deconstruction” imperatives against social inequality and economic marginalisation of Africans in the economy of the country. We assert a truth that will serve as a frame of reference informing the deliberate bent of the nation towards the kind of justice that is intentional in eradicating the patterns of systemic vulnerability. It is the type of truth that aims at attaining a deeper sense of a “consciousness-raising” culture that is intolerant of any form of injustice and corruption (Nabudere 2006:8). The symbolic or imaginative truth calls upon us to lead our lives on the basis of the symbolic and imaginative consciousness, meaning that we become conscious of the necessity for transformation and the demands for justice. Furthermore the symbolic and imaginative consciousness gives us an awareness of what is right, truthful and just in the light of our history. Our recent history has brought to our attention the fact that our country and its leadership has lost its moral high ground that was represented by the moral and visionary leadership of President Nelson Mandela. We are aware of the fact that in the 2017 African Union Summit (AU) our countries influence was severely diminished, since “almost all its positions defeated in the major decisions taken at the recent gathering” (Du Plessis 2017:10).

This persistent loss of influence took place on the symbolic and imaginative realms before it manifested in the decision halls of the AU. Another example in point is the sudden resignation of a highly respected state prosecutor Advocate Gerrie Nel, who opted to serve in the private domain. It cannot be disputed that, “the state under the leadership of the ANC has become suspect in the eye of the public, particularly so under President Jacob Zuma...the state’s legitimacy has been eroded in the eyes of the public. In addition to compromising itself legally and ethically, citizens have lost confidence

our divided past, as well as Van Eck's (2009) 12 theses of parable critique as the fundamental theoretical and methodological basis for our study. Due regard was also given to critical-biblical analysis of the spiritual and social systems milieu of a South Africa endeavouring "to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996:1).

A study of this nature ought to facilitate narrative processes that will nurture, cultivate and advance means for spiritual sensitivity in aspects and areas of policy formulation processes. The hermeneutics of a transforming spirituality of social systems on the level of collective and individual spiritual formation of the vulnerable will be investigated. Critical life experiences articulated in the historicity of the spirituality of Jesus of the Gospels, reflected in the parables will serve as a catalyst for meaningful reorientation of South Africa's food security systems and its impact on the marginalized sectors of the populace. Therefore biblical resources and signposts that will serve as ways and means of advancing a paradigmatic "shift of emphasis" (Van Eck 1995:25) in actualising spiritual capabilities for social analysis as depicted in the parables will be appropriated.

in the ability of government to provide basic services such decent infrastructure, proper healthcare, safety and security" (Malada 2017:1). Jakkie Cilliers of the Institute for Security Studies agrees with Du Plessis and Malada regarding the diminishing influence of South Africa in the continent. He asserts that the Pretoria administration under Jacob Zuma "has been frustrated in its efforts to push in its initiatives...while our stature suffers under Zuma's lack of vision, corruption allegations and the general incoherence in government policies" (Du Plessis 2017:10). Our contention in raising these issues is informed by the need to appropriate the transformative demands of the symbolic or imaginative truth that confronts the "culture of impunity" among public and private leadership representatives, and further requiring that transparent, ethical conduct and justice must regard all citizens as equal under the law, its obligations, and demanding all to lead public lives accordingly. We are also impelled by the need to espouse convictional truth(s) that will serve as a brand and identity expressive of what it means to be a South African in the world. This kind of truth(s) ought to articulate our ideals embedded in our formative character of diversity, our deep spirituality and collective consciousness against all forms of discrimination.

In this regard we can assert that the theoretical and methodological framework of our study also set to consciously make reference to the social, economic and political constructs embedded in the TRC, informed by our communal ontological framework of Ubuntu-botho as entry points into issues of food shortage in our country, (Brooke, 1991:55, *Jung and Phenomenology*, Routledge, London); (See, deeper meanings of Ubuntu-botho concept in CC judgment, *Makwanyane and Others, 1995 (3) SA 391 (CC); 1995 (6) BCLR 665 (CC) at para 224-7; 241-51; 263 and 307-13, (Judgement in the matter of Azapo, Biko, Mxenge, Riberio v The President of South Africa and Others, Justice Mohammed's Constitutional Court judgment, 1996)*). We are also deliberate in locating the formative concepts of our study in the context of the emerging human rights culture as endorsed by the Apex Court judgment in the very same *Makwanyane Case*.

A holistic approach by its very nature implies that the study will endeavour to explore the issues of “corporate spirituality” and its transformative bent. In this regard a non-limiting investigative approach will be pursued. The use of scientific, historical and critical means of research will be the first port of call in the entire study. Important also is the nature of spiritual analysis of the current global economic structures. Areas on which the “concept of corporate spirituality” could attain capabilities for purposeful self-transcendence of issues related to hunger should therefore also be investigated. Such an exercise must enable dialogue among social systems whether narrative or conceptual in format. Furthermore the emerging dialogue must aim to empower affected households to find meaning and purpose for life in the midst of poverty.

This study, from a methodological point of view, will also locate trends of connectivity, relationships and network systems that play a role in the creation and sustenance of social structures of marginalisation. Therefore the expressed reality of systemic vulnerability through hunger will be deliberately subjected to the transformative phenomenon embedded in the parables of Jesus. The parables will show how the commonly shared reality of hunger reflects connections and relations between the sufferers and the nation as a whole.

The logic of applying the parables to challenge social vulnerability, a colonial and an “apartheid generated” crisis (TRC Report, 1988:3, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Extract 4, para, 74) is to highlight the interconnectedness of all life in the given realities of poverty.

Therefore the question of our relatedness as social and spiritual beings within the network of our social systems will be interpreted in the context of our spiritual expressions in public, private and symbolic spaces shaped by food shortage. In order to address the question at hand, a sample of 360 township residents across the South Western Townships (Soweto) and Pretoria, comprising of teenagers, youth and adults were invited to participate in the study.

1.4 METHODOLOGICAL INSTRUMENTS

1.4.1 Measuring instrument

A self-report checklist containing quantitative and qualitative questions was administered by the researcher to the identified participants in selected areas of the South Western Townships (Soweto), and Pretoria in the Gauteng Province.

1.4.2 Statistical analysis

The quantitative questions in the checklist were analyzed using descriptive techniques in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). All the statistical data analyzed were presented to the supervisor for his evaluation, analysis and further suggestions.

1.5 RESULTS

1.5.1 General expectations from the participants

The participants were given a copy consisting of quantitative and qualitative questions. With regard to the former, the participants were expected to express their opinions by grading each given statement. This enabled the outcomes to be verified using the scientific processes of the Social Package for Social Science (SPSS). The quantitative results were captured, analyzed and integrated into the body material of the study.

With regard to the qualitative questionnaire, the participants were expected to write their opinions, feelings and suggestions in response to a given question. The questionnaire was not designed with a grading scale as part of its format. Hence, in analyzing the feedback, the study took into account the most prominent and repeatedly stated feelings, opinions and suggestions and grouped them thematically. Qualitative results were interpreted following the thematic analysis format.

The thematic analysis method enabled the study to identify broad themes that emerged from the given responses. These themes were then analyzed in order of the stated priority and preferences by the respondents and their views were duly assimilated into the study.

1.6 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PRODUCTS

The empirical study comprised of research and development products consisting of the following:

- a questionnaire designed with quantitative and qualitative research elements for data gathering;
- a report including a summary, analysis and interpretation of collected data;
- a database of questionnaire results, analysis of the data, progress reports and the processes necessary to administer the questionnaires;
- visitation of the targeted areas for the data gathering, analysis of the data, submission of the progress reports and presentations to the supervisor for feedback.

1.7 FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT METHOD

1.7.1 Development of methods of analysis and presentation of the research results

The analysis and interpretation of collected data enabled the researcher to construct scientifically proven material that has formed part of the study. The aim of the collected data was to formulate the outcomes and results of the study in a clear and easily understandable manner for the benefit of all who have vested interest in the outcomes of the research.

1.7.2 Analysis

The questionnaires were analysed in accordance with the presuppositional evaluative critique of the parables of Jesus the Galilean through 12 theses employed by Van Eck (2009:1).

1.7.3 Design

The researcher designed the questionnaire, including its measurement, interpretive tools, as well as the systems of incorporating the findings into the study.

1.7.4 Pilot study

The questionnaire measurement tools were distributed firstly to a limited sample of affected families in the township settings and similar contexts to serve as a correlation sample with the Soweto study in the Gauteng Province. After the analysis

and review of the sample results the questionnaires were further distributed on a larger scale to all identified families and individuals willing to take part in the study.

1.7.5 Evaluation

The inputs and suggestions by the participants during the qualitative component of the research helped determine the evaluation process. Thus overall suggestions and opinions of the participants were incorporated into the final recommendations.

Evaluation after the commencement of the study was a continuous undertaking and was effective as requested by the interested parties based on the evaluation of the questionnaires by Van Eck's 12 theses analysis of the parables of Jesus, on the basis of given perspectives of the participants.

1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the relevance and effective use of the parables of Jesus as transformative interpretive instruments of food shortage in urban Townships. It is our contention that the parables of Jesus serves as means of mediating personal and social transformation as envisaged by the kingdom of God. Therefore this study intends to make interpretative spiritual resources part of this debate, which can engage processes that shape the trajectories of transformation in our nation.

The parables of Jesus have the potential to help us in the journey of being and becoming inter-dependent spiritual beings as we transform food insecurity systems. The spirituality of Jesus embedded in His kingdom message in the parables facilitate an alternative world-view oriented on kingdom values (Van Eck 1995:383) that represent the social expression of God's demands for justice, equality and righteousness for the poor.

The appropriation of Jesus' parables in addressing South African food shortage can serve as a conduit that infuses spirituality into the broader economic formulation in our country. The parables serve as frameworks and transformative instruments seeking to respond to the challenges of food insecurity among vulnerable households. A deliberate effort was directed to specific categories of vulnerable groups emerging from the situation of food shortage.

On another level, our social discourse on global power arrangements and how they affect us are not expressively premised on a distinctly South African spiritual consciousness. Therefore the parables will be used to create space for collective and individual critique of social expressions emerging in our newly acquired democracy.

Jesus of Nazareth, in addressing the question of vulnerability in his social context, categorically stated “for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt 25:35-36; NIV).

In this regard the study will appropriate the parables as deliberate conduits to facilitate “a status transformation” intent and redemptive categories of the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. The prevailing social forms of vulnerabilities reflective of social inequality and food insecurity systems definitive of township family life will be subjected to the moral and ethical vision of the kingdom of God represented by earliest tradition of historical Jesus.

The nature of this study places some demands on the reader in as far as locating the experiences of communities affected by food insecurity in a proper context. We need to guard against the tendency of regarding food insecurity as a problem of certain communities or rather individuals in given communities. We ought to strive to attain “as complete a picture as possible” or rightly as Mosala (*et al.* 1986:177) demands the use of “epistemological lenses” and the 12 theses of interpreting the parables of Jesus by Van Eck which will enable us to identify the network and the systems at play in food insecurity.

We attempt to show that there are socio-economic forces that directly create social conditions of systemic vulnerability reflective of the “structure of inequality, that is, on the origins of disparities in income and wealth” manifesting with food shortage in urban townships (Piketty 2014:19). It is important to engage the question of food insecurity systems in a manner that seeks to counteract “disconnected” state-sponsored dialogues (Amit 1999:303) that have yet to yield concrete results against hunger in the townships. The study further had to come to terms with the fact that

such economic forces have a global character and definitive agenda or vested interests that normally do not accommodate the interests of the affected communities. In this regard, due consideration will be given to the effects of globalisation in international food trade, local food markets and local food policies.

It is in the light of the globalisation of food insecurity systems that this study sought to appreciate the significance of the transformative demands of Jesus of reflected in the parables for all suffering humanity. We set to determine how the actual experiences of the followers of Jesus of Galilee under Roman Imperialism, sought to make sense of the teachings of Jesus given their social conditions. In reading Jesus' parables in line with 12 theses by Van Eck (2009:1) against issues of hunger will assist us to imagine as complete a picture as possible of the challenges of the followers of the historical Jesus, as expressed in the Synoptic gospels. The primary objective is to fully come to terms with the responses of the historical Jesus in his self-consciousness as the Son of Man who fully exposed the powers and systems of oppression of the Roman Empire, by choosing to identify and locate himself within the ranks of the suffering communities and the socially marginalised.

It is this study's contention that the current failure of the public institutions to fully grasp issues related to food shortage is compounded by perceptual approaches employed to address poverty in certain communities with ill-informed decision processes that lacks sustainability. We are convinced with Richard A. Edwards that our attempts to bring about desired ends against hunger will require us to cultivate a perception for a hunger free society shaped by an analytical perspective and a reading of given conditions that "is a cumulative process" towards social transformation, justice, equity and meaningful social relations (Edwards 1985:9).

1.8.1 The formative conceptualization of the Chapters

In our attempts to fully comprehend the causal factors of food shortage in urban townships. We have constructed the first three Chapters as contextual background for the empirical data emerging in Chapter 4. Hence in Chapter 2, we made an effort to identify and analyse the emerging patterns of systemic vulnerability definitive of the context of food shortage. Chapter 2 is premised on the critique of the need for social justice advanced by our new Constitutional values, its moral framework and

the work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was subsequently completed in 1998. In Chapter 3, we located and discussed the patterns of systemic of systemic vulnerability within the broader economic framework and policy application that have shaped our nation's economic life since the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Furthermore in Chapter 4, we have reflected on the processes we have undertaken in conducting the empirical research in specific areas around Soweto and Pretoria.

In Chapters 5 and 6 we consciously employed Van Eck's 12 theses of reading the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels, as interpretive tools of the patterns of systemic vulnerability reflected in food shortage. We have deliberately opted for his critique and analysis in the two Chapters given its relevance in engaging the parable material. Hence in Chapter 5, we have located the question of food shortage within Van Eck's theses of interpreting the parables of Jesus. Thus an in-depth deliberation of the 12 theses by Van Eck as interpretative frameworks for the parables will be discussed. Van Eck's 12 theses will be presented as interpretive analytic tools that open up different perspectives of the parables of the historical Jesus. Van Eck's methodology of reading the parables will be followed by the description of a number of reading scenarios of the parables. In Chapter 6, we made an attempt of using specific parables as conceptualised and interpreted by Van Eck to engage the question of food shortage. The interpretive methodology of the parables applied by Van Eck was chosen due to its unique approach of engaging the parables of Jesus in their social and historical context as symbols of social transformation. Van Eck's (2009:1) approach differs (on the basis of the constructs of his 12 theses) with the reading adopted by various New Testaments scholars.

The aspects of the parables that will help the reader in the analysis of the question of social vulnerability in the entire study will be reached particularly in the reading of ten specific parables specifically analysed by Van Eck. The ten parables to be covered will be the following: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the friend at

midnight (Lk 11:5-8), and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65*). We will deliberately use specific parables in interpreting four primary themes that emerge and best convey the issues of hunger in affected communities. The four indicators that will be analysed and interpreted by the given parables will cover the following issues, namely: the impact of food shortage on self-respect, one's dignity, openness to others and good relations with others. We must note that the four primary themes that emerged in the food study had five sub-questions. The sub-questions were intended to further provide more detail information about each question posed.

Furthermore, in-depth issues could be deduced from the major question of the study. We will engage each identified main question with a selected parable with the aim of building a critical data to be further dissected by given parables. Each selected major theme of the food study will be interrogated by a singular or a couple of parables. The remaining aspects of the results of food study will be interpreted by six parables. We want to show that the given parables can serve as catalyst and a transformative motif in the interpretation of the definitive systems of food insecurity in the townships. The study will be concluded with recommendations in Chapter 7. Further aspects of the research data that enhances and broadens the understanding of the entire work is reflected in Appendix B. The additional data in Appendix B will assist the reader to locate the broader issues that have shaped the responses of the participants regarding the four major questions emanating from the empirical study.

1.9 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to comprehend the transformative aspects of the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels. The parables depict the issues addressed by Jesus in his socio-political context of Roman Imperialism that sanctioned religious marginalisation of common people. Much emphasis will be placed on parables of Jesus as presented in the Synoptic Gospels. Linked to this, the focus is also on global food insecurity systems and its impact in South African fiscal policy direction, and its influence on our country's social security systems.

The focus of this study also includes a critique on the socio-economic policy framework, which informs the current government's position on the issues of the

quality of life of the poor in urban areas. It is proposed that the transformative critique of the parables of Jesus and the “interpretive lenses” (Van Eck 2013:226) of systemic vulnerability can serve as both catalysts and tools for social system analysis of our broader social, economic, cultural and political landscape.

1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is an attempt to engage community organisations and selected vulnerable households around the South Western Townships (Soweto) affected by harsh living conditions of hunger and poverty. It envisages interacting with affected constituencies through a questionnaire. The responses gathered will be analysed and interpreted with the primary objective of determining the extent to which spiritual formation categories in the parables of Jesus can be employed as “symbols” of transformation in situations of want and desperate need in affected communities.

The study was done within a biblical framework that emphasises the perspectives, perceptions and actualisation of spiritual formation issues of the historical Jesus. The impact of Jesus’ spirituality may have in forming, transforming and aligning public policy formation processes that aim to address the systemic conditions of poverty in urban townships, will be explored.

This study, when viewed through the prism of the parables of Jesus, South Africa’s, constitutional values, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, can be regarded as attempt to engage the issues of vulnerability. The angle of the Commission on the study will unmask vulnerability and its “truth as the widest compilation of people’s perceptions, stories, myths and experiences, to restore memory and foster a new humanity” (Krog 1998:16). The overriding aim is to foster a culture of respect for life, dignity of affected communities and to facilitate justice and righteousness of the kingdom of God in the here and now.

The aim of this study is also to make interpretative spiritual resources part of this debate, which can engage processes that shape the trajectories of transformation in our nation.

The parables of Jesus have the potential to help us in the journey of being and becoming inter-dependent spiritual beings as we transform food security systems. The spirituality of Jesus embedded in His kingdom message articulated in the parables and their social context will serve as an inspiration in our endeavours of mediating justice and righteousness in our country.

1.11 RECENT FIELD WORK RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN SOWETO

1.11.1 The Broader Study on the South African Social Identity (1997-2001)

The study food shortage was conducted alongside recent studies carried out across the country, and more so those done in Soweto. Attention was given to the ground breaking national study (1997-2001) by Steve Burgess in which 15 000 people across race and class (both urban and rural) participated. The study yielded results with specificity of social identity against race, as a definitive category of being a South African. The current study attempted therefore to address questions emanating from the specific township's "social identity" informed by vulnerability of food shortage.

1.11.2 The Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation Study in Soweto (1997)

Another quantitative study completed in Soweto in 1997 focused primarily on the socio-economic changes as a result of the 1994 political transition (Bozzoli *et al.* 1997:199). The study solicited the views of three thousand Soweto households. The *Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation* (ESSET) commissioned the study. Its primary focus was to gain qualitative perspectives of Soweto church communities about the impact of poverty in their lives. The whole research was conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) (Morgan *et al.* 1998). The outcome of the study was to quantify and verify the experiences of poverty in the townships. It was hoped that the recommendations would be implemented into the programs of the new democratic dispensation. The uncontested outcomes were the provision of space for affected communities to articulate first-hand experiences of living under poverty in a newly emerging democratic dispensation.

1.11.3 The "Class in Soweto" Study (2006)

The current study of food shortage is similarly premised on empirical research conducted in Soweto in 2006. Thus the researcher appreciated the questions raised by the respondents in view of the “Class Soweto Study”. This large-scale opinion research conducted in Soweto between June and July 2006 was later published as “Class in Soweto” (Alexander *et al.* 2013).

The said survey focused on the issues, expressions and conceptualisation of the notion of class, its identity and localisation within the township context. The overall survey was reflective of the opinions of an approximate sample reaching 2 340 adults participants from sixteen years and above.

In this survey the respondents primarily articulated their social location in “class categories”. The survey could be tapped into as a resource for engaging Soweto residents about perceived social challenges and daily struggles, and how such given experiences inform social aspects of poverty, unemployment and the prevalent violent service delivery protests (Alexander *et al.* 2013:8).

The survey also delved deeply into the broader concerns of Soweto residents through a focus group consisting of approximately 51 participants. The participants were representative in a number of aspects such as gender, age, employment, non-employed and perceived class level, with the overall intention of determining “a picture of Soweto’s class structure”. The selected focus group also had to respond to stated intentions of the researchers regarding the question of “class identities”, and how such positions are framed, articulated, and lived out as cultural expression(s), and subsequently the proper placing of said identities unto given “class structure” (Alexander *et al.* 2013:251).

It must be pointed out that the desire to understand social aspects, which contribute to food shortage, will be not be investigated with a particular class bias in mind. Therefore the Marxist approach though commended by Alexander (2013:5) as having “greater flexibility” in reading the living conditions of the poor will not be applied in our study of food shortage. The reader seeks to avoid confining and limiting his findings into a narrow framework of social analysis.

Thus an aspect that must be appreciated in the current study is the centrality of people's actual experiences regarding hunger. As such, the individual's subjective position, one's sense of self-consciousness and how each individual ultimately relates to others is given prominence. The views of affected communities are engaged within the context of experiences and self-consciousness of the vulnerable, notwithstanding the impact of their social and economic location, class, racial, gender and power dynamics at play.

1.11.4 The 2014 Oxfam Report

Our study of food shortage raises a number of issues that are reflected in the 2014 Oxfam Report. The report noted that "one in four people in the country" are experiencing hunger on a daily basis. The Oxfam Report quantifies the number of people suffering from food shortage, and daily going "to bed hungry", at about 13 million in total (Mkhize 2014:13).

The Report also brings to the forefront the shocking state of hunger in urban townships in the context of "low income, rising costs, a lack of access to productive resources and climate change" as contributory factors to persistent hunger and poverty. These socio-economic factors are compounded by the reality of the unrelenting 25% to 35% levels of unemployment, the burden of hunger carried mostly by women, conditions made difficult by rising prices of staple food such as maize, and the impact of the 200% increment of electricity prices "since 2010, forcing people to choose between food and fuel" (Mkhize 2014:13). The significance of the Oxfam Report makes sense when it is read in the context of the specific affected groups specifically women single women and child headed households.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This Chapter addressed the social issues definitive of hunger including global challenges of food insecurity systems and their impact in our country. Attention was given to the aim and purpose of the study, as well as the problem statement, methodology and its instruments in the study. We also focussed on the results, the

research and development instruments, including a concise discussion of recent research study projects conducted in Soweto.

This study consists of seven chapters. Following the present chapter, Chapter 2 comprises of an in-depth description of social, political and historical context of vulnerability with an in-depth analysis of the patterns or frameworks of systemic vulnerability. Chapter 3 highlights economic issues relating to food insecurity. Chapter 4 attends to research instruments, research methodology and empirical results and analysis. Chapter 5 embarks on the discussion of ten parables identified as catalyst for social transformation and social justice. This will be done through the application of Van Eck's 12 theses as a methodology of interpreting the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 6 will interpret the empirical study through selected parables of Jesus. Thus four parables will be utilised in interpreting four major aspects that emanates from the empirical study. Thereafter eight parables will be applied in the analysis and interpretation of the in-depth sections of the study. Chapter 7, the final Chapter as a conclusion presents recommendations informed by the findings of the empirical study interpreted by Van Eck's 12 theses of the parables of Jesus.

CHAPTER 2

SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITY AND FOOD INSECURITY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the focus will be on the aspects of the patterns or frameworks of systemic vulnerability. Therefore various aspects that have led to the constructs of the frameworks of the systems of vulnerability will be analyzed and interpreted in terms of how such constructions have an impact in the questions of food shortage.

Much emphasis will be directed to the formative stages and the definitive structures of systemic vulnerability and its “inheritance patterns” (Piketty 2014:19) of inequality, poverty, hunger and social marginalization⁸ of the affected families and communities.

⁸ The frameworks or patterns of systemic vulnerability that we seek to analyze have wider scope and impact beyond the issues of hunger that emerge from the empirical study that forms part of our work. In that regard we need to appreciate the conceptualization of the notion of systemic vulnerability in the Constitutional Court’s judgment abolishing the death penalty in our legal system. This position is reflected in the matter of the *State versus T. Makwanyane and Mchunu* (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S_v_Makwanyane) delivered on the 6th June 1995 by the Chief Justice P. Chaskalson. The judgment makes reference to the reality of race, class and poverty as determining factors in delivering justice. Chief Justice Chaskalson (1995:34-36) argued that the poor are subjected to positions of “significant disadvantage” and thus rendering them “to be the most vulnerable” sectors of society, who do not benefit from the rights guaranteed by the new constitutional dispensation inaugurated in 1994. Holding similar perspective with Chaskalson, Chief Justice Mogoeng (2016:14), in the matter of *“Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others”* (viewed on the 8th April 2016, at https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Economic_Freedom_Fighters_v_Speaker). Mogoeng’s judgment regards the vulnerable as “the poor, the voiceless, and the least-remembered”. The reality of systemic vulnerability implies that the vulnerable are those whose lives are “stretched to the breaking point” by the indignity of hunger (Herzog 2000:122). It is imperative for the reader to appreciate that the systemic vulnerability of hunger is a “socially constructed” reality. As such our endeavors of rooting out its impacts in affected communities will demand of us to empower those exposed to hunger with critical tools “to identify those responsible for this social construction”, a condition regarded by Paulo Freire as “a crime against humanity” (Freire 1993:20). It is our contention that the patterns of systemic vulnerability manifesting in food shortage have consigned affected communities “to be the most vulnerable” in the two decades of our democracy. Chaskalson’s (1995:59) judgment is constructed in a manner that seeks to advance and protect the interests of the “social outcasts and marginalised people of our society”. The vulnerable and those who lead their lives at the periphery of the mainstream of our economy are still referred to as the “people of our society”. They still carry legitimate claims and demands for justice and social redress. The given judgment addressed itself primarily to the restoration of the right to life and dignity of all citizens, especially the disadvantaged as an expression of respect for the new constitution. The judgement insists that the denial of justice to “the most vulnerable” borders to the violation of their dignity. Therefore the impact of systemic vulnerability violates the sense of being of those living with hunger. We can echo Chaskalson’s (1995:92) conviction about the reality of systems of vulnerability that such systems represent the “destruction of life and dignity”. Further we concur with Chaskalson (1995:44, 91) that systemic

In this regard the patterns of systemic vulnerability, or “the black man’s burden”, as Plaatje (2007:18) suggested, ought to be appreciated as reading scenarios of food insecurity in urban townships. Our township empirical study seeks to locate food shortage and poverty within the social and economic framework of the marginalization of the poor within township settings.⁹

It is imperative to recognize that this study was conducted with awareness that township residence face daily realities of hunger and perceived sense of social marginalisation¹⁰. The question of hunger and poverty in the townships is a lived reality¹¹ that is mediating systemic patterns of social and economic vulnerabilities¹².

vulnerability is the “impairment of human dignity”. It is also a reality that serves as a tool that “strips” the vulnerable their sense of dignity, and remains to become an “affront” to the dignity of the sufferers (Chaskalson 1995:18-19). The systems of vulnerability are also perceived as representing the “defilement of dignity” of the poor and will not retreat until attaining the total “annihilation of human dignity” of those living with hunger (Chaskalson 1995:50, 65).

⁹ The depiction of the status of the poor (in the past 22 years) by the South African Human Development Report of the United Nations gives a revealing perspective about the status of the poor in our country. The UN Report alluded to the fact that the Gini Coefficient for South Africa “increased from 0.665 in 1994 to 0.685 in 2006” clearly indicating the worsening trends regarding inequality. The UN Report was pointing to the fact that the poorest 20 percent of the populace comprising 10 million people had access to only “1.7 per cent of total income in 2006”. In the same duration 72.5 per cent of total income was amassed by only the “richest 20.0 per cent of the population” which comprises 10 million people (The Presidency 2007:21-22, on <http://www.gov.za/reports/2000/population/intro.pdf>), viewed 29 March 2016).

¹⁰ The reality of food shortage facing township residence as attested by 2013 statistics which suggests that 21.7% of our citizens are exposed to “extreme poverty”, lacking the means to afford basic food requirements; 37% lack finances to purchase “food items and nonfood items”, thus forcing them to prioritize transport, electricity and items such the airtime. Whereas 53.8% survive with “less than R779 a month” the latter groups are in a position to buy enough food items, though they fall within the bracket of the population that falls under the widest definition of poverty in the country (Judy Connors, *Mail & Guardian*, March 24-31, 2016:27). Hence the Oxfam Report quantifies the number of people suffering from food shortage, and daily going “to bed hungry”, at about 13 million in total. The Report also brings to the forefront the shocking state of hunger in urban townships in the context of “low income, rising costs, a lack of access to productive resources and climate change” as contributory factors persistent hunger and poverty. These socio-economic factors are compounded by the reality of the unrelenting 25% to 35% levels of unemployment, with the burden of hunger carried mostly by women, conditions made difficult by “rising prices of staple food such as maize, and the impact of the 200% increment of electricity prices “since 2010, forcing people to choose between food and fuel” (Mkhize 2014:13).

¹¹ Issues of food shortage cannot be easily explained by the arguments of political transformation we have witnessed since 1994. Hence the situational analysis of food insecurity in the country by the National Policy position on Food and Nutrition Security (2013:9) by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries presents a grim picture of those living with hunger. The issues raised cover a wide spectrum of aspects of food insecurity. It states that: “The Hunger Index developed from the National Food Consumption Survey of 2005 shows that at the national level over 50% of households reported that they experienced hunger; 28.2% of households were described as being at risk of hunger, and 20.2% appeared to be food secure. In rural areas 58% of households experienced hunger, compared to 46% in urban areas. At the provincial level, prevalence of households experiencing hunger was highest in the Eastern Cape (66.7%), Northern Cape (65.3%) and Limpopo (63.2%), with the Western Cape having the lowest prevalence (29.3%). Child hunger remains high,

The question of food insecurity as manifested in the empirical study we have conducted concurs with the conclusion that food shortage exists within the “context of structural poverty” that forms systems and net-works of vulnerability¹³. It is in the same line of thought our nation’s statistician-general Pali Lehohla (2015:3) regards poverty as an “industry that is man-made”, further alluding that the “burden of poverty” with implications for food insecurity demands “man-made solutions”. The patterns¹⁴ of systemic vulnerability manifesting in food shortage have dire

ranging from 9% in the Western Cape to 43% in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo” (viewed on 29 March 2016, at <http://www.nda.agric.za/docs/Foodsecurity/foodsecurity.htm>).

¹² The discussion document by the Food Security Working Group in the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs (1997:5) through the “*The Food Security Policy for South Africa*,” alluded to nine definitive factors of food insecurity affecting mostly rural and urban African population. The given factors shows that: almost 14 million South Africans are vulnerable to food insecurity, especially women, children and the elderly, one in four children under the age of six years (implying 1,5 million) are stunted due to chronic malnutrition, food insecurity is highly prevalent in rural areas, food insecurity affects mostly African population with increasing prevalence among the Coloured population, affected communities come up with creative ways and means of dealing with hunger, former homelands population lack the capacity to produce enough food whilst vulnerability of urban dwellers is worsened by low and unsustainable incomes, fast pace of change in the agricultural macro-economic environment has exacerbated issues of hunger, poor environmental crisis management has worsened issues of food shortage, and lastly that our countries challenges of food insecurity cannot be addressed in isolation of the regional context. Then five years later the Department of Agriculture (2002:1) in its attempts to provide solutions to hunger (viewed 29 March 2016 <http://blogs.sun.ac.za/fsi/food-security-challenges-in-south-africa/>) produced an integrated food security strategy for our country highlighting a list of five areas significant in arresting food security challenges, namely: inadequate safety nets, weak support networks and disaster management systems, inadequate and unstable household food production, lack of purchasing power and poor nutritional status for the affected communities.

¹³ See Peter Jacobs, Nonkululeko Ngcobo, Tim Hart and Mompoti Baipheti (2010:1-25) in their “*Developmental social policies for the poor in South Africa: Exploring options to enhance impacts?*” They show how issues of poverty and inequality link with food shortage.

¹⁴ The current issues surrounding the question of food insecurity both in our country as well as the broader Southern African Economic Development (SADEC) region is reaching crisis levels. The unfavourable weather conditions specifically the drought that is sweeping across the region, downwards spiral of economic activity coupled with the rise in energy tariffs for low income households has pushed food insecurity to crisis proportions. It is estimated that 14 million people will be hardest hit by food shortage especially the most vulnerable sectors of our society, namely women and children who are on the fringes on economic ladder. The Cape Town nutritionist research expert Mathew Xasana has made observation to the effect that the recently conducted household survey has showed that more than 13.8 million South Africans go to bed hungry every day. This dire situation is acknowledged by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its contention that food insecurity has become “a global health crisis”. In its 2015 November report, the WHO linked our countries food insecurity conditions to endemic poverty levels, persistent unemployment, rising food and energy prices in the context of rising interests rates.

Hence the report registers the concern that the given “conditions have placed severe pressure on ordinary South Africans already struggling to meet their basic households needs”. It is in this broader analysis that WHO reminds us that “food insecurity exists when food is not easily accessible and households have difficulty securing adequate food, and that is the case found in households across the country”. Another dimension of food insecurity is advanced by Food Bank SA. The managing director of the organization issues a report to the effect that the “weakening of the rand, the drought and rising food, fuel and electricity prices were hitting the most vulnerable hard and resulting in food insecurity”. Similar warnings were echoed by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation predicting that South Africa will struggle to adequately meet the country’s food needs with dire consequences for the vulnerable. See also Ntando Makhubu’s article on “*Food security crisis deepening among the poor in SA*”, in *The Star*, March 4, 2016, page 5.

consequences for our country and our region as whole. Kate Bird (2007:v) takes the argument further by reflecting on “social construction” and “systemic inequalities” as definitive features of the question of the intergenerational transmission of poverty in urban households.¹⁵

2.1.1 PRESUPPOSITIONAL FRAMING OF THE PATTERNS OF SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITY

In this Chapter we seek to locate our readings of the frameworks or the patterns of systemic vulnerability through the interpretive critique provided by the work of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission¹⁶. This Chapter will also reflect on a

¹⁵ In this regard the paper by Kate Bird (2007: v) on: “*The intergenerational transmission of poverty: An overview*”, (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/page/igt>) though focusing on issues of poverty in the US context, nonetheless it carries relevance to our empirical study in the townships. Bird’s analysis enables us to appreciate the social and economic dynamics that serve as catalysts for the construction of systemic patterns of vulnerability. The depth of Bird’s analysis show how the generational curse of poverty is perpetuated. She identifies some factors (i.e. absence of good parenting, exposure to violence, child-headed households, child labour, teenage pregnancy, orphanhood and poor education) within households that become enablers of poverty generationally. There are also five factors outside households that perpetuates vulnerability, such as conflict, cultural and psychosocial factors, class, religion and ethnicity issues.

¹⁶ The South African experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that completed its deliberations in 1998 give a fascinating take in the processes of “reading” our country’s social situation. The Commission created a platform that made it possible for the victims and perpetrators of gross human rights violations to register their experiences. The Commission’s conceptual framework propounded four notions of truth seeking approach, namely: “factual or forensic truth”, “personal and narrative truth”, “social truth” and lastly “healing and restorative truth” (Dioxtader *et al.* 2007:93). The narrative of vulnerability “shaped” by township life ties very well with the formative concepts and principles advanced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its notion of “personal or narrative truth” as part of a vital stage in finding the truth about our past. Thus in the light of possibly different narratives about food shortage, the reader needs to discover his/her voice about the veracity of personal narrative of vulnerability and how it is experienced and articulated by the township residents. The presentation and interpretation of the narratives of vulnerability from the TRC’s vantage point give a fascinating view. The school of the TRC simply creates a platform and safe space for locating deeply personal subjective experiences of suffering. Furthermore the TRC’s angle enables us to locate issues of food shortage in the broader picture of collective suffering and vulnerability which the whole nation had to go through during the seating of the Commission. Sachs (2009:17) in practicing judicial readings of justice, referred to the “logic of discovery”. He perceives it, as a state of coming to terms with what one would regard as being truthful to self. Such a discovery when duly integrated in our discussion will empower an individual with an appreciation of the ability to “discover” what it really means to experience the vulnerability of food shortage. The TRC on the other hand took a step further by talking about another aspect of “social” or “dialogue truth”. This is a type of truth that is not technical in nature. It is the truth that seeks to make sense of complexity of “motives” and “perspectives” that informed whatever political decision or actions committed or aborted, in the struggles for or against apartheid. The evolution ecologist, Diamonds (2011:11) has made it clear in his fifth conceptual framework against environmental degradation. He concludes that the manner and extent of seriousness to which any society responds to challenges determines possibilities of extinction or of some reserves for survival. It is our contention that the situational demands of vulnerability would benefit from the critique of these positions of truths in response to food shortage and its structural systems of vulnerability. The situation of vulnerability demands that the TRC’s notions of truth as an interpretive framework must be applied in addressing the challenges of food shortage.

diversity of critical tools of analysis, with the aim of engaging the phenomenon of social vulnerability in South Africa from a broader critical discourse perspective. Therefore we will attempt to apply our analysis and interpretation of systemic vulnerability primarily in the context of our Constitution and its “human rights culture” that upholds an “open, clean, and transparent governance” (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998, Recommendations/Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 21*). It is in that regard that our reading and analysis of food shortage will be subjected to “different levels of scrutiny” (Chaskalson 1995:69) with “interactive layers” (Crossan 1991:6), of “multidimensional and interconnected” perspectives, (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1998, Consequences of gross violation of human rights, Extract 4, para, 21*).

We are encouraged by Chaskalson (1995:67) in that our human rights, social and exegetical readings of the systems of vulnerability will reflect the “two-stage approach” that seeks to advance an analysis and interpretive exercise that will provide the objective and subjective perspectives on the reality of systemic vulnerability. The former aspect focusing much on broader structural systems of vulnerability embedded in socio-political constructs. The latter engages the lived experiences as the “material content” (Barth 1956:137) of vulnerability of affected individuals, families and communities.

We will therefore apply our reading and exegetical analysis of systemic vulnerability with the intent of providing a “broader” approach both in locating and engaging systemic vulnerability. We are conscious of the fact that a “narrow”,¹⁷ subjective

¹⁷ The “narrow” interpretive approach of systemic vulnerability is well argued by Chaskalson concurring with Justice A. J. Kentridge, with reference to the Canadian case of *R V Big M Drug Mart Ltd*. Chaskalson cites Kentridge’s judgment to bring to the fore the perspective that the requirements of justice are meaningful when articulated within the parameters of the “fundamental rights enshrined” in the Bill of Rights, within the spirit of human rights culture embodied in the Constitution (Chaskalson 1995:5). Therefore in aligning the critic of systemic vulnerability with the narrow paradigm of social justice for those facing hunger. We advance the argument that a deliberate push and demand for justice and dignity for the vulnerable must not be perceived as a “static imaginary propositions” (van Aarde 1995: ii) or “as a static concept” (Chaskalson 1995:28) that does not carry any relevance in post-apartheid demands for justice. We are essentially engaging in a critical exercise that seeks to locate the inherent rights of the poor within the premise of justice “in the light of the interests it was meant to protect”. In this regard we are concerned about the “interests” of the hungry that are violated by the systemic patterns of vulnerability (Chaskalson 1995:5). In the same vein we need to appreciate the use of biblical exegetical critic of the systems of vulnerability as taking side of the interest of the poor and the hungry. Our appropriation of biblical critical exegesis against systemic vulnerability asserts that such tools of analysis must not be handled as “static imaginary propositions” as argued by

human rights, and exegetical reading of vulnerability serves to acknowledge those living with hunger and “have been subjected to systemic disadvantage and discrimination” as attested by Justice Ngcobo’s judgement in the Hoffman Case before the Constitutional Court in 2000 (Sachs 2009:195). Nonetheless a “broader” objective interpretive approach we are applying aim at discussing food shortage within the framework of “reasonable and necessary” human rights culture that is informed by a “principled position” affirming individual’s human right such as the right

Andries G. van Aarde (Van Eck 1995: ii) when reflecting on Van Eck’s work, *“Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark’s story of Jesus: A narratological and social scientific reading”*. We assert that biblical criticism has direct relevance in interpretive analysis of systemic vulnerability. Thus we endorse a biblical criticism that confronts the issues of the poor. It is an undertaking we pursue impelled by the conviction that systemic vulnerability has created “exceptional circumstances and it is in the interest of justice” and “the interest of the nation” that such systems must be analysed and transformed (Mogoeng 2016:15). Therefore we need to engage the point of entry into the question of vulnerability advanced by Gerald West. His approach essentially (West 1991:11) proposes a trilogy of perspectives engaging the written Word. He suggests that “reading behind the text” for social analysis carries biblical analysis. On the other hand textual analysis can be reached by reading the very “text” as a literary entity in its own right. Lastly he proposes that one can also engage the Scriptures by “reading in front of the text” with the primary purpose of attaining “new” potential options and results for application and moral conduct. In applying the methodology of West in addressing the question of hunger. The reader is persuaded that West is asserting that whatever option of reading one chooses, it will place the reader in a position of advantage that will shape and in turn be influenced by the premise of vulnerability. The obvious challenge therefore is to attempt to apply West’s proposed readings in addressing the socio-economic circumstances that could be operating “behind” the systems of vulnerability. Therefore in our “reading behind” vulnerability, West (1991:32) advises us to be conscious of the “interpretive interests” that will be served by such reading(s).

In similar perspective we can appropriate the suggestions of Karl Barth (1956:359), in his challenge for the imperatives “of going back a step behind the knowledge” appropriated in salvation history, and in this regard, social injustice definitive of systemic vulnerability. We are impelled by Barth’s convictions of stepping “behind” the systems and the “disruption” of social relations mediated by food insecurity in urban townships. The reader is moved by the notion of the “stepping behind” that Barth (1956:358) insists it ought to be “the radically new determination of the human situation” under systemic vulnerability. Moreover the reader must be aware of the moral and political aspects of the “interests” located in those readings. West contends that we do not “do” readings from the platforms that are morally and political neutral. All readings respond to a measure of accountability placed upon them. All our readings are doing “bidding” for specific interests. A further unpacking of West’s (1991:132) mode of readings demands of the reader of vulnerability to be sensitive about his/her “intentions” in seeking redress regarding vulnerable households. Though West’s arguments are strictly raised within the context of handling the text of biblical Scriptures. He challenges the reader to move from the stage of the interrogation of one’s intentions, until one reaches a point of appreciating the “narrative shape of a text”. We need to deliberately appropriate the narrative shape of food shortage and understand its impact on affected families. In the case of our study, West’s analytical practice is bound to stretch the reader to come to terms with the shape of vulnerability narrated by food shortage. Fiorenza (1988:14) argues that we must open ourselves to the “irritation” of the text that we are interpreting. The “irritation” of the text serves to makes us uncomfortable. It stands as a critique of our presuppositions as well as personal and collective conduct. Therefore if we duly open ourselves to the “irritation” of vulnerability of food shortage, our deeply-held “assumptions” and hardened views about the plight of those living with food shortage would be challenged, and hopefully changed for the betterment of the poor. This implies a deliberate actualisation of a human rights culture against hunger. We must promote a human rights agenda that seeks to serve as an integrative reality of our livelihood. This human rights culture must talk about the transcendence of confining realities of the past, reflected in the tolerance of hunger, as we “become more conscious of who we are, what we are and where we are” (Keteyi 1991:25) in the struggle against food insecurity.

to equal citizenship, equality before the law, right to life and the dignity of those exposed to hunger (Chaskalson 1995:68-69).

The question of human dignity is also given prominence in the work of Soyinka in which he locates issues of indignity within the social constructs of political power. However in our context, this also includes economic power constructs of oppression and exploitation. We could agree with Wole Soyinka (2004:92) in his lectures *“The quest for dignity”*¹⁸, whereby he asserts that human dignity finds its ultimate expression “within human relationships”. It is therefore imperative to appreciate how food shortage damages the ability to relate on the part of those facing hunger on a daily basis. Hence Soyinka (2004:92) insists that “the human attribute such as dignity, is most meaningfully sought, not within the self as some mystic endowment, but as a product of social interaction”. Therefore the social dynamics of hunger we are dealing with give credence to the argument that as a country, in our social interactions, we have developed justifications and complex levels of tolerance for the indignity of hunger.

The broader interpretive approach promotes a principled analysis of the issues of vulnerability “in an open and democratic society based on freedom and equality”. We advance a reading that is “both reasonable and necessary and it must not negate the essential content” of the demands for justice and social redress for the hungry. The “principle positioned” that promotes the interests of the vulnerable emanating from our reading and analysis is also contemplated in the critical exegetical perspectives constructed by different biblical and theological positions (Chaskalson 1995:68-69). We share the opinion that our “two-stage” analytical approach “fit into the pattern” (Chaskalson 1995:74) of the calls for social justice in a variety of fields. However “it is not without relevance to the enquiry we are called upon to undertake” in our quest to advance the interests of the vulnerable (Chaskalson 1995:85).

We are convinced of the argument by Chaskalson (1995:43) that the violation of the dignity of the vulnerable constitutes a deliberate process of treating them as less significant. In essence the affected individuals and communities have been gradually

¹⁸ See the lectures of Wole Soyinka compiled in his work, *‘Climate of Fear’*, (2004, Profile Books, Hatton Garden, London) presented as part of ‘The Reith Lectures 2004’.

“stripped” of their sense of worth, a process that has culminated in total disregard of their interests and legitimate demands as equal citizens. We hold the notion that the patterns of systemic vulnerability fundamentally constitute gross violation of the constitutional rights of the poor in the issues of mis-governance that treats “members of the human race as nonhumans, as objects to be toyed with and discarded”. In this regard systemic vulnerability ultimately centers on the question of objectifying sectors of the populace that have no voice and representation in government (Chaskalson 1995:43).

2.2 “TRANSITIONAL ANOMALIES” AS PATTERNS OF SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITY

The reality of food shortage as reflected in the empirical study¹⁹ we have conducted in the given townships must be located within the broader context of South Africa as a society in transition from apartheid to democratic rule. In our attempts to understand, engage and interpret the frameworks or the patterns of systemic vulnerability as reflected in the current conditions of food insecurity²⁰ across the country with particular emphasis in urban townships. We need to appreciate the

¹⁹ See the statistical constructs of our study in Chapter 4, and the Appendix B for overall results of the empirical study. Information was ascertained through a questionnaire covering quantitative and qualitative instruments analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

²⁰ The current issues surrounding the question of food insecurity both in our country as well as the broader Southern African Economic Development (SADEC) region is reaching crisis levels. The unfavourable weather conditions, specifically the drought that is sweeping across the region, downwards spiral of economic activity coupled with the rise in energy tariffs for low income households has pushed food insecurity to crisis proportions. It is estimated that 14 million people will be hardest hit by food shortage especially the most vulnerable sectors of our society, namely women and children who are on the fringes on economic ladder. The Cape Town nutritionist research expert, Mathew Xasana has made observation to the effect that the recently conducted household survey has showed that more than 13.8 million South Africans go to bed hungry every day. This dire situation is acknowledged by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its contention that food insecurity has become “a global health crisis”. In its 2015 November report, the WHO linked our countries food insecurity conditions to endemic poverty levels, persistent unemployment, rising food and energy prices in the context of rising interests rates. Hence the report registers the concern that the given “conditions have placed severe pressure on ordinary South Africans already struggling to meet their basic households needs”. It is in this broader analysis that the World Health Organization (WHO) reminds us that “food insecurity exists when food is not easily accessible and households have difficulty securing adequate food, and that is the case found in households across the country”. Another dimension of food insecurity is advanced by Food Bank SA. The managing director of the organization issues a report to the effect that the “weakening of the rand, the drought and rising food, fuel and electricity prices were hitting the most vulnerable hard and resulting in food insecurity”. Similar warnings were echoed by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation predicting that South Africa will struggle to adequately meet the country’s food needs with dire consequences for the vulnerable. See also Ntando Makhubu’s article on “*Food security crisis deepening among the poor in SA*”, *The Star*, March 4, 2016:5).

trajectory of social transformation and its competing claims and interests that have created a distinct class of the socially vulnerable.

Charles Villa-Vicencio would have us reflect the issues and events that have and continues to play a role in shaping and informing the present reality of food shortage in urban townships “within the contextual contradictions and ambiguities of transitional²¹ societies”. Villa- Vicencio hold the opinion that transitional contradictions have to do with deliberate steps of letting go of tendencies tolerant of domination with its accompanying top-down practice of the culture of governance (Doxtader *et al.* 2003:31).

The Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has assisted the country in seeking to address the issues of our past conflicts within a specific historical context²² and a frame of reference beginning with the Sharpeville massacre in 1960,

²¹ Charles Villa Vicencio (Doxtader *et al* 2003:31), discusses the contending issues characteristic of societies in transition in his paper on “*Restorative Justice: Ambiguities and Limitations of a theory*”, in which he asserts that transitional societies require “a set of ideals” that will serve as conduits to open up possibilities of reconciliation for divided communities. Vicencio (2003:47) proposes that the given transitional ideals are part of “transitional justice” embodied in our “transitional constitution” (Chaskalson 1995:4). The “transitional justice” he espouses will enable divided societies to define the duality of the terms and conditions for the “restoration of relationships”, and “the adjustment of material imbalances”, thus leading to healing of memories. Further addressing the “anomalies of the transition” (Chaskalson 1995:20) in that ours is a society characterised by contradictions. In Vicencio’s (2003:35) perceptions, we are a society driven by “contradictory forces” of affluence and destitution which mediates social injustice. In that regard Vicencio (2003:47) challenges us to open our new social arrangements to the demands of justice. He suggests that South Africa needs to embraces four aspects of justice as catalyst for meaningful transformation. He firstly calls for “restorative justice”, and “rehabilitative justice”. The former pointing to the affirmation of the dignity of the poor, whereas the latter promoting processes that infuse purposive demeanour of the newly liberated nation. Furthermore he brings to our attention the requirements for “deterrent justice” as a counter measure against “retributive justice.” Vicencio holds the view that in our attempts to transcend the past, we need to promote a culture of accountability of individuals, communities and social institutions in order to avoid the temptations of resorting to past conflicts and prejudices. We contend that the transformative dynamics of justice demand from the beneficiaries of apartheid to open themselves, and their benefits of the past to the scrutiny of introspective justice for them to own up to the past injustices, and advance genuine remedial options for the benefits of the poor majority.

²² See also (Terreblanche 2002:14) in his perspective on the history of inequality in South Africa. Terreblanche does not provide a conclusive argument regarding the historical aspect of domination history. His contribution seeks to locate the issues of discrimination and its consequences within the sphere of economics. Terreblanche assists the reader in appreciating the economic factors that have influenced the economic path our country embarked upon since the arrival of white settlers in the Cape in 1652. He presents to us six economic stages that have become a defining feature of our economic trajectory of discrimination and domination. The suggested stages of our historical timeline highlights the evolution of economic discrimination of black Africans in the economy up to the point that such practices became formidable constructs of “systemic exploitation to systemic exclusion” of Africans. In this synopsis of exploitation and exclusion, Terreblanche details how the colonial power structures made it possible that “unequal distribution of income, opportunities and property” (Terreblanche 2002:xv) to fundamentally shaped the prevailing economic position in our country.

up to the unbanning of the liberation movements and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990. In our current work we have detail further aspects and conditions (in the two two decades of democracy) that have become a catalyst for systemic vulnerability to take root both in government and the communities affected by hunger. We hold the view that the Report of the TRC gives a broad overview²³ of

Providing further analysis of the systems of marginalization, Charles van Onselen (1996:24) points to the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly and the gold fields in the Transvaal as the basis of our economic apartheid. During the given periods structural systemic vulnerability of the workers became a norm. It was also the period that brought to the fore variant shades of vulnerability experienced by different races and class groups. Van Onselen gives much deserved space to the vulnerability visited upon the landless African sharecroppers who were subjected to casual labour in farms. Land dispossession and imposed migrancy system by colonialist demanding cheap labour, created another class of African farm tenants. This group of Africans became labour tenants on white farms by paying rent to pursue farming. Van Onselen also does justice to the question of systemic structural vulnerability by relating the emergence of “poor whites” after the First World War who did not have the resources to purchase land but were hired by rich “absent” landowners to oversee their properties. In this regard the nature of systemic and structural vulnerability established itself across racial lines, with severe impacts on the landless Africans. This situation is attested by Colin Bundy (Scire *et al.* 1992:36) in noting “how structural inequality took different forms in different periods”. This is also a period that details how deliberate structural power arrangements placed Africans into a lower class, below the poor whites. The “vulnerable Boer tenants” without financial muscle to do productive farming had to forge relations with their African counterparts who survived as sharecroppers. The African farmers were allowed by “absent” landowners “who farmed kaffirs” for rent to use their land for farming. These African farmers had no option but to forge a living as landless farmers in the country of their birth. The chronology of vulnerability was well depicted following the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. The British dumped mostly Afrikaans women and their children in concentration camps. This act of genocide resulted in to the death of many Africans who were also forced to various concentration camps established by the British (Van Onselen 1996:29).

²³ It would not be the first attempt on the part of the South African society to wrestle with the social readings that call for the nuances of change. This is attested by the former Executive Secretary of the Human Rights Violations Committee, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Dr Ruben Richards. Richards (1996:19-24) in his unpacking of our country’s process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reached a conclusion that as a people we had a myriad of contexts that informed our response for and against the Commission. He gave attestations commencing with the contexts of the transitional era. This was soon followed by the context of miraculous political re-alignment in 1994. The post 1994 era “positioned” the TRC as a synthesis between the dichotomous realities of black and white populace experiences of apartheid and its outcomes, as encountered by respective communities. Nonetheless, Richards concludes his reading of the emerging new South Africa through the dominance of Christian worldview. It is important to note how various contexts that form part of our history have provided settings and frameworks with specificity of meanings for the reality of socio-economic vulnerability. In the same light Villa-Vicencio (1988:vii) embraces a rereading of the South African experience of racial conflict through the prisms of the theology of Karl Barth. The reading of Barth provides a synergistic appraisal of the contextual angels (Richards) of our history with resolute implications for issues of vulnerability. Richards (1996:19) placed much emphasis on the progressive realisation for social transformation in our country on the basis of contextualised individual experiences of the oppression. The attempts of Villa-Vicencio (1988:vii) served as a prelude in relation to Richards’ point of entry in social analysis exercise. Villa-Vicencio’s elaborative efforts of reclaiming and actualising the tenants of the theological practice of Karl Barth as resources of liberation tie very well with suggestions of Boff for social analysis. It therefore becomes logical to realign and “appropriate” Barth’s resources of liberative reading on God’s grace for the benefit of the vulnerable in affected communities. A deliberate application of Barth’s socio-critical reading of vulnerability will duly enhance our attempts of addressing vulnerability in its totality. In this instance, some level of “critical distance” as Boff (1987:19) would demand, is a necessity. Such a distance will negotiate the space that would enable the reader to forward informed analysis rather than blind critical attack of the systems of disempowerment. Edwards (1981:12) would have us engaging in Barth’s reading of the

the frameworks or the patterns of systemic vulnerability and the informed perspectives as to the causes and contextual factors that gave birth to the reality of vulnerability in given communities. The TRC Report speaks to us about how the frameworks or the patterns of systemic vulnerability came into being²⁴. We must appreciate that the TRC timeframes will limit our understanding of how the broader historical factors such as colonialism and the formation of the Union of South Africa²⁵ in 1910 contributed in the construction of the systems of vulnerability²⁶. The TRC

conditions of the marginalised to make an effort not to lose our “way”. Most importantly, these include our unique voice and perspective on how we relate the experiences and perspectives of vulnerability. However, we are conscious of the fact that “we do not yet have the advantage of distance”, given the two decades of democratic order. The criticality of our situated-ness as Boff suggested compels us to submit critical analysis and possible solutions (Carson *et al.* 1986:5) as a result of our closeness to experiences of poverty. It could further be argued that the reading of Karl Barth by another South African, Allan Boesak, obviously brings bearing to the question of communities living with vulnerability. Boesak’s reading (1988: X) of Barth’s social critique firstly acknowledges that Barth has been blasphemously misused and misrepresented by systems of oppression for their own benefit and enrichment. In the same breath this denies the poor the opportunity to read and allow Barth to speak truth to their situations. Boesak holds the view that the tendencies of oppression must be confronted with a liberative paradigm of grace accentuated by Barth’s critique. In the same argument, Boesak suggests that the attempts of reading Barth in the South African context ought to be perceived as a conscious practice of the liberation tradition for the poor and the oppressed. Therefore “the reading of reality” (Boff 1987:21) of vulnerability from the wells of Barth’s theology of grace would bring the potential of God’s grace to reorient the realities of food shortage. This does not imply a top-down imposition of proposed solutions, but rather a theological practice (Boff 1987:31), baptising the actual experiences of hunger into God’s grace. The same argument finds its place and voice in Itumeleng Mosala’s (Mosala *et al.* 1986:176) notion of the given experiences of the oppressed as “a material force”. Mosala holds the view that conditions of suffering must be used as a vehicle of liberating the oppressed. Therefore the question raised by vulnerability emerging from food shortage, is whether such realities can be appropriated by the affected communities as their very own “material force” to bring about the change and the quality of life they deserve.

²⁴ In the same line of argument Frederic van Zyl Slabbert (Doxtader *et al.* 2003:325) reflects on whether the whole TRC process had some measure of validity and credibility. His point of concern is that despite the shortcomings of the entire process. However it has made it possible for a greater section of our populace to hold a certain degree of awareness and pointers as to “where we come from and the direction in which we must move”. In that regard the patterns of systemic vulnerability brings to our consciousness some perspectives regarding “the direction” we need to embark upon if we intent to eradicate the root causes of poverty and social marginalization of township communities.

²⁵ See Bernard Makhoswezwe Magubane (2000: viii). In the foreword of the collected essays in this body of work. In this body of work we hear Ntongela Masilela describing the impact of colonialism and the white rule over Africans in 1910 as “disenfranchisement of the Africans by Europeans (British and Afrikaners)” that has fundamentally altered race relations in our country in a manner that was unprecedented. The damage of oppression and its race based philosophy of apartheid of 1948 began a process of confining the economic marginalization and social dislocation of the Africans to specific social spaces with specified intended outcomes.

²⁶ See how Magubane’s (2000:3-7) unpacks the destructive nature of the underlining’s of colonialism and apartheid. The construction of the systemic patterns of vulnerability by colonialism and apartheid has been perpetuated, maintained and adapted into post-apartheid political order by “established interests”. The given interests of systems of vulnerability are determined to prevent any attempt of undoing their vested gains and influence. The “established interests” of systemic vulnerability are advancing forward in the same marching formation of colonialism representing “productive system of exploitation” that are operational under the watch of democratic government. In as much as the systems of colonialism and apartheid had to have a theoretical framework, systemic vulnerability has its own apologists “and an ideological superstructure built to maintain and justify it”. The “established interests” benefiting from economic marginalization of the Africans and total control of resources of the

also brings to our attention the dual perspectives of the reality of vulnerability depending on the voices that narrates such experiences, either from the point of view of the victim or rather the perpetrator of gross human rights violations. In this sense we ascertain the fact that systems of vulnerability²⁷ have both the experiential and perceptual dimensions²⁸.

2.3 THE SYSTEMIC PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

The question of economic injustice is the fundamental aspect that is definitive of systems of vulnerability that have a direct and /or indirect impact in the lives of all South Africans. The current systems of vulnerability that have taken root in urban townships are a reflection of how our economy was and continues to be structured on the templates of “economic determinism in regard to inequalities of wealth and income” (Piketty 2014:20). Recently with the introduction of the Black Economic Empowerment by the democratic dispensation, another class of black and mostly African beneficiaries was created and grafted into the economy that was meant for whites only. It is important for us to trace the patterns of systemic vulnerability to the formative stages of the early European commerce in South Africa, expressive of “a pattern of relationships” of “interdependence to outright warfare” (Willan 1984:1) that continues to manifest in the contending struggles for social justice against vested interests and systems of patronage in our fluid democratic space.

It is common knowledge that the arrival of white settlers in the southern tip of the African Continent brought a major shift in race relations. Thus the economic history of our country shows a gradual and a complex formation of an economy that was

country justify their exploitative enterprises as beneficial to the development of our economy without full participation of the African majority in the economy. Our contention is that the apologist and beneficiaries of the systems of vulnerability are primarily “concerned with drawing the balance sheets of the benefits of colonial rule” and promises of investments without dealing with how the unequal terms and conditions of such economic arrangements benefits investors. In the same vein we can argue that since colonialism and imperialism were never intended to advance “philanthropic” programs. The institutions, net-works and individuals who benefits from the exploitation of our resources are not different in intent than their predecessors who thrived for more than three hundred years of the exploitation of our resources by “established interests”.

²⁷ Sampie Terreblanche (2002:66) submits a critique of the stance of ‘innocence’ by the corporate sector (in its business submission in the TRC) in its crimes of apartheid. He elaborates the complexity of the systems of vulnerability by also reflecting on the role of capital in the creation of “discriminatory labour pattern” and the “system of racial capitalism” that still defines present socio-economic realities of South Africa.

deeply rooted in the land yet its beneficiaries do not hold any allegiance to the country. Ralph Austen (1987:157) in his work *“African economic history”* details the evolution of our economy from the role played by the Portuguese explorers in the late fifteenth century up to the discovery of the diamonds and gold in the late nineteenth century. The phase after the Portuguese explorers was followed by the Dutch in 1652 who established the Cape of Good Hope as a Colony. Strange enough even after the advent of democratic change in our country, there are still provinces that were named and declared by the democratic order as colonies. Subsequently the Dutch were replaced by the British rule that later extended its domination to the east coast of Natal and to the interior of the Boer Republics in Orange Free State and Transvaal.

Austen suggests that during the early settlement period of the Europeans in South Africa. The settlers did not push for any significant change in the manner the agrarian economy was organized. Instead the settlers made efforts to see to the expansion of the “livestock economies” with the intention of maximum participation. During the said period the economic interaction that was effected was beneficial to the indigenous people, mostly the KhoiKhoi who were providing the Colony administration with cattle supplies. Though there were episodes of competitiveness that resulted in conflicts due to the refusal of the KhoiKhoi to settle for lower prices for their livestock (Austen 1987:157).

The only persistent change that could not be thwarted by both the Dutch and the British governments was the aggressive (and later violent) invasion of the frontier by the European settlers, “always at the expense of indigenous Africans”. It is important to appreciate that the patterns of systemic vulnerability were being entrenched in that the Africans were at the receiving end of the encroachment of their lands. However the radical change that affected the indigenous people was “the expanding control by Europeans over all resources on the subcontinent” (Austen 1987:157) in the late nineteenth century “towards greater inequality” (Piketty 2014:22).

²⁸ Yasmin Sooka (Doxtader *et al* 2003:308) engages the question of relating experiences of our past conflict as attaining a category of being a “shared” reality given the fact that TRC process became a vehicle that acknowledged “the wrongdoing done to vast majority of our people”.

The discovery of the minerals in the period of 1865 to 1900 transformed South Africa “from a marginal outpost of European commerce and agriculture to the world’s leading supplier of diamonds and gold”. In that regard South Africa became the center of wealth and a destination of choice for European investors who saw profitable returns in their investment in the exploding mining industry. However for the indigenous populace the new financial enterprises represented a form of developments at their “expense” again, to the effect that by late 1950’s black work force was rendered a low wage transaction “under the control of the whites” (Austen 1987:175). Their role was to avail their labour. Initial participation of the Africans in the mining was to be crushed by law and violence²⁹ by the British (Austen 1987:162). The British were brutal in the manner they grabbed mineral resources under the ruler-ship of Boer and traditional African authorities.

2.3.1 The vulnerability of cheap migrant labour system

The patterns of systemic vulnerability are most visible in the creation and maintenance of black migrancy in the formative stages of industrialization³⁰ of the South African economy. The economic model of the migrant labour system³¹ with its

²⁹ See Shula Marks, Richard Rathbone (eds., 1982:45). The manner in which British Imperialism was establish and how it took control of the mining industry in South Africa tells the tale of brutal aggression and greed under the guise of the rule of law. The British mind-set dictated that the mining industry was to be run by “brute force”. The migrant workers were simply the means of extraction of the raw minerals of which they had no share or claim. The workers were organised on racial lines and were treated as mere subordinates by force of capital. Furthermore Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds., 1987:289), elaborate on the aggression of the British. They highlight the fact that the racialization of work environment along race and ethnicity within accommodation compounds set in motion “ethnic patterns of migration from specific rural districts” to preferred areas of employment determined by the demands of labour. The introduction of the racialization and ethnic categorizing of the workforce added another dimension of systemic vulnerability. This construct of convenience will later be used by the employers to divide the workforce along racial lines and “ethnic networks” with the intentions of diluting worker demands for better wages and conducive working conditions.

³⁰ See William H. Worger (1987:70). The discovery of diamonds deposits in Kimberly in 1870 radically changed the position of African men in particular across Southern Africa. The beginning of the mining operations in Kimberly created “a huge new market for the sale of unskilled labor” with a better promise of high earnings compared to the salaries that African men were receiving in the farms at the Cape Colony and Boer Republics. The mining industry in its infancy demanded intensive man power from thousands of African workforce in the first phase of prospective diggings. It is evident that in the early phases of the development of the mining industry black participation was voluntary and driven by the possibility of improved quality of lives for the men and their respective traditional kingdoms that were set to benefiting from tax duties of men returning from the mines.

³¹ See Martin Meredith (2014:341-343). Meredith’s accounts of the impact brought by the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly tells the tale of risks and tragedy that the first diggers had to endure. The new arrivals from the entire subcontinent were greeted by “the stench and squalor of the settlements”. The inhuman conditions were compromised by “open trenches” that served as ablution facilities within the very tent settlements of the diggers. The working conditions at the Big Hole of Kimberly were characterised by danger due to congested pathways in the pits with diggers “endlessly filling buckets and sacks with broken ground” and on a daily basis some diggers were fatally wounded by falling into

“multiple dimensions of inequality” (Piketty 2014:243) has left untold damage in black family life and communities, affecting both the rural and urban context of its victims. It is in the same note that the TRC Report register the degrading effects of “the migrant labour system” and, “inferior wages” embedded in the systems. The Report acknowledges that black migrancy created “single sex” hostel systems that further inculcated the violation of the dignity of black workers (*TRC Report 1998:3, Recommendations, Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 38, 44*). We also need to appreciate that the migrant labour systems emerged from the conflicts of land dispossession of diamond rich areas sanctioned by British Imperialism³² against Boer Republics.

In its final recommendations with regard to the state of the living conditions within the hostels the Commission noted that the reality of the single sex hostels will not be wished away in the transition period. However it suggested a governmental intervention process that will “undertake an audit of all hostels in the country to establish the state of buildings, the number of persons being accommodated and the nature of facilities being offered; and further make recommendations with regard to improving hostel facilities and investigating their long-term desirability” (*TRC Report 1998:3, Recommendations, Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 44*).

newly dug pits around and below them. Marks and Rathbone (1982) attest to the fact that the industrial revolution ushered by the mining industry brought about social, cultural and economic changes that were complex in nature and actualization. These changes facilitated the domination by the British of traditional kingdoms and Boer Republics and in the process intensified the racial classification and stratification of both rural and later urban African communities. The new conditions in African settings meant that the rural populace were serving as proletariat to the dominant masters whilst confined to the “locations” or “reserves”. Nonetheless their livelihood was structured in such a way that they were not in a position to be free from the wage employment obligation, be it in farms or urban settings (Marks et al 1982:9).

³² See Martin Meredith (2007:8). Meredith presents to us the landscape of the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly, a territory outside the control of the British Cape Colony. This was “the world’s richest deposits of diamonds” and Imperial logic dictated that British had to usurp by brute force the territory that fell within the borders of the Orange Free State. The patterns of systemic vulnerability brought into being by the British were first experienced by the Afrikaners under British attack. The British aggression against Boer Republics culminated into two year war devastation, eventually leading to the British’s “scorched-earth tactics”. This British version of ethnic cleansing against the Afrikaners included the destruction of hundreds of farmsteads, razing villages to the ground and slaughtering livestock on a massive scale. Afrikaner women and children, their African house maids and children were rounded up and placed at concentration camps. The living conditions at those camps were horrendous, resulting to 26 000 deaths of most Afrikaner woman, youth under the age of sixteen due to diseases and malnutrition, and an estimated 20 000 African deaths. It is this British chapter of systemic disintegration of communities and nations that has set into place a template of gross human rights violation that is manifesting in systemic vulnerability we are witnessing in our townships (Meredith 2007:8).

The Report classifies and identifies the hostels system as part of the legacies of apartheid. Nonetheless in the view of our empirical study we can assert that both the systems of black migrancy³³ and single sex hostels are the cruel representation and symbols of colonialism and economic disempowerment³⁴ of black people in the land of their birth. The grip of poverty and systemic vulnerability has been realized through cheap labour migrancy and squalor living conditions in the hostels by the thousands of black men who were separated from their families.

It could be argued that the damage that was inflicted on black families by absent male figures has left generational dis-functionality that has been ignored by white capital that benefited from such structural arrangements.

2.3.2 Systemic patterns of exploitative co-optive economic model

The systemic patterns of vulnerability have left footprints in the economic arrangements and its consequences in social relations in our country. The final recommendation of the TRC acknowledges that “the huge and widening gap³⁵ between the rich and the poor is a disturbing legacy of the past, which has not been reduced by the democratic process. It is morally reprehensible, politically dangerous and economically unsound to allow this to continue” (*TRC Report 1998:3, Recommendations, Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 38*).

³³ The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly and goldfields in the Transvaal resulted in the resurgence of the class of white independent diggers. These diggers were on the frontlines of digging promising mining sites on behalf of few white elites and established powerful mining houses. The growing demands for unskilled labour in the mines resulted in the imposition of taxes to force Africans to be migrant workers at the mines, further diminishing their status below that of the white working class (Van Onselen 1996:36).

³⁴ See Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds., 1980:292). The writers contend that the migrant labour system relegated the African communities to be the “exporters of labour” largely to the mining industry and on a moderate scale to farming. The economic disempowerment that came along with this arrangement of the economy is that the Africans were forced to become “dependent on goods and cash” from the capitalist. This state of affairs created a status quo that ensured the rapid rise of the domineering “capitalist mode of production and a guaranteed underdevelopment of the rural areas that were suppliers of labour”.

³⁵ The question of the widening social and economic gaps refers to a framework of discrimination that is self-perpetuating in South Africa today. In that regard, Cuthbertson and Jeeves (2008:6) allude to the fact that the current policies of the Affirmative Action have compounded the problem of inequality. The implementation of the Affirmative Action that was intended to co-opt black people into white capital agenda has resulted in the gross expansion of the economic class division in the country. This process of incorporating blacks into apartheid economic systems has further entrenched the “economic wealth and power” into the domain of whites and in particular into the “hands of white men”. Cuthbertson and Jeeves (2007:vii) suggests that affirmative imperatives of the democratic dispensation aimed at correcting the economic imbalances of the past has unduly extended the

The option of the Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment mechanism has further widened the gap³⁶ between the rich and the poor among the ranks of the black communities. The veracity of further marginalization within the black communities precipitated by the black economic projects is attested by Sampie Terreblanche. Terreblanche (Kangwanja *et al.* 2008:108) take cognizance of the fact that the BEE policy gave birth to “a black elite and a black middle class”. However this policy resulted to the deliberate selection of privileged and well-connected individuals that were “co-opted into the economic circles of the white elite and white middle class”. Terreblanche (Kangwanja *et al.* 2008:108) insists that the visible change of BEE model of economic transformation was merely the “color code” of the new entrants of the capitalist machinery. The BEE was not aimed at the total transference and sharing of the economy from white ownership to the black majority. Instead as “a powerful multiplier of inequality” (Piketty 2014:243) it gave credence to the “pro-rich” net-works without any attainment of “pro-poor” aspirations embedded in the promises of the Freedom Charter (Kangwanja *et al.* 2008:108).

The fundamental failure of the BEE project is that significant financial resources were deliberately “transferred from white people to the top 20 per cent of black population”. However such transference of economic ownership was not extended to the poor sections of black population in comparative “social spending and poverty alleviation”. Terreblanche’s analysis points to the facts that BEE has significantly contributed to the increasing levels of economic inequality among the black populace (Kangwanja *et al.* 2008:108). In view of such an analysis of the economic shortcuts³⁷ of our

“historical gulf” of inequality and its consequences beyond black and white but also “within the African community itself”.

³⁶ The creation and implementation of the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) imperatives was a compromised response by the African National Congress (ANC) to the pressure of white capital in its insistence to control the economy and maintain positions of privilege. This economic arrangement took place in a context of society that is experiencing the worst forms of social inequalities in the world. This widening gap between the rich and the poor made worse by the BEE projects has resulted to “complex environmental impacts” of social inequality (Gibson *et al.* 2013:182). Gibson has shown that this environmental damage of inequality has pushed the majority poor to a position of accessing and using less resources, whilst the “fewer, more affluent people consuming large amounts of resources”. This state of affairs has resulted to an “ecological footprint” that reveals that the rich cause much damage to the environment than the poor”.

³⁷ It is imperative for the reader to locate and understand the “discourse” (Boff 1987:4) and the dynamics of food shortage. Such a discourse shows its social placement, formative conceptualisation and expression. This discourse is canvassed on the template of systemic exploitation that ought to advance without compromise the “epistemologically privileged” position of the vulnerable, in specific social locations and class formations (Cochrane & West 1991:1). In as much as Terreblanche invested deliberate effort and detail in exposing systems of exclusion. Clodovos Boff (1987:6) applies equal commitment and interest in articulating socio-historical realities that inform both the perceptual factors, and conditions of marginalisation, prevalent in communities visited by hunger and social

transition. The TRC final recommendations bring a sober reminder that the effects of apartheid had far reaching implications. Such impacts resulted to “racism, gender discrimination, job reservation, group areas legislation, the effects of the migrant labour system, inferior wages and inadequate or non-existent social benefits” (*TRC Report 1998:3, Recommendations, Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 38*).

The model of grafting black middle class into white capital interests has fundamentally changed the nature of relationships among the black and African communities. Therefore the “interrelatedness”, the “ecology” and net-works of social and economic relationships of blacks and Africans needs to be opened to the possibilities of restoration and healing. Apartheid economics has divided the nation

exclusion. Boff chooses to engage all realities at his disposal through the lenses of his concept of “socio-analytic mediation”. This theoretical tool of social analysis and theological orientation enables the reader to dissect the socio-political factors that enables the systems of vulnerability, social exclusion and the emergence post-apartheid oppressive systems to be rooted under the watch of the African majority parliament. The interpretive tools of Boff will assist the reader to make sense of this anomaly. The “reading” from which socio-economic vulnerability emerges in South African Black Townships places some demand on those who endeavour to engage the realities of hunger. These “readings” must be regarded as objective critic of poverty. Hence the reader must not shy away to articulate in whatever manner the subjective expression of the experiences of hunger encountered in affected areas. The demands of “reading” the conditions of vulnerability is well argued by the Critical Discourse Analysis Framework, as viewed by Terry Locke (2004:6). Locke’s position must find expressive outlets in our perceptual, moral and ethical conduct in responding to hunger. He therefore calls for the promotion and deliberate “positioning” of the issues affecting marginalized communities, in the broader discourse of social transformation in our country. The intentional placement of the concerns of the vulnerable would suffice on condition that the reader subscribes to the first demand of the “reading”, which requires the reader to be open to a phenomenological insertion in the actual worldview of the vulnerable. In this instance, the “positioning” of the vulnerable has a dual experiential dimension. This duality of locality has far reaching implications for both the one who “positions” the interest of the affected communities, as well as, the position of interest definitive of the conditions of vulnerability for the communities concerned. Boff would go as far as arguing that the contexts that birth vulnerability invariably inserts the experiences of deprivation within a multi-faceted “network”, riddled with complexity of socio material conditions (Boff 1987:6). He further argues that the complex networks of vulnerability are premised on the scaffoldings of socio-historical determinism. This determinism tends to be self-perpetuating in confining societies more in the “us” and “them” mode of social discourse about vulnerability. Furthermore, Boff (1987:17) assents that the presuppositional intent shaping the reading of vulnerability as informed by “socio-analytic mediation” could yield a number of results. The reader can appreciate his readings as objective functional tools, constructed with social transformative meanings that do not negate the subjective intent of opening oneself to the phenomenon of vulnerability. Locke (2004:7) in taking the debate further, regards the transformative discourses emanating from the locality of vulnerability to be outcomes of conscious encounter with all the aspects of the realities of despondency. Furthermore such public and private engagements of the questions of vulnerability are bound to result in a praxis in which, both the individuals and communities are collectively transformed. The transformative praxis of vulnerability will result to a different naming of issues of hunger. Furthermore the position of self in relation to others and all aspects of socio-economic reality that defines vulnerability will be perceived differently. However the immediacy of engaging vulnerability impresses upon the reader principled perceptual and intentional moral position against poverty. Hence the immediacy of reading the patterns and social connections of vulnerability must be accompanied by the realisation that one’s distance to the realities of vulnerability are likely to shape and influence decision for or against systems that endorses hunger.

on multiple levels. It has resulted to “intergenerational conflicts” (*TRC Report, 1998:4, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and Conclusions, The Perpetrators-Causes, motives, perspectives, Extract 4, para, 100*) and deepened the schism within African communal and family settings.

African communities whose relationships are purported to be expressive of Ubuntu-botho have been torn asunder by economic and financial frame of reference and value systems that place significance on money, power and domination. It is in that light that we need to explore a redemptive net-work and ecology of economics³⁸ that

³⁸ In recent decades the scientific discourse has been advancing arguments that seek to define and engage any given reality in terms of how it relates, or align itself with other forms of reality, both in actuality and perceptual disposition. This forms a paradigm that seeks unity in diversity. It is in the same vein that the emerging ecological critique of wasteful capitalist and materialist culture is making its voice heard. There is an insistence that we cannot be defined by “a modernity that conceives of, and wish to use science as a means of dominating nature as well as other peoples and cultures” (Boff 1995:76). Thus the domination of the vulnerability of hunger in the townships needs to be subjected to a social critique that affirms the dignity of those suffering with food shortage. Werner Heisenburg (1958:198) holds the view that the respect for ecological systems ought to create a unified spiritual consciousness for humanity. Such recognition of interrelatedness and constant interaction of facts, values and ideas, demonstrates the spiritual logic, which is “the inner synthesis and organic unity of life itself”. Thus the ecology of corporate spirituality necessitates our obligation towards the environment must reflect an ethical human rights culture with a sound social responsibility imperative that links the hungry with possible resources to address their plight. The fundamental thread exposed by this argument is that the scientific community, global structural systems of governance and the international trade, must deal with the habits of the “atomisation of knowledge” regarding global food security. This therefore rejects the tendency of engaging any given reality independently from the conditions of its context. This assertion must have a bearing on the attempts of engaging food shortage. Leonardo Boff (1995:7) categorically states that “ecology has to do with relations, interaction, and dialogue of all living creatures (whether alive or not) among themselves and with all that exists”. He takes his argument further by asserting that our ecological expressions manifest either in “natural ecology” or “social ecology”. An argument can be made for the need of a socio-ethical and economic ecological frameworks. These ecological dimensions pertaining environmental issues and the preservation and development of social and cultural ideals are at the core of our existence. It is in the same train of thought that Boff (1995:7) concludes that ecological consciousness “reaffirms the interdependence of beings”. This position regards all systems of governance on the basis of equality and co-existence. Therefore it is imperative to appropriate this ecological consciousness as a tool to critique the nature of “social ecology” mediated by food shortage in the townships. Such a posture will undoubtedly enable the reader to engage the network of issues manifesting the social ecology of systemic vulnerability among the affected communities. In the field of natural sciences, it will be beneficial for our study to tap into the voice of Jared Diamond. Diamond is an ecology and evolutionary biologist. Diamond (2011:11) is clear in his assertions regarding five frameworks that influence how societies pre-empt their chances of failure or survival within the constraints of changing environmental factors. The importance of Diamond’s (2011:18) approach is based on his contentions that across the continents environmental degradation became a catalyst that in some cases resulted to “societal collapses”. The underlying question in Diamond’s “readings” of ecological systems and their impact on societies is that the severity of the damage on our earth must not be taken as catastrophic in apocalyptic categories. His (Diamond 2011:21) view is that remedial interventions however minute, contribute to the restoration of the planet. The factor that stands as an impediment in facilitating restorative environmental habits rests with societies to make right “choices”. It is instructive to note that a scholar within natural sciences refers to and acknowledges the role of morality, ethics and decision-making capacity of humanity in determining the future survival of the human species. Therefore Diamond (2011:419) argues that societal challenges including environmental issues are exacerbated, among other things by society’s lack of anticipating problems, along with illogical conduct and selfish driven moral choices. Though Diamond argues within the sphere of

will alter all aspects of social, cultural and economic reality of being an African and a South African in the world today.

2.3.3 Global³⁹ financial patterns of systemic vulnerability

biological/evolutional ecological systems. However we need to appropriate his application of ecological paradigm with its application to social and economic systems of marginalization. The implication for us is that we need to make choices in our readings of vulnerability that will ensure our survival as a nation and of our posterity amidst the current socio-economic environment.

³⁹ See the article by Parselelo Kantai entitled “After the Leaks” in the *New Africa Magazine*, 15 May 2016, p. 6. The recent publications of the Panama Papers points to the existence of a complex network of economic exploitation and domination of the rest of the world by Western capitalist nations. The Western countries have not taken stock of what became of Europe after the Second World War and its negative influence in shaping the spiritual consciousness and moral sensitivity of the collective conscience of Europe. The seriousness of a depraved Europe which has become the incubator of global corruption is attested by the testimonies of his holiness Pope John Paul II (2005, *Pope John Paul II: Memory & Identity, Personal Reflections*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, Britain). His Holiness in his reflections about being a European in a global world asserts that the ‘Old Continent’ had to contend with the ‘rivalry between the three worlds’. Europeans had to make sense of the capitalist First World of Western Europe. On the other hand, they had to engage the so-called ‘collectivist’ world behind the Iron Curtain commonly defined as the Second World. Developing countries were lumped together ‘as the Third World’ as if they lacked distinctive national identities and spiritual consciousness (Paul II 2005:140).

The Pope in sharing his experiences of the Second World War alluded that Nazism had cast a negative shadow in Europe, “yet many aspects of Nazism were still hidden at that stage”. He further elucidates the moral corrosion that was ushered by Hitler’s regime in that, “the full extent of the evil that was raging through Europe was not seen by everyone, not even by those of us situated at the epicenter”. He further elaborates that as Europeans “we were totally swallowed up in a great eruption of evil and only gradually did we begin to realize its true nature” (Paul II 2005:15).

One gets the impression that the spirituality of Europe has been shaped on the negative at least by its legacy of slavery, colonialism and recently, its share in the spoils of the ravages of unregulated capitalist global trade. The challenge and lesson from the European chapter of wars and narrow nationalistic driven conflicts ought to assist us as a country to fully appreciate possible “great eruption of evil” of economic inequality, public and business corruption as well as systemic vulnerability of hunger which finds its base in the Panama Papers.

The Panama leaks traces an organised system of raping mineral resources of nations by the West in the last forty years. In this regard “Africa has been haemorrhaging more resources than the aid-drip is supplying. Over the past decade alone, the continent has lost at least \$1 trillion in illicit financial flows, a sum far exceeding its collective debt, aid and foreign investment inflows (Kantai 2016:6). Kantai (2016:6) details how these illicit outflows of capital from Africa were made possible by the operations of the law firm, Mossack Fonseca, based in Panama which started its operations in the last forty years. Mossack Fonseca has served as the mid-wife of capital outflows from Africa to preferred “global net-work of offshore tax havens, which hold anything between \$21 and \$32 trillion of private wealth “ which is enabled by Western powers and their financial and political systems.

It is therefore not surprising that the City of London serves as the hub and the incubator of 80% of global traffic of illicit transactions. Taking the argument further, Khadija Sharife (2016:30-34) shows how these transactions materialise. She alludes to the fact that a number of poor countries such as Liberia, Mauritius, Seychelles, Bermuda and Virgin British Islands are used as vehicles for “commercialised sovereignty” of nation’s resources in offshore accounts. She suggests that these countries by the share size of their economies are themselves “vulnerable and impoverished”. Hence that renders them exposed to intimidation by “offshore powers” to participate in illicit economy. Sharife (2016:31-36) points out that the secondary enablers of this corrupt systems are the “multinationals including accounting and banking firms as well as the political prowess of the UK, US and Switzerland, wishing to maintain ring-fenced financial sectors.” The Panama Papers show that Africa losses almost \$150 billion annually (Sharife 2016:34). The significant lost accrued by Africa has reached a total of \$814.96 billion from 2004 to 2014. In the same period South Africa and Nigeria lost \$209.22 and \$178.04 million respectively. The Panama Papers bear testimony of how the global net-work of systemic vulnerability operates, and how it has adversely affected our country.

The patterns of systemic vulnerability reflected as expressions of “financial imperialism” and “global coloniality” (Zondi 2016:17) have a global character and corporate persona⁴⁰. It is imperative for the reader to appreciate the dynamic and complex net-works and how separate parts of the puzzle of global institutions make it possible for the systems of vulnerability to materialize. We also need to come to terms with the fact that global institutional instruments of systemic vulnerability have solicited, by cohesion or forceful means a net-work of satellite states in strategic geo-political settings that serve as intermediary and conduits for the outflows of mineral and financial resources out of developing countries to the Western beneficiaries. In the case of South Africa, the global patterns of systemic vulnerability were identified by the United Nations General Assembly, in its 1970 Resolution declaring apartheid South Africa as a crime against humanity. The resolution identified global states and financial systems that were partners in the perpetuation of apartheid by clandestine collaborations with apartheid government in sanctions busting attempts. Such attempts were directed at the United Nations imposed sanctions against apartheid governments. The Resolution duly pointed out the undertakings of “certain States and foreign economic interests” that forged an alliance against the oppressed majority (Dioxtader *et al.* 2007:4).

⁴⁰ Another reality of corporate greed that could not be wished away is the ever-growing tendencies of price fixing by big and respected companies in South Africa. It must be noted that corruption practices are a global phenomenon. Hence by 2007 Africa is estimated to have lost R1 Trillion due to corrupt practices in the public and private sectors. The international report of the United Nations and the World Bank stolen asset recovery (STAR) project apportion blame to intermediary functionaries situated in the developed world. Thus a number of professionals such as lawyers, accountants and public representatives of companies in the developed economies knowingly participated in dealings “to launder or hide the proceeds of assets theft” from third world countries (Schmidt 2007:13). The scope of theft covers a wide range of areas such the cash from the trafficking of drugs, arms dealing, human trafficking and slavery, blood diamonds and unrecorded oil transactions, fraudulent acts, extortion, bribery accompanied by tax evasion. The UN report estimates that R10, 9 trillion is lauded annually. Half of those funds “come from developing and transitional economies” (Schmidt 2007:15). Paul Hoffman, the director of the Institute for Accountability, regards the seriousness of corruption practices as undermining the livelihood of vulnerable communities. He alluded to the fact that since the democratisation of the country in 1994. South African government has lost an estimated R700 Billion, through corruption due to weak tender monitoring systems (Hosken 2014:1). Joseph E. Stiglitz (2012:xvii) reflected on the global scale of financial injustice practices. He asserts that the power of money is used to “gain advantage”. Money is also used to consolidate positions of dominance in specific sectors of the economy. In our context, such conduct perpetuates corrupt tendencies. The very same tendencies of using the “power of money” to perpetuate and maintain dominance has been hastily adopted by the black elites across the board. The dominance of money, power and influence has reached all levels of leadership both in the public and private sectors. There is no level of leadership in our country that is not beholden to Mammon. The old demons of apartheid Mammon have democratised across race, class, gender and culture. It is not far from the truth to assert that the weakening of prosecutorial state agencies in our country has undauntedly advanced the interest of the dominance of money in the public and private sectors. The corrupt elites believe that they can buy justice. They commit crime with impunity.

On the other hand the liberation movements (in South Africa, Namibia and Angola) were assisted by sympathetic governments and the broader Anti-apartheid Movements to raise funds to advance the cause of liberation. In that regard financial systems were created to raise funds to support the struggle. Thus sophisticated systems that could not be easily detected by the apartheid regime were created to transfer funds to support families of political detainees, and the up-keep of those in exile. Those systems that were beneficial to the cause of liberation have been used by the elites⁴¹ of the newly established post-oppressive governments to siphon off funds and mineral resources from their respective countries to off-shore accounts.

⁴¹ In developing countries the role of the elites emerging post-independence conflicts have been used by Europe and the Western world as the front and the tools of furthering the interest of the West by using credible leaders who fought for the freedom of the oppressed. The UN Durban Conference against Racism shows clearly how the leadership of formerly oppressed nations, (particularly Africa) missed an opportunity to call and demand from Europe to account with amends in restitution for the sins of colonialism against Africa. During the 2002 World Conference against Racism in Durban, a demand was made for reparations from Western countries due to the indignity and inhuman treatment visited on non-European countries through the imposition of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. The dominant consensus that won the day was simply a mere acknowledgement of the historicity of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. The conference adopted resolutions that did not carry any moral obligation to redress such wrongs. Thus denying the wide spread implications of colonial and racist past in socio-economic and political dislocation of societies of the historically Third-World countries (Bond 2003: 15).

In the last couple of years, the African continent has observed the 1st decade of the existence of the African Union, which was launched in Durban on the 9th of July 2002 by the African Heads of States. The importance of locating our analysis of issues regarding food insecurity, particularly the negative impact of hunger and destitution, was felt with much harshness in the beginning of the 1st decade of the African Union, as attested by the 2006-2011 Statistics SA report.

The report released by the Statistics SA covering 2006-2011 substantiated a round figure of about 15.8 million South Africans who in 2009 were severely affected by the global recession that started a year earlier. Therefore, it is imperative to ascertain the nature of the socio-political factors in the African continent that contributed to the systemic failure of the African Union to arrest the ravages of hunger and poverty that visited the communities across the continent. The former President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, gave a critical assessment of the performance of the African Union in a ten-year review. He pointed out how internal bureaucratic politics of the African Union adversely affected “the future and welfare of the billion Africans and their Continent, as well as African Diaspora” (Mbeki 2012:9).

Mbeki commences his analysis by noting that the historical significance of the African Union was to put in place a collective government of the African people that would pursue self-determination and African socio-economic development. However, the dreams and aspirations of the African citizens are thwarted by a misplaced focus by African leadership when it comes to life sustaining strategic imperatives of governance aiming at “the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment”. Mbeki asserts that the current leadership of the African Union is primarily concerned about canvassing for placement in the structures of the African Union instead of strategically positioning Africa in the global economy (Mbeki 2012:9).

A broad base of civil society organisations met in Johannesburg at Nasrec on 1-2 August 2002 to further deliberate, revise and expand a newly adopted Declaration for Bali, 17-19 May 2002. The outcome of the gathering was a document titled *South African Civil Society Policy Position for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development*. The overview of this policy document surmises a wide range of issues such as economic growth, international trade agreements and food sovereignty, to mention a few. The policy position of this body of civic organisations categorically declared that:

The non-sustainability and bankruptcy of the ruling world order is evident. The need for alternative has never been stronger. The impact of market deregulation has reduced the state's

It is ironic that the very systems that were used for the common good of the majority of the oppressed are today used by those who were formerly oppressed to exploit those who voted them in government. Yesterday's freedom fighters are now mastering the art of oppressing their own using the manuals and doctrines of their former masters.

This post-oppression exploitation and corruption is made possible by financial institutions, banks, law-firms, accounting and auditing firms and companies both internally, with the assistance, compliance and mentorship from off-shore governments and their private sectors. In this regard the patterns of systemic vulnerability that promotes hunger have a global platform and net-work systems that has manifestation in our public and private sectors.

2.4 THE WEIGHT OF SYSTEMIC PATTERNS OF CRIME OVER THE SHOULDERS OF THE POOR

The ripple effects of the patterns of systemic vulnerability that are manifesting after twenty two years of democratic rule in our country have a specific contextual grounding that must be confronted. The canvas of systemic vulnerability is painted by the international community's condemnation of apartheid as a "crime against humanity" by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 1970. The Resolution 1970 categorically declared that the rationality of apartheid construction were "a negation of the Charter of the United Nations". The Resolution further brings into light and recognizes "the legitimacy of the struggle" against racial oppression. It goes on to pronounce a denunciation of the reprisal attacks by the South African

role in the economy and state power is increasingly weakened by unaccountable corporate powers. In the process, justice, rights, democracy and the environment continue to be undermined. The divide between rich and poor becomes ever wider and the exclusion and disaffection of people ever stronger. We note that elite groups are able to set their own agendas and further they're own interests by using violence and oppression. Justice, peace and sustainability are indivisible. Without a sustainable and just sharing of the earth's resources there is no justice. Without justice there can be no peace. (Unpublished policy paper, 1-2 August 2002:1)

The fundamental position of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was aimed at addressing socio-economic issues and the effects thereof that were negatively impacting environmental aspects of global development. The issues raised on the declaration of the Summit speak to the factors that have given birth to the conditions of food shortage in the townships.

government against neighboring countries that provided shelter and safe bases for the liberation movements (Dioxtader *et al.* 2007:3-4).

In essence the culture of the “crime against humanity” of apartheid system continues to have lingering impacts to all South Africans. If there is any visible evidence of the persistent effects of apartheid violence, one needs to read the nature of violent crimes⁴² that South Africans inflict on each other. Hence it is imperative to bring into the picture the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report’s (TRC) perspective and how it contextualizes the violence of apartheid. The Report submits that our type of racial discrimination as a system “was maintained through repressive means, depriving the majority of South Africans of the most basic human rights, including civil, political, social and economic rights. Its legacy⁴³ is a society in which vast numbers of the people suffer from pervasive poverty and a lack of opportunities” (*TRC Report 1998:2, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and conclusions, The Perpetrators-Causes, motives, perspectives, Extract 4, para, 1*).

The systemic maintenance of apartheid caused great damage into Black communities resulting to negative “intergenerational relationships” (*TRC Report 1998:2, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and conclusions, The Perpetrators-Causes, motives, perspectives Extract 4, paragraph 107*). The

⁴² See also the *Medical Research Council Report on Intimate Femicide in South Africa*, 2014:4 (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at <http://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/16866/>) that details the levels of trauma that South Africans are exposed to. Such incidences of violent crime are normalised by the victims of as a way of coping. The report further points out that the kind of criminal violence that we are living with has “multi-faceted” dimensions. Crime in South Africa has become a learned experience. It could thus be asserted that ours is a “learned history of violence”, implying that our nation is characterised by communities that are defined and deeply steeped in violence. Another factor that comes out of the study is that criminal violence is a reflection of what it refers to as “everyday inequalities” such as gender, race and class inequalities. It is in the same vein that we can argue that systemic vulnerability adds another dimension of inequality and structural violence that is a lived reality of those experiencing food shortage.

⁴³ See the views of Yasmin Sooka (Doxtader *et al.* 2003:308, 309-314) in her paper dealing with “*Apartheid’s Victims in the Midst of Amnesty’s Promise*”. She brings to the fore the argument that the legacy of the crimes of apartheid is strongly reflected in the number of young lives it has destroyed. The specific group of the youth she is referring to are so-called “young soldiers” who stepped out during the townships “black on black” violence and organised themselves as defence units. Sooka points out that these young people were mostly coming from poor backgrounds, unskilled, and had no education. The only skill they have acquired post community conflicts was “streetwise aggression” that has pushed them into criminality. Her contention is that our society has not given the youth (commonly referred to as the “lost generation”) any alternative except resorting to acquired skills of aggression to earn a living. Sooka suggests that the prevalence of criminality committed by these vulnerable youth is “a living reminder of how our new society has not carried out its responsibility to help them move from past to future”.

permeation of state violence into black communities had far reaching consequences both to the rural and urban settings. The common trend connecting divergent experiences of vulnerability gave effect to “localized battles rooted in socio-economic deprivation” (*TRC Report 1998:6, Extract 4, paragraph 53*). The levels of poverty, economic stagnation and accumulative unemployment of the vulnerable communities became the “entry points” for the “cycle of violence” to take root in given communities (*TRC Report 1998:4, Extract 4, paragraph 145*) grounded in apartheid’s “economic and social mechanisms that produce inequality” (Piketty 2015:1).

Such conditions of vulnerability rendered individuals and communities open for infiltration by state organs. The manipulation by security forces exacerbated brewing inter-community strife and further entrenching “intergenerational” conflicts which pitted “fathers” against the “comrades”. This modus operandi of state agents became the core strategy of destabilizing Black communities in the period leading to the first democratic elections in April 1994 (*TRC Report 1998:4, Extract 4, paragraph 147*). South African communal life has been shaped by the culture that has deep tolerance for violence and de-evaluation of the worth and dignity of human life. Today all races and social classes are both the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes⁴⁴ against each other, with the worst forms of violence visited upon the women, children and the elderly, and recently against African lesbians with violent murder and the so-called ‘corrective rape’.

2.5 THE VULNERABILITY MAP

The vulnerability map refers to the geographical location and manifestation of the brutality of systemic vulnerability. The given map assists us to correct the false notion that families and communities living under food shortage are mere victims of their circumstances. This perception is rather materialistic and it hinders the families and communities from seeking within themselves the ability to attain a sense of self-transcendence. To place the responsibility for social justice against hunger solely

⁴⁴ The nature of violence that has invaded all communities’ elicits divergent reactions from affected areas. Hence Jonny Steinborg (2007:73) in his work *“Notes from a Fractured Country”*, concludes that violent crimes has contributed to “fracturedness” of our society on a number of levels. However he brings to light the fact that the privileged sectors of our country are better placed at voicing their displeasure to the authorities who tends to respond with immediacy to such protestations. Whereas the poor who are exposed to worst kinds of violence and related crimes and suffer the worst pain of social fructuredness are least heard by the powers that be when registering their outrage.

upon a person becomes unrealistic and individualistic. It underplays the context of social vulnerability within a particular social fabric. The challenge is to locate people in “systematic” categories. In this regard people must be seen as being part of a “network” of human relationships to which they belong and where their sense of self-identity is acknowledged and affirmed (Mashinini 2004:25).

The implication of this assertion is that individual families and communities in hunger cannot be encountered in “isolation” of their socio-economical context. This perception further acknowledges that one’s socio-political context and the location of one’s social stratification has a bearing on the nature and quality of life and the kind of social support system that one will receive.

It can be argued that the system of social engineering resulting to the creation of the homelands set in motion the template of systemic vulnerability that became definitive of black life both in rural and urban areas. “In this period of “grand apartheid”, the South African government embarked on a project of profound and widespread social engineering. From 1960s onwards, millions of individuals were uprooted and relocated-generally to the homelands in the process of “consolidating” South Africa’s ethnic map. Direct physical violence, accompanied by structural violence inherent in the system of migrant labour, resulted in violations of human rights that defy easy calculation” (*TRC Report 1998:7, The Liberation Movements-The period 1960-1990, The Homelands-The Period 1960-1990, Extract 3, para, 20*). The creation of the so-called “ethnic map” was virtually the entrenchment and the systemization of the patterns of vulnerability in specific geography among the black populace.

The report further states that “the cumulative, national impact” of the internal forced migration and relocation affected almost 3, 5 million people between 1960 and 1982. The “systemic failure” (*TRC Report 1998:12, The State Inside SA-The Period 1960-1990, Extract 2, para, 607*) of the ideology of apartheid is that it had to take a deliberate imposition of the homeland system by “unilateral re-drawing homeland boundaries” resulting to disintegration of families and communities (*TRC Report*

1998:7, *Extract 3, para, 34*). The huge impact was registered in economic strain⁴⁵ that was carried by the new “independent states”. Bearing in mind that the “reserves” were structured in such a way they would provide cheap labour to apartheid capital. South Africa’s subsidies could not stretch far enough to support and sustained the burgeoning bureaucracy of all the homelands. Hence the large segments of the populace of the homelands were supported by the “remittances from relatives working in distant industries” (*TRC Report 1998:7, Extract 3, para, 34-35*). It can be argued that the reality of food shortage⁴⁶ particularly in the rural areas and recently within the urban settings talks to the entrenchment of the map of vulnerability that stills defines the quality of life of those living with hunger.

2.6 THE “SYSTEMIC PATTERN OF ABUSE” AS MEANS TO SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITY

The stipulated frame of reference of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has enabled us to identify “the pattern that emerges” (*TRC Report 1998:11, The State Inside SA-The period 1960-1990, Extract 2, para, 509*) detailing the nature and the dictates of the pace of our country’s transition from apartheid to democratic rule. In the same manner we need to trace the formative patterns of systemic vulnerability

⁴⁵ See Peter Jacobs and Tim Hart (Meyiwa et al 2014:158) arguing that the rural landscape pre 1994 “was deliberately starved of adequate investment”, particularly the former Bantustans. Their point of contention is that the planned and legislated entrapment of the rural areas was the worst forms of deprivation and underdevelopment. The map and the geography of vulnerability speak of intentional marginalisation and impoverishment of the rural population that has not been broken even by the sporadic remedial social up-liftment projects of the new government. The main question is that rural poverty was a structural arrangement and intentional construct of the apartheid government. It will also take a strategic intervention of the state to eradicate the effects of the vulnerability map. The democratic state dating back from Thabo Mbeki’s term in office initiated intervention measures such the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Program (ISRDP) with targeted focus to 13 rural nodes identified as most vulnerable. Another attempt by the Zuma administration in 2009 under the auspices of the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform introduced a Comprehensive Rural Development Program (CRDP). The failure of these programs to radically transform rural areas is informed by the fact that rural areas were determined by apartheid map to provide cheap manual labour to the urban commerce, rather than be seen as viable entities with potential for sustainable economic growth. Democratic government has premised its intervention in apartheid constructs. We have not seen well-articulated policies with strategic investment and redevelopment intent for radical reorientation of rural areas, except some kinds of ‘intervention projects’.

⁴⁶ Peter Jacobs and Tim Hart (Meyiwa et al 2014:164) come to the conclusion that the reality of food insecurity in our country has become a permanent feature in the urban metropolis. The greater impact of food insecurity is felt more aggressively in the informal settlements. However it is their contention that the former Bantustans carry the “breadth and depth of household food insecurity”. The reader is also made aware of “the multidimensionality” aspects of food insecurity which points out the challenges regarding accessing quality food on regular basis, as well as the nutritional status of the available food.

within the framework of the TRC, whilst not limiting ourselves to its timeframes and the specific issues it sought to bring to our attention.

Therefore we can assert that systemic patterns of abuse that have informed the construction of the vulnerability of hunger speak of the gross violation of human rights of the affected individuals and communities. The human rights violation of the hungry refers to the indignity of the hunger mediated by decisions and systemic conduct⁴⁷ by those in positions of authority that instill a sense of worthlessness in the minds of the poor communities by not prioritizing the needs and interests of the poor. In this regard we need to engage the reality that the gross violation of the human rights of the hungry further points to a systemic, calculated “objectification” and depersonalization of the hungry.

In the post-apartheid era the protection of the vulnerable is expressed by the Constitutional Court. The merit of its judgment affirms the dignity of the vulnerable in all aspects of life and social interaction of all citizens of our country. The violation of the human rights of the hungry is an actualization of a deliberate process of undermining the dignity of the lives of the African people in our country as our history attests. The validity of this argument ought to inform the legal and moral framework for the affirmation of the dignity of human life as reflected in the judgment reached by the Constitutional Court on the 6th June 1995, in the State versus T. Makwanyane and M. Mchunu, (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SvMakwanyane>).

The Makwanyane case has direct relevance on a number of groupings, particularly those experiencing social marginalization. In the summation of the judgment, Chief Justice P. Chaskalson noted that the two accused of murder were duly sentenced to the death penalty after failing to attain a different verdict against their convictions and sentences from the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court. However the new

⁴⁷The sense of worthlessness imposed upon the vulnerable reflects the tendencies of reducing poor communities to the status of being objects, or rather the “thingification”/“I-it” categories as suggested by Titus (*et al.* 1986:61). It is in the same light that Kung (1990:32) raises a voice of protest, echoing Kantian dictum against the tendency of objectifying human experience. He strongly demands that human beings must never be treated as “mere means”, but must always be regarded as “ultimate end”. The “thingification” process takes place when we treat others as though they are not endowed

political dispensation based on a new Constitutional framework informed by the Bill of human rights demands respect for life and the promotion of human dignity.

Thus the journey to overturn sentences by death penalty necessitated that the country had to relook the legal presuppositions that informed the policy of death by hanging. The reader had to appreciate the legal, moral and ethical rationale for the justification of the death by Capital punishment as articulated by the apartheid jurisprudence which was rescinded in March 1992 by the Minister of Justice (Chaskalson 1995:15). The final decision on the death penalty was referred to the envisaged Constitutional Court. Hence the Judgment of Justice Chaskalson⁴⁸ (1995:43) affirmed that “under our constitutional order the right to human dignity is specifically guaranteed”. However the present reality of food shortage as depicted by our findings is that the guarantees of respect for life and human dignity are deliberately undermined by food shortage with full knowledge of the public representatives.

We need to have the liberty to trace the historical development of systems of vulnerability without necessarily confining ourselves within a particular historical perspective. However we can benefit from the perspective of the TRC in how it framed and presented its findings within clearly emerging patterns of abuse and gross violations of human rights in the period covered by its investigations. Therefore in tracing the evolutionary patterns of systemic vulnerability and its expression in food shortage we need to identify issues and aspects that are referred to by the Truth and Reconciliation Report as triggers to the violation of human rights in the given

with human dignity and worth. In this instance the interest in people is primarily centered on their “value” as mere objects of our study and analysis.

⁴⁸ The judgment of the Constitutional Court abolishing Capital Punishment was informed by the inherent values for the right to life and dignity as the fundamental rights of our new constitutional dispensation. Chaskalson’s (1995:92) verdict asserts that the ruling was a declaration that our nation will uphold the primacy of the given rights as “above all others. And this must be demonstrated by the State in everything that it does”. Chaskalson (1995:92) holds the conviction that the violation of human dignity and the undermining of the respect to life takes place when those who hold power over others, usurp the right to “objectify” their subordinates. The contention of the judgment is that the practice of objectifying the other results to the “impairment of dignity” and the “destruction of life.” It is our argument that the vulnerability of food shortage in our country represents the violent “destruction of life and dignity” of those living with hunger. Unless those holding political and business leadership come to terms with the legal and moral force that our human rights culture accords to life and dignity, public policies will fail to match up to the requirements of our new human rights jurisprudence.

period and how such patterns are manifesting in present day South Africa which continues to claim that it is a transformed society.

We need to appreciate that the patterns of human rights violation in the conflicts of our past have been carried over to the new dispensation. Hence the TRC Report on the Consequences of the gross violations of human rights notes that such violations have “lingering effects” which manifest in psycho-social dimensions that has adversely affected all sections of our populace. This implies that such adverse effects “extend beyond the individual-to the family, the community and the nation”. The patterns of vulnerability have also given birth to self-sustaining impacts that have triggered “a cascade of psychological, physical, and interpersonal problems for victims” and the broader “social system”⁴⁹ definitive of what it means to be a poor African and black South African in the present (*TRC Report 1998:2, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and Conclusions, The Perpetrators-Causes, motives, perspectives, Extract 4, para, 2-4*).

The reality of food shortage in present day South Africa points to the lingering effects of the “systemic pattern of abuse” of our past (*TRC Report 1998:3, Extract 3, para, 88*). The very same patterns definitive of our past exist differently today. Nonetheless they are currently serving as the strongholds that are bent on undoing the gains of freedom and liberation. An appreciation of the Truth and Reconciliation’s construction of patterns of vulnerability, reflecting how individuals and communities were rendered “vulnerable” and became a “vulnerable sector” without any means of protection, ought to be regarded as an entry point in the analysis of the living conditions of township residence (*TRC Report 1998:2-3, The State Inside SA-The period 1960-1990, Extract 2, para, 17 & 90*). Food shortage has created a “sector” of the vulnerable without guaranteed human security as envisaged by the UN Development Index (UNDP, 1994:22-23).

⁴⁹ This “social system” of vulnerability categorically registers the truth that South Africa is a country “that has brutalised and exploited its own people” and its neighbours for the economic benefit of the minorities and global capitalist system. It is with broader perspective that penetrating questions are raised by critical analysts in *“South Africa in Africa: The Post-Apartheid Era”* (see Adedeji et al 2007:17) about the readiness and credibility of our country to take upon itself the mantle of being the “champion of human rights, democracy and sustainable development on the African Continent”. How can a country that is failing to accord decent basic services to its own citizens claims to be an ideal society to the rest of the continent?

2.7 PATTERNS OF SYSTEMIC COMPLICITY⁵⁰ AGAINST THE VULNERABLE

The patterns of systemic vulnerability were made possible by deliberate and calculated acts of complicity with apartheid machinery by various sectors of society against the victims of racial oppression. The TRC Report presents a compelling argument and a direct indictment against civil society that contributed to the “perpetuation of race-based systems and structures” in failing to oppose the gross violations of human rights that ravaged affected communities (*TRC Report 1998:9, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and conclusions, The Perpetrators-Causes, motives, perspectives, Extract 4, para, 152*).

The testimony of Mr. Craig Williams in the armed forces hearing clearly articulates how the society as a collective failed to uphold justice for the victims of human rights violations. Williams does not absolve anybody in the crimes and violence of apartheid. In his testimony he asserts that, “it is therefore not only the task of the security forces to examine themselves and their deed, it is for every member of the society which we serve to do so. Our weapons, ammunition, uniforms, vehicles, radios, and other equipment were all developed and provided by industry. Our finances and banking were done by bankers who even gave us covert credit cards for covert operations. Our chaplains prayed for our victory, and our universities educated us in war. Our propaganda was carried by the media, and our political masters were voted back in power time after time with ever-increasing majority” (*TRC Report, Consequences of human rights violations, 1998:9, Extract 4, para, 150*).

⁵⁰ The patterns of systemic complicity against the vulnerable have taken a center stage in the controversies of the “state capture” by the Gupta family and big business in general. Judy Connors who is the Director of a non-governmental organization dealing with issues of transformation, youth mentorship and social justice for women, holds the view that our society has been complicit “in allowing the government to cozy up to business”. She asserts that the practice of capturing governance systems for business interests is a global phenomenon. This globalization of state capture is premised on the economic precepts of “the free market system, neo-liberal capitalism or deregulated capitalism”. In her analysis, capitalism though it has some good economic outcomes. However in the past three decades it has been captured by corrupt business in furtherance of its narrow selfish intents. Her argument is that economic systems takes shape in specific given social and political contexts. Business deals and trade investments takes place in contexts that are designed by elected public officials. Thus by implication societies ought to be aware of what those who govern on their behalf are committing to when dealing with the business sector (Judy Connors, Mail & Guardian, 24-31 March 2016:27).

The relevance of the given testimony can be aligned to the complicity of today's organs of civil society against those living with hunger. Perhaps the level of responsibility cannot be that wide-spread. However greater sections of our society are turning a blind eye to the plight of the hungry. The level of responsibility for being part of the systems and decisions making that perpetuates hunger may not be the same. There are some sections of our nation that benefit with the deepening vulnerability. As a case in point, some sections of the business community have willingly participated in dealings that have created more misery for the vulnerable.

The Competition Commission has given fines amounting to millions of rand for miscellaneous financial deals that took advantage of the vulnerable by direct or indirect decision making processes by the business sector. The patterns of complicity against the vulnerable takes place on a variety of levels. The government bears a lot of responsibility in allowing private and public institutions to perpetrate acts that compromise the well-being of the vulnerable. Another case in point is the publicized evasion of arrests⁵¹ by the President of Sudan al Bashir when the Johannesburg

⁵¹ The High Court injunction was based on two warrants of arrest issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2009 against Bashir. The issued warrants of arrest detailed a catalogue of war crimes; rape of women and girls by the Bashir's backed militia, genocide and crimes against humanity. Bashir is facing five counts of crimes against humanity, which include "murder, extermination, forcible transfer, torture and rape". Furthermore the ICC warrants detail "two counts of war crimes: intentionally directing attacks against civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking part in the hostilities; and pillaging; and three counts of genocide". The genocide charges are divided into three categories namely: "genocide by killing; genocide by causing serious bodily or mental harm; and genocide by deliberately inflicting on specific target groups conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction" (Shoba 2015:2). The alleged human rights violations took place at the Darfur conflict, resulting to an estimated death of 400 000 Sudanese of African descent, of which 2.5 million were displaced by the Arab Bashir administration. The High Court condemned South African government in allowing al-Bashir to flee arrest, as contrary to the Constitution of the Republic. Notwithstanding the call of the United Nations Secretary General for Pretoria to affect the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrants of arrest. Amnesty International added its voice by noting that South African government's unwillingness to arrest Bashir "was a betrayal of the hundreds of thousands of victims who were killed during the Darfur conflict" (Ferial 2015:1). The government violated its own courts and showed contempt for the Hague Court's Statutes. South African born, Navi Pillay, who presided as a judge in cases involving Rwandan genocide held the same sentiments. The former judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, one of the two vehicles that were activated prior the establishment of the ICC. She has also served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights between 2008 and 2014. Navi Pillay issued a stern critic against the government on the Bashir matter. She stated that the criticism against the court for allegedly targeting African leaders is unfounded due to the fact that it is the African victims and civil society that referred the cases to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Further insisted that "it is important to separate what people want and what leaders want". She laboured the argument by emphasising that "leaders in Africa are protecting each other. When South Africa did not help in the arrest and transfer of al-Bashir, it was a slap in the face of victims" (Ferial 2015:1). Hence the Judge President of the High Court, delivered a harsh judgement in stating that "it is of concern to this court that it issues orders and then things just happen in violation of those orders"

High Court issued an order that prevented his departure from the Republic until a verdict about the case against him was finalised. This case point to the failure of South African government to effect the order of the High Court for the arrest of the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir on the 15th of June 2015 while in attendance of the African Union Summit in Johannesburg. It is common knowledge that the South African government allowed Bashir to leave country.

under the watch of President Zuma and the former cabinet minister and now African Union Commissioner, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (Ebrahim 2015:1). After a week the High Court handed down a verdict against the State for the violation of its order. The Court insisted that “if the state or an organ of state, or state officials don’t abide by court orders, the democratic edifice will crumble stone by stone until it collapses and chaos ensues”. The judge president instructed the office of the National Prosecuting Authority to consider laying charges against the state for the manner it handled the question of Bashir’s escape from justice (Masombuka 2015:1). The court castigated our government in its failure to respect and implement its own laws and international legal obligations under Roman Statutes. It could then be assumed that our government’s non-action against Bashir lends credence to the perception that the state has become accessory to crime. It must be born in mind that our government enacted into its legislation and by implication to the national jurisprudence in 2003 the Roman Statutes, which are binding to all signatory states. All signatory States are obliged to surrender to the International Criminal Court individuals or groups wanted for human rights violations. The South African government by turning its back to the victims of Darfur genocide, rape, and crimes against humanity opted to be an economic power house that is merely concerned about protecting its economic interests. A nation of freedom fighters whose noble struggle for justice was shaped by the practical vision of the Freedom Charter has just become a people without conscience, soul and spirit. The Zuma administration by choosing economic benefits in Africa against the injustices of genocide has in fact sacrificed our nation’s struggle conscience at the altar of Mammon and political correctness that comes with being a member of the African Union. It is disconcerting that the protégé’s of Nelson Mandela had to muster the courage to harbour and aid a fugitive from justice to avoid arrests by ignoring the cries of the victims of the Darfur genocide. It is dis-heartening and inconceivable that the organisation of Oliver Reginald Tambo who galvanized the United Nations to isolate and declare apartheid South Africa a crime against humanity, could side with Bashir who has presided over worse crimes than apartheid. The Bashir issue has brought to the public the defining factors of our spirituality as a nation. The fact that a people and leadership that have a first-hand experience of apartheid and were denied the right to citizenship in the country of their birth shows the bankruptcy of the spirituality of struggle and that of Ubuntu-botho . A generation of leaders and youth, who were imprisoned without trial, tortured, banned and exiled by the apartheid regime for more than three decades. This government is populated by a generation of youth celebrated in the poem, “*No children*” by Don Mattera (*Azanian Love Song*, African Morning Star Publications, Grant Park, South Africa). In this work Mattera (2007:75) laments that “no children in Soweto, Langa, Mannenburg, no child left in Sharpville, dead, jailed, crippled, blinded, tortured, yes the children have all become adults”. Yet it is the very same leaders who have gone through the baptism of fire under apartheid oppression that are defending Bashir. How the ANC have fallen. Mattera (2007:44) has prophetically foresaw the demise of the ANC (in his poem *I watched*) in stating that: “I watched the sun weep, in its sinking, once – proud rays covered by cloak of dark. A flame reduced to a dying spark”. We see a government that exercises its authority under the auspices of a most liberal democratic constitution in the world has pledged its solidarity not with the victims of genocide but the perpetrator. Zuma’s administration enabled Bashir to evade justice. On the other hand, Senegal brought to trial the former dictator of Chad, Hissene Habre. Habre appeared before the courts in the middle of July 2015. Habre known as “Africa’s Pinochet” is facing charges of killing 40 000 people and almost torturing 500 000 political opposition, in the beginning of the eighties until 1990. The Senegalese’s in pursuing Habre’s trial has undoubtedly exposed the moral bankruptcy of Zuma’s government. The trial indicate how “in resisting a court order to arrest Bashir, the South African government swims against the tide of international justice” (Swart 2015:16). We could contend with evidence from the High Court’s decision that the South African government has been rendered impotent of the capability to prevent the violation of the

The verdict of the court was against the State. This verdict was also upheld by the Court of Appeals. This case points to the complicity with systems of vulnerability to “protect the power and the privilege” of the elites, further resulting to “a culture of impunity” to those who are mandated by the electorate to advance solutions against poverty (*TRC Report, 1998:7, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Extract 4, para, 101*).

2.8 SYSTEMIC NET-WORKS OF POWER AND PRIVILEGE AGAINST THE VULNERABLE

The TRC Report points out on numerous occasions the existence of “patterns and trends” of exploitation (*TRC Report 1998:2, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Extract 4, para, 5*). It also notes the prevalence of “social net-works”, “interconnectedness” (*TRC Report 1998:3, Extract 4, para, 49, 91*), “partnerships” and deliberate “net-works” organized “to protect the power and privilege of a racial minority” (*TRC Report 1998:7-8, Extract 4, para, 101, 129*).

The existence of the given arrangements of privilege and convenience formalized a class and groups of beneficiaries from all sectors of our country⁵². These individuals

human rights of the most vulnerable both within and outside its borders as attested by the Bashir debacle.

⁵² These net-works of power and privilege manifested in the democratic space since 1994 in various forms. William Gumede (Kangwanja et al 2009:45) engages this entity in his analysis of the commencement of the modernisation process of the African National Congress by its President Thabo Mbeki in 2009. Gumede suggests that individuals and certain institutions both locally and internationally exerted some level of pressure to persuade or impress the idea that the ANC needed to transform from being a liberation movement and modernise to a strictly narrow political party. The suggested benefit being the acceptance of the ANC to global economic systems by aligning itself to free market system as articulated by the emergence of globalization. Gumede proposes that Mbeki’s attempts of modernising the ANC gave a footing of “new centres of influence on policy making” within the ANC and entire governance machinery. The net-works of influence gain credence outside the constitutionally elected and mandated parliamentary systems. It was during Mbeki’s presidency that the views and opinions of a number of entities (such the presidential working groups) were sought in the formulation of policies. These groups varied from “big business, international investment advisory councils” and representatives of Washington Consensus Institutes such as the (IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization). We can begin to see that these networks of influence were given a room to shape and change government policies to serve their vested interests. The policy positions they suggested “were presented to parliament as *faints accomplish*”. The consequence was the deliberate marginalisation of national bodies such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council which represented aspirational and transformative social dialogue mechanisms. The operational systems of the net-works of patronage clearly depicted in how they engaged the government. In this regard bodies such as the Washington Consensus (i.e. World Bank, World Trade Organization, The International Monetary Fund (IMF), including “credit rating agencies” and globalised corporations form a global net-work system that has amassed wealth and power that can facilitate “regime change” in

and groups being the “beneficiaries of the past”⁵³ (Doxtader *et al.* 2003:23) have vested interests in the maintenance of apartheid patronage. However the systems of the patronage of vulnerability were a mere expression of globalization as an economic system meant to maintain economic dominance of the Western capitalism. It is in the same light that the role of the homeland structures, vigilantes, informers, and askaris (activists who turned against their communities and comrades) needs to be located in the context of global systems of patronage and clientism of corruption. The very same people who sought to dismantle apartheid ended up being the recipients of power, benefits and privileges that made the oppression of the masses to be self-perpetuating. The systemic patterns of vulnerability are self-perpetuating. The transition to democratic governance did not dismantle to a great extent the core of the old net-networks of apartheid patronage. Those systems adapted and readjusted themselves into new partnerships of corruption⁵⁴ that have been grafted into all levels of the public and the private sector post 1994 socio-political arrangements.

world areas that do not endorse their agenda. These institutions present themselves as advancing global economic growth, yet “they seek to incorporate only propertised classes and the privileged groups in developing countries into the global economy” that maintains the status quo of the economic dominance of the “wealthy North” against the global South (Munck 2005; Saul 2006; Scolte 1997). In the same train of thought Gumede (Kangwanja *et al.* 2009:44) further alludes to the fact that on another level the logical outcome of opening democratic institutions to the net-networks of influence necessitated the centralization of governance systems and ANC policy imperatives within the expanded Presidential Office. The given political Machiavellian talks of the transference of electoral mandate from the Executive “into a political centre” not accountable to parliament and the electorate. Such an administrative presidential decision was perceived as a conscious side-lining of the voices of the liberation movement as well as ordinary citizens from active engagement with the “policy and decision making” processes in the Mbeki presidency and beyond. In this scenario it is those with political and financial power and influence that are better positioned to dictate preferred policy outcomes than the powerless voter constituencies and public representatives. The vulnerability of our government to the manoeuvres of the net-networks of influence is also attested by Sampie Terreblanche (Kangwanja *et al.* 2009:114,108) in noting that the Mbeki administration presided over a period of “systemic exclusion” of the poor section of our population and thus precipitating the social inequality. The administrative exclusion of the poor began to take root immediately after the unbanning of the liberation organizations. The leadership was aggressively courted by big business in secret talks that were not endorsed by the rank and file membership. There was also a prevailing attitude that the liberation movement participated in the business talks for the benefit of the majority. Terreblanche argues that it was during those early days after the unbanning’s that active civic bodies were “demolished and deprive of the highly politicised role” and niche they had carved for themselves in the struggle years.

⁵³ Charles Villa-Vicencio (Doxtader *et al.* 2003:34) in his deliberations about issues of transitional justice brings to the attention of the reader the fact that the TRC process encountered calculated critic and accusation primarily from the quarters of the “beneficiaries of the past”. Their refusal to participate or endorse the processes of the TRC was informed by their impatience with the intentions of the whole process and constantly “asking why the past cannot simply remain the past”. In this protests to consign the past to history, there is contradiction in the sense that the privileges and benefits of the past still continue to advance the positions and interests of the given group, further perpetuating racial, gender, social and class inequalities.

⁵⁴ The level of corruption that has permeated government structures arose in the wake of perceived “state capture” by the Gupta family and white business represented by the Rupert family. In response

2.9 THE PATTERNS OF “SYSTEMIC FAILURE” IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Recently the office of the Public Protector released a long awaited report⁵⁵ about the status of the Post Office in response to reported cases of corruption and maladministration in the organization. In delivering its findings the office of the Public Protector stated that there was the prevalence of “systemic irregularities”⁵⁶ and maladministration that is characteristic in the running of the organization (Madonsela 2016:7).

The patterns of systemic failure manifesting at SAPO are grounded on what the Public Protector referred to as “systemic deficiencies” (Madonsela 2016:56) definitive of administrative processes. The mismanagement of the parastatals such as the Post Office brings to our attention the extent of “systemic failure” and how it has crippled

to the public outcry President Zuma (responding to allegation of his administration being captured by the Guptas) submitted his defense to the ANC national executive committee that “he had never appointed the Guptas anywhere in the state”. Whereas his predecessor Thabo Mbeki “had appointed Ajay Gupta to his economic advisory panel in the presidency”. Zuma detailed how the Gupta family was introduced to him by the Minister in the Presidency during the term of President Mbeki. In the same sitting of the national executive committee Zuma suggested that the South African billionaire based in London Johan Rupert is fiddling in local politics by the latter’s displeasure with the removal of Nene as finance Minister. Rupert’s (is alleged to have close contacts with Deputy President Cyril Ramaposa) resurgence in the mudslinging within the ANC is understood by Zuma as “part of an argument that white capital is also engaged in alleged state capture” (Andiswa Makinana, *City Press*, 27 March 2016:2).

⁵⁵ See the Public Protector report (titled *Postponed Delivery*), viewed on the 29 March 2016, at (<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/public-protector-finds-corruption-irregularities-post-office>). The findings of the Public Protector against Post SA revolves around a complaint brought forward by the SATAWU Union members raising concerns about the failure of management to occupy a building that SAPO rented but did not occupy for over eleven months. The Public Protector brings to our appreciation that the “SAPO is a strategic organ of state with an expenditure budget approximately R6.5 billion”. This organization employs 22 000 people placed at its 2,500 postal outlets country-wide, and it has the potential to attain R7 billion annual turn-over (Madonsela 2016:4).

⁵⁶ The pace and the extent by which our democratic culture in just twenty two years has been violated by systems of governance failure is alarming. The findings of the Public Protector concurs with Southall (*et al.* 2007:8) of the reality of the “systematization of corruption” in corporate governance structures particularly in the public sector. In the field of education this crisis of systemic failure is referred in the 2016 study conducted by the University of Stellenbosch’s Research on Socio-economic unit as the “weak institutional functionality” that produce poor quality education for African and black communities (Masondo 2016:10). Our new nation is struggling to turn the tide against corruption and ineptitude. The corrupt practices are slowly corroding government instruments set up to thwart the nature of systemic evil actualised by the tender oligarchy that is bent on collapsing our democracy. We can assert that it is no longer a question of the possibility for our governance to fragment, but rather it is now a question how deep the damage will be when the edifice of democracy, rule of law and accountable tenants of our government give way to tidal wave of vested interests of mis-governance that is gaining ground within the state machinery.

the capacity of accountable governance across state departments and parastatals such as the South African Broadcasting Corporation⁵⁷ (SABC).

The investigations of the SABC were conclusive in detailing the prevalence of “systemic corporate governance failures”⁵⁸ (Madonsela 2014:34) which were admitted to be a reality by the Chief Operations Officer, Mr. Hlaudi Motsoeneng. The report of the Public Protector asserts that Mr. Motsoeneng conceded that the SABC was experiencing systemic failures and dysfunctionality in its governance. However he refused to take responsibility, instead he put the blame to the Board, his executive colleague’s and to the Department of Communication (Madonsela 2014:10).

In the Post Office alone the findings of the Public Protector detail that the aspects of systemic failure are inherent in the management practice in the organization.

The Public Protector refers to “the failure of the SAPO to follow proper bidding process” (Madonsela 2016:9, 73). She further points to the “failure to implement” (Madonsela 2016:4, 78) corrective measures against act of maladministration. The management of the Post Office also failed in discharging their duties and responding with seriousness when complains were presented to them for consideration

⁵⁷ See the report of the Public Protector titled “*When Governance and Ethics Fail*”, viewed on the 29 March 2016, at (http://www.pprotect.org/library/investigation_report/2013-14/WHEN%20GOVERNANCE%20FAILS%20REPORT%20EXEC%20SUMMARY.pdf). The report conveys the findings of the Public Protector with stipulated and considered remedial actions. This report is an outcome of an investigation informed by a complaint registered on 11th November 2011 by Ms Phumelele Ntombela-Nzimande. Miss Ntombela-Nzimande called for an investigation to probe allegations regarding a number of corporate governance failures in the management and running of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The investigation sought to scrutinize the alleged misconduct of the management Board, with particular reference to the financial mismanagement at the SABC, resulting to the lack of control of the negative expansion of its financial expenditure. The investigation had to deal with the blurring of roles and functional conduct in an unprecedented undue interference by the Minister and Department of Communications in the staffing processes at the Corporation. Furthermore the investigation had to respond to alleged maladministration with regard to axing from the SABC of Ntombela-Nzimande and Ms Charlotte Mampane, former Acting Chief Operating Officer at the SABC, from 11th November, 2011 and 26th February 2012. The primary focus of the investigation was the alleged misconduct in the appointment processes and unprofessional behaviour of Mr Motsoeneng the Acting Chief Operations Officer (COO). Lastly the investigation looked at systemic maladministration affecting the overall running of the SABC.

⁵⁸ The mismanagement of SABC is similar in nature and expression to the other state organs investigated by the Public Protector. The findings also pointed to the existence of “symptomatic pathological corporate governance deficiencies” (Madonsela 2015:22). This negative state of affairs at the SABC was complicated by the pursuance of “systemic purging” (Madonsela 2015:29) of qualified senior staff members who did not see eye to eye with Mr Motsoeneng (who admitted that he had falsified his matriculation qualification in applying for the post in the SABC). The crisis of mismanagement was further compounded by the Minister of Communication in interfering with appointment of staff, an act which represented the violation of Executive Ethics Code on her part. All these shenanigans took place under the watch of the Board which did nothing to correct the misconduct of the Minister (Madonsela 2015:145).

(Madonsela 2016:21, 52). In a broader analysis the findings of the Public Protector exposes institutional failure on the part of the SAPO to adhere to internal monitoring standards and to promote open and accountable procurement processes (Madonsela 2016:64, 68, 78). The patterns of systemic failure at the SAPO brings to our attention the impact of “deep rooted corruption” (Madonsela 2016:20) with regard to the implementation of contracts. This situation has resulted into the emergence of “corrupt relationship” (Madonsela 2016:74) between suppliers and employees at SAPO.

The mismanagement of public institutions has effectively rendered the state vulnerable to failure. The manner in which public institutions are managed gives the impression that most senior managers regard themselves as not accountable to anyone. The findings of the Public Protector against PRASA⁵⁹ give a grim picture about inherent systemic failure in state organs. In her findings against the management at PRASA, the Public Protector excavated mismanagement practices that promotes “a culture of systemic failure” to adhere to good governance practice, as well as “failure to plan” and implement procurement systems that are transparent and fair (Madonsela 2015:46). The crisis at PRASA speaks of “the weak state framework” (Jackson 2001:65) in that we are governed by a failing state that has lost control of parastatals and their management systems.

⁵⁹ The said report by the Public Protector entitled “*Derailed*”, (viewed on the 29 March 2016, at <http://ewn.co.za/2015/08/24/Madonsela-releases-scathing-findings-against-Prasas-axed-CEO>), looked at the culture of systemic violation of policy and governance injunctions for good governance at the parastatal. The report makes attempt of giving a broader view of the status of the organization, both in its managerial and financial position. The reader is reminded of the significant role played by PRASA in the government’s attempts to address job creation, skills transference and broad-based economic development. The preamble of the report asserts that, “as a public infrastructure provider, PRASA also has implications for the economy. A state owned enterprise with an estimated total net value of assets over R19 billion as at 2010/2011, PRASA is an organ of state listed as a National Government Business Enterprise in terms of Schedule 3B of the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA). PRASA has four subsidiaries, namely: Metrorail, operating commuter rail services in urban areas; Shosholoza Meyl operating regional and intercity rail services; Autopax, operating regional and intercity coach services; and Intersite, managing the corporate property portfolio. PRASA reported an accumulated loss of R4.4 billion for 2010/12. PRASA reported an accumulated loss of R1 billion for 2014/2015 financial year. The budget allocation from Government for PRASA for the MTEF period 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 is R17.2 billion. The 37 cases reported by the Complainant mostly deal with alleged procurement irregularities with the amount involved being more than R2.8 billion. As the report was being finalized further allegations of procurement irregularities at PRASA were reported” (Madonsela 2015:4).

Thus Madonsela's reading of operational systems further reveals "systemic administrative deficiencies" (Madonsela 2015:48, 67) that perpetuates maladministration and compromised accounting systems. PRASA is also reprimanded for conducting its business in the context that shows "systemic failures" (Madonsela 2015:145) in its monitoring and evaluation processes, which undoubtedly leads to "systemic procurement management deficiencies" that has enabled corrupt practices to be pervasive (Madonsela 2015:382). The disheartening finding against PRASA is the prevalence of a culture of deliberately "hiding" and manipulating information that has a bearing on the human resource management and business contracts and agreements (Madonsela 2015: 206, 382).

Management (at state enterprises) conduct of disregarding standing systems of accountability and expected duty of care for the respective organizations has undoubtedly set in place a template of "systemic failure" (*TRC Report 1998:12, Extract 2, paragraph 607*) for the democratic dispensation. A "culture of impunity" has taken root across the parastatals (*TRC Report 1998:4, Extract 4, paragraph 146*). On the other hand a number of social analysts such as Roger Southall have alluded to the entrenchment and "systematization of corruption" in public institutions⁶⁰ (Buhlungu *et al.* 2007:8).

The systematization of corruption in public spaces has gained a distinct personality and spirituality, resulting to a predictable pattern of conduct by individuals and groupings bent on corruptive systems of governance. Corporate spirituality in this regard becomes the defining factor of what an organization represents and that which it stands for. More importantly how organizations seeks to relate both to the internal as well as the external parties. As a nation we need to confront the spirituality of socio-structural systems of vulnerability that has put on a corrupt public persona. Therefore South Africans both as private and corporate persons need to acknowledge that there is a "relative hierarchy", a corporate spirituality that informs corruption in the public sector (Davies 1983:225). We could then engage measures

⁶⁰ Walter Wink (1986:4) argues that every institution has a particular distinct spirituality and personality. He regards such a reality as "an intrinsic spirituality, an inner essence, a collective culture or ethos, which cannot be deciphered from its outer manifestation". As such, given the varying categories of vulnerability, the "personality, social-structural, and symbolic elements" thereof, as well as the meeting points between various levels vulnerability are present (Turner & Beeghley 1981:373).

that define us, be they open or closed systems of economic equity or the persistence of systemic vulnerability, “which we live, and which we ourselves are” and within which we find ourselves (Outhwaite 1987:22).

Our corporate spirituality is defined by deliberate looting of public resources with dire implication for our social relations. The case in point is a similar mismanagement of the South African Airways (SAA) that has been relying on bailout mechanism from the Treasury amounting to over 30 billion rand in the last decade as reflected in the high-speed of mismanagement at the SAA manifested with the miscalculation by its CEO Coleman Andrews.

Andrews committed the airline in purchasing R4 billion Boeing B737 knowing fully well that the airline could not afford the deal. His contract was subsequently cancelled at the cost of the “richest golden handshake (R232 million) in local corporate history”. Surprisingly the SAA management escalated the crisis by undertaking a costly gamble in converting its hedge funds into dollars resulting to a “R8.7 billion loss and a whopping R15 billion trading deficit in 2003-4” (Southall, *This Day*, 16.9.04). Such blatant disregard of common sense that has contributed to the plundering of the public purse gives credence to the assertions by William Gumede’s notion that public servants “can get away with corruption if they have good political connections” (Kagwanja *et al.* 2009:55). The democratic space provided by the 1994 elections has enable sinister forces of corrupt intentions to maneuver with relative ease.

Recently we have learnt of how “the Guptas⁶¹ have strategically captured Zuma and, by remote control, have been running both government and the ANC with varying

⁶¹ The Gupta family originally from India, arrived in South Africa in 1993 with the intention of acquiring South African citizenship. They have managed to build for themselves a business empire (comprising of more than forty five companies) that is worth billions of rand with a variety of interests “in computers, mining, media and engineering”. The concern about the Guptas is a perceived undue influence they have on the person and the family of the President Jacob Zuma and the ANC. They have infiltrated all levels of government and have enabled Jacob Zuma to “construct elaborate patronage systems” (Jackson 2001:70) to maintain his corrupt dealings. Jacob Zuma’s son Duduzane, owns shares in a number of the Gupta companies. This close relationship has led to the allegations that the Guptas have orchestrated “corporate capture” of the government and in particular the State President himself. It is alleged that the Guptas have amassed an influence to the office of the Presidency that they have abrogated themselves the right and the Presidential prerogative to appoint ministers in Cabinet posts. The Gupta companies have managed to secure tenders and business

degrees of influence” (Ndebele, City Press, 20 March 2016:13). Njabulo Ndebele’s analysis of the state capture by the Guptas follows a simple pattern of *modus operandi*. It is evident that the Guptas’ process of state capture which is a deliberate intent to expedite the systemic vulnerability of State institutions and systems of governance, begins with the identification of particular “sources of wealth” to be won over their business interest. Thereafter “political enablers, enforcement instruments and instruments of governance to secure these sources” is then activated (Ndebele 2016:13). The argument at hand advance the view that the synergistic dimension of state capture comprises of business rational for state capture which is the prerogative of the Guptas, and governance capabilities for the realization of stated objectives which is allegedly delivered by President Jacob Zuma “who governs only in his own narrow interests and the interests of those in his patronage network” (February 2016:13). Thus dragging and deliberately plunging our government and State into “legitimacy crisis”, expressive of “weak” and “failing” states phenomenon (Jackson 2001:70).

The overall enabler for the state capture to thrive is the sacrifice of the politics of principle for “loyalty” to the ANC even if it means the violation of the public conscience. In the light of these serious allegations against the Head of State and the ruling party, we can reach a conclusion that we have a “democracy” only by name. Ours’s is a “state captured” by “self-interested elite” that manipulates “state machinery” for their benefits (Buzan 1991:84). Our democracy is becoming history by the behest of the domineering oligarchy that as a nation we have allowed to take over the running of our country without the mandate of the ballot box.

interests that have direct or indirect links with government (Hlengiwe Nhlabathi and Setumo Stone, City Press, 6 March 2016:6). The systemic patterns of state capture mediated by the Gupta Empire points to “a net -work” of individuals who occupies strategic, powerful and positions of influence particularly in the parastatals that are directly or indirectly linked to the Guptas. An analysis of the systemic capture of the governance structures manifest alliances and “contacts” that represent the Gupta interests at the two parastatals, Eskom and Transnet. The analysis shows that more than twelve board members at the two institutions have relationships with the Guptas. Such a state of affairs raises questions about the credibility of those appointments by the Minister of Public Enterprises, Ms. Lynne Brown. Her appointments of individuals who are beholden to the Guptas to positions that have duty of care and responsibility of the policies and the management of state resources makes a mockery of the notion of accountability of the Executive and Parliament to the voters. Her appointments accounts to the Gupta family. A case in point is one of the Gupta associates Salim Essa has at least close links with “five directors of Eskom alone”. Essa’s web of influence extends to “a staggering number of people with direct influence in Transnet, Eskom and the department of mineral resources”. This analysis comes to a logical conclusion that asserts that the

The systemic capture of the state by vested interests of big business⁶² and their beneficiaries was evident on the removal of the Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene at the close of 2015. His removal⁶³ by the President was credited to the hand of the Guptas whose “insidious incursions into the public governance space” resulted to the worst fall of the rand against the US dollar. The removal of Nene plunged the rand to the negative 9.5% of its market value with disastrous effects to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) loosing “R170 billion from the bourse and severely eroding ordinary people’s life savings” in less than five days. The collapse of the strength of rand had a negative impact in the lives of the ordinary and mostly poor township residents in a manner that cannot be reflected on with justice (Msimang 2016:6).

The devastating effects of Mr. Jacob Zuma recklessness is attested by the huge loss sustained by the Government Pension Fund in just two days of the implementation of his decisions. Daniel Matjila, the CEO of the Public Investment Cooperation alluded to the fact the overall Government Pension Fund lost over R95 billion. When the losses are categorized we could ascertain that the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) lost the sum of R 7 billion, the Compensation Fund and the Pension Fund lost R 3 billion and R 1.2 billion respectively. It can be concluded that Mr. Jacob Zuma

Guptas literally own state enterprises by the consent of the Cabinet of Jacob Zuma (Sole, McKune & Brummer, *Mail & Guardian*, March 24-31, 2016:2).

⁶²See the leaked Public Protector Report, (www.mfin24.com/Companies/Financial-Services/leak, viewed on the 05th February 2017) about the illegitimate apartheid bailout given to ABSA without expressed demands from Treasury for ABSA to pay back the ‘loan’ given at the tax payer’s expense. The leaked document calls for ABSA bank to pay back a merely R2, 25 billion. The extent of this scandal has amounted to “R200bn-worth of apartheid-era loot” that the ANC government has failed to recover (Erasmus 2017:11). Recently the South African Competition Commission has announced its intentions to pursue charges against 17 banks (local and international) for collusion in fixing the rand in global market trade, dating as far back as 2010. It is alleged that this fixing scandal could result to massive fines of up to R140 billion (Steyn, et al, 2017:2, *Mail & Guardian*, Feb 17 to 23).

⁶³The removal of Minister Nene from his finance portfolio was precipitated by his refusal to endorse a South African Air Ways (SAA) tender deal of R6 billion rand to purchase five Airbus A330 planes. Nene refused approval of the purchase by a company (Quartile Capital) that had the backing of SAA chairperson Dudu Myeni who is a close associate of President Zuma and the chair of Jacob Zuma Foundation. Nene’s refusal to give a green light to the SAA recommendation for Quartile Capital to buy aircrafts on behalf of the SAA was the possible financial collapse of the SAA due to the demand of “up to billions of rands of SAA debts” by the creditors and banks that advanced capital to the SAA. What raised concerns to the creditors was the contractual agreement between SAA and the Airbus to the effect that the parastatal was expected to pay a pre-delivery amount of \$40 million (R618 million). When Minister Nene questioned the rationale of the SAA chairperson for such an arrangement with Airbus. He was then removed from his duties as finance Minister allegedly due to the fact that he was a stumbling block to the realization of the deal. The given allegation have been refuted by the Presidency, citing a redeployment of the minister to the forthcoming post at the BRICS Bank which has not yet materialized (Susan Comrie, *City Press*, 27 March 2016:1-2).

has cost the civil servants over R100 billion in the 48 hours of his redeployment exercise, and in totality the JSE lost R500 billion (Msimang 2016:6).

The reckless decision of Mr. Jacob Zuma has affected the most vulnerable in our society in measures that defies logic. The indictment⁶⁴ against Mr. Jacob Zuma is his inability to appreciate the damage he has done to the country in his failure to respect the Executive Members Ethics Code⁶⁵ that governs his presidential duties. Systemic

⁶⁴ See the ruling of the Constitutional Court in the matter of *“Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others”*, viewed on the 8th April 2016, at (https://en.wikipedia.org/.../Economic_Freedom_Fighters_v_Speaker). The judgment categorically declared that President Jacob Zuma had “failed to uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the land” in refusing to comply with the remedial actions instituted by the Public Protector regarding upgrades in his private residence at Nkandla (Mogoeng 2016:41). The judgment also ruled that the National Assembly failed in its obligation to hold the Executive to account by endorsing the report of the Minister of Police. The concocted report was bad exercise of cover-ups and misdirected in its “findings”. Hence in “exonerating the President from liability is inconsistent with the Constitution and unlawful” (Mogoeng 2016:49). This judgment must serve as wake-up call to the government to lead by example in showing respect to the citizens and “the supreme law of the land.” If there is any judgment about the deficit of imaginative capability to rise up to the nations aspirations for post-apartheid governance on person of the President and the Executive, this is it. The judgment in concurring with the report of the Public Protector points out that Jacob Zuma “failed to act in line with his Constitutional and ethical obligation by knowingly deriving undue benefit from the irregular deployment of State resources” for his advantage in the installation of non-security features in his homestead (Mogoeng 2016:4). The judgment further declared that Mr. Jacob Zuma “violated the provisions of the Executive Members’ Ethics Code” and by implication his oath of office that requires of him to lead with integrity under the Constitution (Mogoeng 2016:7). The judgment alludes to the fact that Mr Jacob Zuma has failed in act and intent on four levels. Firstly he has failed to respect the law of the land. He has also failed to govern on the basis of the moral insight of the Constitution. Thirdly Mr Zuma has failed to adhere to the ethical standards of his office by violating his oath of office in playing ignorance to instances of corruption at his homestead. Fourthly, he has failed to conduct himself on the grounds of the “dictates of Constitutional Principle VI”, demanding governance practice “to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness” to parliament and the nation (Mogoeng 2016:44) as dictated by our “human rights culture” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1988, Recommendations/Reconciliation, Extract 5, para, 21). This judgment reminds us that the failure of Mr Zuma implies his inherent impotency to respond rationally to the Public Protector. He is also void of shame, let alone the insight to activate personal and material resources capacitated in his office to respond appropriately. We could assert on the basis of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s “interpretational lenses” (Van Eck 2013:226) embedded in its “factual or forensic truth”, that Mr Zuma has failed to live up to the legal and moral demands of his office. Hence he must not be spared from the critique of the “social or dialogical truth” that compels the electorate to call him to account for the breach of trust represented by the Nkandla corruption. Furthermore, we need to take into account the interpretive critique of “the healing and restorative truth” that ought to be effected in reconstructing moral sensitivity and professional judgment of government employees, across the departments, who were exposed to the corrosive episodes of Nkandla (Dioxtader *et al.* 2009:93). We could assert the need for the symbolic or imaginative truth that implies the demonstration of justice, moral conduct and transparent governance both in perceptual and concrete day to day decision making in all spheres of governance as a remedy for the damage done the Nkandla corruption.

⁶⁵ See the report of the Public Protector in her report *“Secure in Comfort”*, viewed on the 8th April 2016, at (<http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Public%20Protector's%20Report%20on%20Nkandla>) about the upgrades at the presidential homestead reached the conclusion that the President violated his executive ethics code by not raising questions regarding the escalating costs of the project. The ethics code is informed by Section 2 of the executive members’ ethics act, in paragraph 2 which demands from Cabinet members among other things to: “(a) perform their duties and exercise their powers diligently and honestly; (b) act in good faith and in the best interest of good governance; (c)

act in all respects in a manner that is consistent with the integrity of their office or the government” (Madonsela 2014:352). These values and moral principles were unashamedly violated by Mr. Zuma. The report detail how Mr Zuma failed to live up to the ethical and moral standards of his office. It showed that the President’s failure was serious in the sense that he went to an extent of misleading Parliament by giving false information in claiming that his family advanced the funding for non-security aspects of the project. However the findings of the Public Protector contradicts the President on concrete facts informed by irrefutable sequence of events. Madonsela (2014:425) registered her concerns on the ethical question by the President on his reporting in his speech to “parliament and the nation that no building was constructed for him by government. The evidence shows that these structures were constructed for him at state expense. The structures on the homestead part of the fence include the visitors’ centre, cattle kraal with chicken run, swimming pool and amphitheatre. Misleading Parliament is prohibited by the Executive Ethics Code. My decision on his conduct is in the findings. The pertinent question related to the fact that the President may have misled parliament and accordingly violated the executive ethics code when he announced that the renovations at his private residence were financed through a bank mortgage bond.” Mr. Zuma deliberately lied to Parliament by asserting that he was not informed about the day to day running of the project and that he did not interfere with the progress of the work. However Thuli Madonsela presents a different version about the involvement of the President in the project and his subsequent violation the executive member’s ethics code. She alluded to the fact that “it is common cause that the President was briefed by officials of the SAPS and DOD when the Nkandla project started on the measures that had to be installed in his private dwellings. He has not denied that he was informed from time to time on certain aspects of the project by Mr Makhanya and deputy Minister Bogopane-Zulu and reports were occasionally forwarded for his attention” (Madonsela 2014:422-423). Thuli Madonsela gives further details that elucidate the participation of the President in his attempts to expedite the project considering the scale of the project and disruptive impact it was exerting on his family life. It is therefore disingenuous of the President to report to Parliament that to the best of his knowledge the project was driven by experts whose primary aim was to improve and implement only security upgrades. It is on that score that the report mentions the fact that “the President was also provided with a detailed progress report on 5 November 2011 by the former Minister of Public Works. The President was therefore aware of what the Nkandla project entailed. He obviously also observed the scale and extent of the project when he visited his private residence during the period of implementation. The fact that he complained on more than one occasion of the lack of progress made with the project and the impact that it had on his private life and that of his family clearly shows that he was aware of the measures taken and the status of its implementation. We have also ascertained some direct involvement related to his request that the design of the bullet resistant windows be changed and a kraal be built. There is no evidence that the President raised his concern or disapproval on the scale of the project that was being implemented at his private residence or the cost thereof with the ministers or officials involved. The mere magnitude of the Nkandla project, the many buildings constructed, including underground facilities and substantial landscaping interventions, the swimming pool and terrace, amphitheatre, kraal and culvert, visitors centre, elaborate paving and the space created for a marquee tent, would, in my view, have prompted any reasonable person in the position of the President to seriously question the need for certain items and the expense to the fiscus of funds that could have been used somewhere else where there are service delivery needs, poverty and unemployment.” (Madonsela 2014:423). The main argument of the report regarding the absence of ethical consideration in the entire project is premised on the constitutional requirement as articulated in Section 96 of the constitution and the executive ethics code. The constitutional ethical framework demanded from “ a person in the position of the President to have been concerned about the obvious elaborate scale of the project that was being implemented at his private residence and the cost thereof to the state. As the ultimate upholder of the values of the Constitution and custodian of public funds, it was, in my respectful opinion, expected of him to have interrogated the need for measures, such as the underground safe haven, the relocation of households, the construction of a visitors centre, swimming pool, amphitheatre etc. Which were both extensive and in some instances had no obvious relation to his protection and the security of the premises”. The Public Protector critiques the President on his failure to bring sanity to the whole exercise by pointing out that in the instances that the President gave corrective directives on what he desired. Appropriate actions were duly taken by the officials to actualise the wishes of the President, such as his displeasure with the installation of bullet resistant windows and the quality of work in the construction of the kraal. Therefore Madonsela (2014:425) laments that “a substantial amount of public money would have been saved, had the President raised his concerns in time. By failing to do so, the President allowed or caused extensive and excessive

state capture continues to destroy the lives of millions of South Africans who have pinned their hopes for betterment of their lives to the very same public representatives who are compromised by corrupt business interests.

2.10 THE SYSTEMIC PATTERNS OF THE “SILENCE OF VULNERABILITY”⁶⁶

Another form of the patterns of vulnerability is manifested in the perceived sense of guilt and shame of those exposed to the violence of apartheid. This is evident in the experiences of the individuals whose resolve to withstand the systems of apartheid was “broken” by their interrogators under severe torture. In this regard the “silence of vulnerability” was actualized and it was further internalized by the victims who had to live with the knowledge that in their struggle path they “failed” to be true to their convictions and principles. The security personnel who gave testimonies in the amnesty hearings refer to the notions that the way they administered torture and interrogations was designed to diminish the sense of worth, pride and dignity of the victim⁶⁷. Their primary intention was to “break” the arrested person to confession and possible betrayal of fellow comrades.

upgrades that go beyond necessary security measures to be made to his private residence, at state expense”.

⁶⁶ The systemic patterns of the “silence of vulnerability” are deliberated upon by Greg Cuthbertson and Alan Jeeves (2008:9). Their point of entry into this space of vulnerability is that the given silence is characterised by the prevalence of fear for the unknown. The one aspect they present to us reveals a conscious effort and decision by our country to “the shift away” from dealing and confronting the issues that were unearthed by the TRC. They refer to this framework of vulnerability as the “new silence” that brings us face to face with “systematic and extreme human-rights violation” catalogued by the TRC. However the silence takes place when the nation decides to turn its back against the realities of human rights violations presented at the TRC. On the other hand the TRC analyses the vulnerability of silence as reflecting the deep-seated incapacity and impotence of the victims of human rights violations to muster the courage and inner resolve to consciously respond against their dehumanization in the face of human rights violations they had to endure, in some cases under extreme forms of torture and interrogation. This is the calculated and deliberate silencing of the vulnerable that refuses to raise and register voices and deeds of protests. This silence by whatever justifications it can command deliberately denies and downplays the experiences of humiliation that the victims of human rights violations had to learn to leave with. Cuthbertson and Jeeves (2007:9) bring a harsh reminder that this “new silence” of the vulnerable “weigh” heavily in the new historical trajectory we have embarked upon since 1994.

⁶⁷ It is therefore important for us to adopt an informed appreciation of the challenges of living with food shortage. We also need to cultivate and practice a restorative phenomenological approach, best defined by Vera Buhrmann (1984:10) as “a path of inner exploration”, in our attempts of responding in a responsible way to the challenges of food shortage. The demands of a phenomenological approach are that one has to identify with those living with vulnerability. Phenomenological appraisal of the situations of vulnerability enables the reader to muster the courage to handle the given reality of food shortage as a “lived experience” (Brooke 1991:31) that demands genuine response and redress. On the other hand one must develop a special kind of detachment from the communities concerned. Intentions to ameliorate conditions of vulnerability must be informed by conscious efforts to “suspend” or “bracket” (Oates 1973:34) one’s biases or any attitude and value judgment criteria. In that regard affording dignity to the identified communities facing hunger in the manner in which intervention

measures applied to their situations are not perceived as “top-down” solutions. The whole exercise of “suspending” or “bracketing” one’s biases does not necessarily mean total disregard of one’s own value systems and psycho-spiritual structures. It implies that the attempts to redress the conditions of hunger must be informed by choices that seek to relate and engage vulnerable communities in terms of their collective psycho-spiritual frame of reference, rather than the imposition of the frame of reference by outsiders. The kind of vulnerability as a result of hunger needs to be addressed from the viewpoint of the concerned families and individuals, more so on the basis of religious experience and social consciousness of affected communities (Mashinini 2004:25). The benefit of this exercise is that one does not have to be deliberately dislocated and placed at a distance from his/her frame of reference in order to win the confidence and fulfill the expectations of vulnerable communities. The vulnerability of food shortage demands respect for the “otherness” of the other without compromising ourselves in the process. Such vulnerability requires intervention measures on the basis of “I-thou” categories, instead of perceiving hungry families in terms of “I-it” categories as rightly espoused by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. With regard to the former option we are placed in a situation whereby we rightly see families living with hunger as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. Such a position will imprint upon the reader an inclination of perceiving and respecting the individuality of each suffering family, and the members thereof, as free moral agents who have the capacity to overcome their challenges. Food shortage demands an emergence of a critical voice that must promote a “reading grid” (Boff 1987:21) to serve as a perspective fostering “different ways of reading” (Fiorenza 1988:13) state sanctioned processes of dealing with hunger. Such a critical voice must attain what Norman Gottwald asserted as the “balance of power” (West 1991:13) in the discourse of social justice for the vulnerable. This balancing critical engagement must be deliberate in challenging public position that tends to be over defensive, and dismissive of possible failure of the state in providing solutions to issues of hunger. The public intolerance and critical performance evaluation and review of government’s interventions are a necessity. It will foster public perceptual constructs that “work out” (Boff 1987:25) and demands continuous accountability to communities by state entities. The very existence of vulnerability due to food shortage ought to serve in its own right as a concrete reading grid” of governments intervention systems. Cochrane and west would regard this “reading grid” in terms of liberative framework as an “epistemologically privileged” analytical category of the poor and vulnerable (Cochrane & West 1991:1). Confronting vulnerability from the affected communities’ position must bring about constructive readings that do not seek to gloss over the existing challenges. On the other hand, critical readings against food shortage will encounter “interpretative disagreements” that either uphold or surrender to the *status quo* maintaining “interpretive interests” (West 1991:133). Rather we need a kind of critical reading that will “shake us up” and “make us uncomfortable” (Joubert 2009:48) in the face of hunger during the two decades of democracy in South Africa. Fiorenza (1988:14) would argue that her constructs of “different ways of reading” vulnerability ought to yield dual implications. Firstly, she insists that her reading must impress in the mind of the reader a kind of interpretation of the “text” regarding vulnerability. Thereafter the application of the “meaning” of the “text” of vulnerability must seek to “do justice” to the affected communities. However Margaret Elizabeth Kostenberger (2008:16) at this stage will go a step further from Fiorenza by duly proposing a kind of “reading” that is “countercultural” of the socio-historical framework that serves as bedrock for poverty in township settings. Perhaps Gunther Bornkamm (1960:9) would rightly concur with the stance taken by Kostenberger. He supports the unleashing of a reading approach willing to “break through” vulnerability, and “seek behind it” a critical perception of all given systems that perpetuate hunger and destitute. The breaking down of the edifice of vulnerability will enable each affected party to “built its own case” (Komoszewski *et al.* 2006:18)) through daily life experiences of food shortage and official legitimation of possible causes and anticipated solutions. Thus in the posture of John MacArthur (2008:25) we would be operating on a position of strength that validates the experiences of the marginalised when we consciously “refuse to tone down” the demand of the poor for dignity against hunger and poverty. This presuppositional stance against vulnerability concurs with the murmurings of Gustavo Gutierrez’s (1973:287) warning against watering down spiritual engagement with poverty that does not directly confront the indignity and ugliness of being poor. One can therefore come to a point of appreciating the fact there will always exist some elements of tension and the roughing of feathers between the state and communities facing food shortage. The defining factor of the perceived misalignment of expectations on the side of the communities and inadequate service delivery creates a widening gap between the governors and the governed. In a situation of a prevailing schism, Norman Gottwald suggests the disagreement between the powers and the affected communities can be appropriated as a vehicle of genuine “encounter” similar to an exercise of finding each other “around the text” as readers and interpreters of scripture (West

In the given testimonies the Report deduces that the arrested persons who were exposed to extreme levels of torture became “more vulnerable”, resulting to “greater silence” (*TRC Report 1998:4, The State Inside SA, Extract 2, para, 95*), informed by the “code of silence” of the past (*TRC Report, Findings and Conclusions, 1998:5, Extract 4, para, 32*) Hence the victims internalized their humiliation by holding to feelings of failure to withstand the pain inflicted by their interrogators. They believed that they have betrayed their convictions and principles by succumbing to the “culture of silence” that has resulted to the “maintenance of this culture of silence” by the perpetuation of the status quo of social marginalization (Freire 2000:30).

Another dimension that complicates the silence of humiliation is the perceived stance that principled comrades were supposedly expected not to display any form of weakness under the duress of torture. Hence they then internalized their “weakness” to the point of experiencing feelings of guilt and shame. These individuals are struggling to be integrated back into their respective communities due to self-imposed stigma. It is therefore imperative for the reader to locate one-self in the realities of those experiencing food shortages, and yet harbor the thought that it is

1991:13). The atomic physicist Weiner Heisenburg attested to this finding of common concerns as the convergence of perspectives in attempts to advance workable solutions with the given challenges before us. Heisenburg (1958:175) formulated his arguments by firstly acknowledging the possibility that the given “points” of interaction may emanate from a variety of contexts. Those points of interaction could be socio-cultural, diversity of timeframes and different expression of religious traditions. Nonetheless converging “at those points where two different lines of thought meet” in response to the issues of social vulnerability is likely to yield desired outcomes. Providing a critical reading that would foster a transformative “historical and religious consciousness” (Fiorenza 1988:13) at the identified and seriously contested “points of vulnerability” is important. Unlocking the reading processes applied by Gerald West (1991:21) of reading the Bible can best be attained when one goes through a comprehensive critical “reading” of vulnerability. West talks of different “modes” of engaging the Bible. His point of contention is that the interpretive task in biblical setting deals with a variety of questions in the “broader interpretive terrain”. Hence he insists that relevant interpretive involvement must be informed by one’s “own interests”. Therefore in interpreting food shortage one does not need to focus “on the detail but the shape” (West 1991:21) of social conditions of hunger. The interpretive positions identified by West, which are characterised by possibilities of liberative readings and practice, have multiple positional locations in the entire process of biblical interpretation. The very same “modes of reading”, could find application and relevance in our reading of the situations of vulnerability. It is imperative that as we endeavour to provide a deeper understanding of the systems of vulnerability. We also need to allow a room for a dialogue between different voices in the South African context and other settings that might have direct relevance to the issues of vulnerability. Thus a deliberate critique of vulnerability from the given points of views ties very well with Gerald West’s social aspect of truth as reflected in the “situatedness” of the text (West 1991:132). Hence such social location of vulnerability must expose the “vested interests” that frustrate efforts to provide meaning to our responses as a nation and the truth “dialogues” we evoke about hunger. The “situatedness” of vulnerable households, if not addressed, will determine our chances for survival as a nation. On another level such a situation will act as a pointer for the impending annihilation of a nation that is still faced with countless deficits on both the material and personal spheres of social interaction.

because of their inabilities, weaknesses and failure to provide for their families. Is it possible that the guilt and shame of those living with hunger is pushing them to the fringes of society? Can we assert that the exposure to hunger also serve as a form of torture inflicted against families and communities in urban townships? The “culture of silence” has permeated the whole fabric of South African political life. Those among the liberation movement who were fearless critics of apartheid have succumbed and are opting for ‘silence’ in the face of the rampaging patronage and corruption.

2.11 LANDLESSNESS AS A DEFINITIVE PATTERN OF SYSTEMIC VULNERABILITY

Since we have discussed (through the lenses of the TRC) in detail the social, economic and political framework that gave birth to the patterns of systemic vulnerability. Perhaps it would be prudent of us to acknowledge that over a century ago, one of the finest minds ever to emerged in South African soil, Sol Plaatje gave a deep analysis of our country’s ills in his work, *“Native life in South Africa”* (2007), which was firstly published in 1916. In this work Plaatje presents the results of the research he undertook to determine the impact in the lives of rural black South Africans in the introduction of the 1913 Native Land Act that rendered Africans vagabonds⁶⁸ in their native land. Plaatje (2007:22) duly informs us that the enactment of the Native Land Act on the 29th of June 1913 legalized the dispossession of the black people land rights. Whereas the white population were

⁶⁸In a stage play on issues of reconciliation in South Africa, *“Nothing but the Truth”* by John Kani (2001:36, Macmillan South Africa and Wits University Press, Johannesburg), we encounter a debate between Siphos and Thando, his daughter about Siphos failure to secure a post he had applied for. Thando, with the conviction of youth challenges her father to fight for that Senior librarian post. She argues that he “...deserved that job. You’ve waited for it all your life”. In calculated anger Siphos responds by stating the obvious, “It’s okay Thando. It’s done. There is nothing we can do about it”. Mandisa, Siphos niece, steps in and recklessly push him to man up and fight for what is duly his, in her asking, “are you going to let him take what is rightfully yours?” Indignantly Siphos submitted, “yes, yes. People always take things from me. It’s been like that all my life”. This resigned acknowledgement of the taking that Africa has gone through gives credence to what landless black South Africans are still subjected to, with the indifference of a black majority government. The taking away of what is rightfully African, the land and its resources has not ceased in the last 364 years. This time it happens with the arrogance of patronage and the *“State of Capture”* agenda, (Public Protector Report 2016).

The question of landlessness among the Africans in South Africa is definitive of what it means to be an African in the post-apartheid dispensation. The experiences of denial to own land in one’s native soil confirms the grounding constructs of what Bevens (2009:xvi) perceived to be “the experience of the *past*” and “the experience of the *present*” that represents the prevailing power and privileges of the elites (both black and white) against the landless majority.

granted land ownership comprising 87 per cent against 13 per cent leftovers that were allocated to the Africans in the Reserves.

We would not be far from the truth if we could postulate that the land dispossession of the Africans in 1913 represents one of the first post-colonial legislation that established and legalized the patterns of systemic vulnerability that we are grappling with hundred and three years later. In essence the 1913 Native Land Act is definitive of the “fundamental patterns of income and wealth inequality” (Piketty 2014:242) in the history on our nation. We can assert that the 1913 Native Land Act stands as one of the main stakes that rotted the patterns of systemic vulnerability as Apartheid in 1948. We need to appreciate that the status of landlessness of the Africans is definitive of systemic vulnerability today. The given status was later contextualised and implemented as the framework of Bantustan structures and Group Areas Act that controlled the movements of black people in urban areas. It thus makes sense to locate the gradual introduction of Apartheid laws such as the Pass Laws and Job Preservation for whites. The latter legislation served as an affirmative action mechanism intended to benefit whites. The patterns of systemic vulnerability we have enunciated simply reflect the consequences of land dispossession and its material manifestation in the broader context whereby “the wealthiest 10 percent control about 60-65 percent of national income” (Piketty 2016:168). Indeed that is the reality of being a black African and marginalised in one’s native land.

The attestation that the landlessness of the Africans is a pattern of systemic vulnerability stands as a reminder of how our government has failed⁶⁹ to actualise the aspirations of the poor majority and how “the promise of equality has not been realized” in the twenty two years of democratic rule (Piketty 2016:168). Ruth Hall in her evaluation of land transference highlights some self-inflicted impediments that frustrated the just transference of land to the landless. Hall (2014:171) argues that “after twenty years of democracy, not only has the land reform fall far short of both

⁶⁹ The African National Congress government that came into power through the suffering and tears of the landless African majority has hardened its heart to the call of the oppressed (for land restoration) reverberating through the voice of the poem, “*No time, Black man*” by Don Mattera (2007:46, *Azanian Love Song*, African Morning Star Publications, Grant Park, South Africa). Mattera cries out that, “Stand, Black man, put that cap back on your beaten head...don’t bargain with oppression. There’s no time man, just no more time, for the Black man to fool around”. The African Nation Congress in the past twenty two years has not appreciated the time wasted appeasing the few elites with no conscience who are spiteful of the pain of the landless by demanding money for the land they inherited through bloodshed.

official government targets and the public expectations of the early 1990s". Its formulation protocols have been wavering to the advantage of the market demands. This dismal performance of the state is verified by its own data that shows that "by 1999 less than 1 per cent of commercial farmland has been made available to black South Africans".

She further points to records that confirms that after the decade in the new dispensation, only 3 per cent of the land had been successfully handed over to deserving applicants through the channels of all state programs administering land transfers. The figures of the 2013 financial year refers to a merely 6.5 per cent of the land acquisition for landless. The question of land ownership as "the socioeconomic mechanism that generate inequality" (Piketty 2015:2) perceived from the narrative (87 per cent white ownership of land) of Sol Plaatje, show how far the bar has been lowered in affirming the dignity of the Africans by the black government (Hall 2014:171). Whereas the very same black government presides over the institutionalization of "the narrow interests of old white elite and the emerging black elite" (Terreblanche 2012:66) in the face of landless African majority. In this regard we can assert that the conditions of landlessness that has targeted Africans has pushed our nation into the reality of "failing" or "failed" state driven by a "complex nexus of actors, incentives, power structures and net-works" that maintains the status quo of social and economic inequality (Jennings *et al* 2005:388). We can only concur with Jennings that the dynamics of the failing state that permits landlessness give credence to the notion that the failure to implement land reform in our country points to decisions that "take place outside and in-between official state structures , and power relations" (Jennings *et al* 2005:392) that are captured by vested interests of patronage.

2.12 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has provided ample space on the question of socio-historical context of vulnerability as a framework for the conditions of hunger. A further analysis of the context of hunger was viewed through the categories of spirituality and social stratification.

A detailed analysis was given to the historical context of vulnerability in the formative processes of the patterns of systemic vulnerability. Lastly we also made an attempt to engage socio-analytical tools to unlock the given layers of vulnerability in our country, from the platform of intentional, immediate and critical reading of the multi-faceted issues of vulnerability. In the following Chapter we will turn our focus on the economic imperatives of vulnerability.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMICS OF FOOD INSECURITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will devote much attention to the economic factors that contribute to food shortage. In that regard the fundamental economic policy document the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) will be discussed with the intent of determining whether its position on job creation and poverty eradication has materialised.

Thereafter the economic tool of inflation control as a driver for economic growth will be investigated, particularly its influence in creating the conditions for social vulnerability. This analysis will take into cognizance the context of globalisation and its calculated consequences of socio-economic inequality in our country.

The challenge of our government in servicing foreign debt obligation, as well as the private sector's practice of transfer pricing to European markets will be explored. Attention will be directed to the mining sector with regards to its contribution to structural vulnerability. Furthermore the conduct of the emerging economic elite with its inherent demands for self-enrichment through corrupt means will be exposed. We will show how such conduct violates the human rights and the dignity of the poor.

3.2 ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF FOOD INSECURITY

The economic context of food insecurity systems when subjected to the scrutiny of liberative economic analysis yields unexpected results. It is not surprising that rigorous analysis of economic frameworks brings to our attention the fact that prevalent analysis tend to endorse the *status quo* of the dominance of the few in the economy of the country. Hence the critique by Moelesti Mbeki of the state of economies in Africa as whole brings important perspective on the causes of poverty and hunger across the Continent.

The basis of Mbeki's (2009:ix) argument is that the challenges of poverty facing the African Continent today can be traced back to the influence of Western Imperialism,⁷⁰ and the commencement of the slave trade in Africa. Mbeki details the inhumane introduction of the slave trade in Africa. He paints a gustily picture depicting the violent uprooting of communities from deep rural African villages to Europe and to the United States of America. This uprooting of communities was tragically facilitated by the African leaders, who duly raided their villages, capturing fellow Africans, and then sold them to Europeans primarily as commodities of exchange for guns.

3.2.1 Systemic exploitation of Africa's resources

Robert Sobukwe⁷¹, the founding father of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), a break away from the African National Congress (ANC), unapologetically expressed Mbeki's sentiments about the economic exploitation of Africa. Robert Sobukwe (1978:12), at 25 years of age, delivering his address to the 1949 graduating class at the South African Native College, later named Fort Hare University. He lamented what he regarded as the "second rape of Africa", that was fast tracking the "naked brutal mercantile imperialism of the 17th and 18th centuries"⁷².

⁷⁰ Bernard Magubane (2000:85) subscribes to the Leninist appreciation of imperialism as that form of domination of nations at the close of nineteenth century by the capitalist West. In this instance Western economies and the survival of nations depended on the raw materials they were extracting from colonised nations. Imperialism therefore put in place a framework that erected and ensure the maintenance of capitalism. The essence of Imperialism as an expression of Western economic interests is "to maximize and stabilize domestic income at the expense of people in other countries". Whatever justification forwarded to rationalize imperialism by its apologist, what remains is that the past and the present of Western development was and continues to build on the backs and sacrifices of other nations. Countries in Africa and other "developing" nations are where they are today not by accident, their growth and development has been deliberately stunted for sake of the West. Magubane holds the view that South Africa is a victim of dualistic imperial domination systems. The initial Imperial system that affected South Africa was the "white settler colonialism" which was followed by the "direct and indirect" imperial system of domination and the exploitation of its resources and people.

⁷¹ This is the freedom fighter that the black consciousness poet and writer Don Mattera (2007, *Azanian Love Song, African Morning Star Publications, Grant Park, South Africa*) captured in his poem 'Sobukwe' in memory of the passing of Sobukwe. Mattera (2007:80) cried out that "it was our suffering and our tears that nourished and kept him alive, their law that killed him. Let no dirges be sung, no shrines be raised to burden his memory, sages such as he need no tombstones to speak their fame. Lay him down on a high mountain that he may look on the land he loved, the nation for which he died. Men feared the fire of his soul."

⁷² Similar sentiments were captured and articulated by Sol Plaatji, who in 1916 documented the suffering of the Africans in the introduction of the 1913 Native Land Act that gave 87 percent of the land ownership to White population. Plaatji (2007:22) reminds us that the enactment of the Native Land Act on the 20th June 1913 rendered an African man not only a slave, "but a pariah in the land of his birth". This calculated dispossession of the Black people has set in motion patterns of systemic vulnerability that are manifesting with unrelenting inequality, poverty and unemployment. It is with this appreciation that Terreblanche (2012:67) made reference to the "systemic injustice of white political dominance and racial capitalism" and how such a system has given birth to Black Economic Empowerment instruments that benefit an elite class among the blacks.

A decade later in 1959 in an inaugural address of the first Convention of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, Sobukwe (1959:18) referred to the debate of the imperialist onslaught as an annihilation of the Africans. He said Africans were violated “through a systemic starvation” of communities locked-up in the Reserves and the Bantustans. The systemic violation of Africans was expedited by forceful implementation of the Pass Laws and the Influx Control measures that prevented African populace to freely travel and settle in the cities.

Mbeki suggests that the question of poverty in Africa rests solely with the African leaders. Dr Peter Witterauf (2011:vii) the CEO of the Hans Seidel Foundation, shares Mbeki’s perspective on the role of African leadership on issues of underdevelopment of Africa. He contends that Mbeki presents a case against the African leaders for consciously participating in political decisions that led to the deprivation of their subordinates. In the era of the slave trade, African potential for growth and stability was auctioned for political power, without substantial benefits for African population. The very same scenario is repeating itself in the offshore selling of the natural resources of the Continent, both in the mining sector and the pumping of oil by foreign companies for the benefit of the political elites.

3.2.1.2 Global economics of exploitation

John Perkins, a multi-national corporate executive deliberated on the endeavours of crippling non-Western countries, particularly by the USA. Perkins (2005: xi) details the USA strategy of dispatching financial advisors, so-called “economic hit-man” to the developing countries. Those advisers are planted in targeted countries to promote trade deals that ultimately benefit the USA. Perkins suggests that these advisers function primarily by enticing “world leaders to become part of a vast network that promotes U.S. commercial interest”.

This end-state is achieved by providing loans and credit facilities, through the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund. The loans are given as surety for major infrastructure construction projects. The financing institutions that issue the credit facility know very well that such loans and credits come with terms and conditions that render the recipient countries beholden to both the political and financial levers of power in the USA.

In the same tone and critique, Mbeki (2011:2) raises serious questions in advocating for ways of facilitating change across the entire African continent. He is of the view that the current African leadership across the board have “sold out” the interest of the African continent. Mbeki bluntly states that the African continent has been castigated to a state of powerlessness, destitution and poor health status for its citizens. He forcefully argues that “Africa has been destabilised and plundered for centuries through the slave trade, colonialism, neo-colonialism, the cold-war and feeble post-independence leadership”. We can assert that these multifaceted aspects of African exploitation and marginalisation⁷³ are still having ripple effects in communities facing food shortage.

3.2.1.3 Afrocentric view of exploitation

The African Renaissance Conference held in Johannesburg in 1998, deliberated upon negative economic conditions in Africa in the opening address by former South African President Mr. Thabo Mbeki. A call that the time had come for Africans to disempower the political elites was categorically conveyed. Mbeki stated that African leaders “abuse political power to gain material wealth” (Makgoba *et al.* 1999: xvii), through corrupt means of governance and endless wars that bedevil the African Continent.

⁷³ Shadrack Gutto (2003:43) in his article “*International Crimes and Gross Human Rights Offenses*” argues that the form and shape of globalization as we know and experience it have placed “the dominant world capitalist system” in a privileged position. His assertion is premised on the presupposition that globalization has created a situation in which both the individuals, national governments as well as private corporations are called upon to define their sense of responsibility in relative imperatives of interaction. In Gutto’s arguments the centrifugal point of “modern globalization” is the negligence to recognize the “social and economic crimes that devastated Africa and its peoples, in addition to the playing down of the need to hold corporate actors responsible for serious crimes and gross human rights offences”. Thus further implications for crimes of social vulnerability brought about by hunger in our townships bear the brunt of globalized economy (Gutto 2003:43). In the light of the stated arguments, Gutto (2003:43) suggests some remedial options for international instruments of judicial administration. He points out that global judicial systems need to consider the placement of responsibility and accountability for gross human rights violations on various levels. He names areas that must be covered by global institutions seeking justice. The scope of international justice must include “economic and social crimes involving inappropriate and harmful policies, plunder, pillage and corruption” on a new legal framework. He is advancing the notion that an expanded and contextualized international legal framework must be directed both on the personal and collective levels of social interaction. Hence a “category of persons who should be held responsible to include states (foreign and African), powerful corporate and individual private actors, investors, development aid institutions and international financial institutions”. In the South African context, cases of human rights violations need to be leveled against state departments that perpetuate hunger (Gutto 2003:43). The views of Gutto say to us as a country we need to develop a legislative legal framework that will categorically regard the kind of food shortage experienced by township residents both as “economic and social crimes”. Thus public representatives must be held accountable for failing to provide adequate means to solve the issues of food shortage.

Mbeki also encouraged the conference delegates to be part of the dialogue that seeks to promote the participation of Africa in shaping the agenda of globalization. His focus was on the need of aligning globalization to the economic development of the Continent. He called for robust debate about the evils and selfish driven interests of the global financial institutions. The said international financial instruments espouse practices that have encouraged the accumulation of financial capital in the West, with its subsequent destabilization of African economies. This scenario is well attested in the cases of the movement of investment “from one corner of the globe to the other” in search of immediate profit (Makgoba *et al.* 1999: xvii) to the detriment of local economies.

3.3 SOUTH AFRICA’S MACRO-ECONOMY AND FOOD INSECURITY

Recently, Statistics SA (2015) has issued a report to the effect that South Africa’s Gross Domestic Product has been negatively affected by Eskom’s motivated load shedding. The mining houses carried much of the losses due to the low production that took place in the second quarter since the first power cuts were effected. The impact of power crises has adversely affected positive prospect of economic growth, in the very negative global climate characterised by the upsurge in food and oil prices.

It is in the context of such an uncertain global market that the question of inflation management and its devastating impact on the interest rates needs to be located. The negative impacts of power cuts had a bearing in our economy since the first power cuts were effected in the middle of January 2008.

Therefore, the publication of the Harvard Group Report, as well as the Growth Report by the Treasury has assisted in shaping the level of the debate about the policy option that our country has adopted since the inception of democracy in South Africa in 1994.

3.3.1 GEAR as a frame of reference for SA macro-economic policy

It cannot be disputed that South African economy is undergoing a process of change. Thus experiencing high inflation, high interest rates as well as high unemployment figures. It is common knowledge that South Africa’s inflation reached the highest

level in the beginning of 2010. The inflation peaked at levels between 8%-9% respectively. On the other hand the Reserve Bank is constantly put under pressure to reign on inflation. The Bank is expected to control inflation swings by its operational mandate as well as the external global⁷⁴ economic factors. Nonetheless the targeted outcomes are beyond its control. The Bank's decisions merely influences the markets and hoping for favourable adjustments by respective players.

It is in that light of local and global changing economic outlook⁷⁵ for many economies that our interest rates have necessitated the South African Rand/Dollar exchange rate to remain at 10-14R/\$ levels. In the same vein the South Africa's unemployment figures though largely disputed, are presumed to be within 5.5 million brackets of estimated 8 million active citizens that participate in our country's economy.

Credible economic analysis of the current economic climate in South Africa with regard to the broader question of inflation need to take into account a number of factors. The primary factor that needs to be engaged must be the realisation of the fact that South Africa's economic environment has been largely shaped and influenced by the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy.

A lot could be said about the economic exigencies that gave birth to the GEAR policy. This economic framework was conceived by the then Deputy President of the

⁷⁴ Kenneth Creamer (see Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:142) discusses the broader issues of South Africa's economy from the perspective of its openness to the global markets. Therefore our undertakings to analyse the economic challenges that the Gear strategy was responding to need to factor in the question of "powerful foreign investment interests" in exerting pressure and undue influence against the GEAR imperatives that were perceived to be pro-poor rather than pro-business. We need to take into account that South Africa was dragged into the global markets in the early days of Mandela's administration when big South African companies listed at Johannesburg Stock Exchange insisted on the right to transfer their listings primarily to the London Stock Exchange. In that instance the government had to expedite the process of relaxing the financial exchange instruments curtailing and placing limits on the quantity of capital that could be transferred off-shore. As such the implementation of Gear had to contend with the push and reluctance of the "powerful foreign investment interests" against the majority ownership of our economy by black participants.

⁷⁵ Kenneth Creamer (see Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:144) suggests that South Africa's macro-economic framework shows a greater degree of openness and "integration to world financial markets". The implication therefore being our susceptibility to positive or negative swings in global markets. On the positive our economy grows and yields some benefits with the inflows of global capital into our bond and equity markets. Our further strength also manifests in the favourable exchange financial inflows in our export of commodities in our raw minerals, agriculture produce, locally manufactured goods and tourism offerings. On the negative, the level and extend of our openness to global markets exposes our economy to the downswings affecting global trade as shown during the 2008-2009 global recession which had negative impacts in our exports, a drop in "investment and employment".

Republic Mr. Thabo Mbeki. It became an economic policy project that was to be piloted by the Minister of Finance Mr. T. Manuel.

All the questions, analysis and possible review of inflation position in our economy must be placed within the presuppositional frame of reference of GEAR and how it informed both the theory and praxis of the macro-economic policy of the Mbeki's administration. We need to acknowledge that the introduction of the GEAR strategy⁷⁶ came as a replacement of the 1994 Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). GEAR policy had wide ranging economic implications and unintended consequences.

The launching of the GEAR initiative could be attributed to the quest to provide "structural adjustment programme with all the hallmarks of the Washington consensus" (Paton 2008:36). It is obvious that the GEAR policy although it was intended to address and attain specific economic outcomes and objectives to benefit South African economy. Nonetheless it was drafted to appeal to international investors. The GEAR policy was aimed at contributing to the broader climate of creating much needed investor confidence. It was also geared toward the domestic investor market with the aim of facilitating public-private sector partnerships.⁷⁷ It could then be asserted that the GEAR's strength was its ability to provide a broad base platform that gave direction to South Africa's fundamentals in its macro-economic vision within the context of the global economy (Paton 2008:36).

The position of the GEAR policy was well articulated by former Finance Director-General Mr. Lesetja Kganyago, who is now Governor of the Reserve Bank. He categorically put on record both the positive and negative aspects of the GEAR

⁷⁶ The GEAR policy was a direct opposite of what the Reconstruction and Development Program intended to accomplish. The RDP was informed by the broader social liberation imperatives of correcting the discrimination chapter of apartheid. It could be argued that the poor people were deliberately located at the centre of the RDP. However the Gear policy took a "sharp swing" in projecting "conservative macroeconomic principles" that were geared to integrate our economic vision into the global competitive markets (Cuthbertson and Jeeves 2008:4).

⁷⁷ The launching of GEAR policies also had to do with the recognition by state that it lacked some capabilities to spend public funds for development and service delivery requirements. Thus GEAR served as a policy framework for the attainment of some economic objectives within the constraints of fiscal conservatism. The government was acknowledging that it did not have sufficient capacity to spend developmental capital at the rate and scale it was needed. The state intimated that meeting the developmental needs of the poor will not be realised. However the disconcerting question about the push to adopt and implement Gear is that big business was given a free reign to amass wealth with the incentives and legislative support from the state (Carter *et al.* 2009:153).

policy. Kganyago asserted that “Gear committed the government to the economic conventions of the global marketplace” (Boyle 2008:11). Such an analysis is frank and honest enough in acknowledging that the primary objectives of the drafter(s) of the said policy were to locate the direction of the South African economy within the “economic conventions of the Washington Consensus” (Boyle 2008:7).

One could argue that the reference to strategically locating and carving a niche for South Africa’s economy in the “global market” was to a certain extent placing our economy not only to the anticipated benefits. On the other hand our economy was rendered vulnerable to the dictates and uncertainties of global trade.

Lesetja Kganyago accentuated the logic of placing our economy within the realm of global international trade. He goes on to point out that the subsequent benefit was a sense of “stabilised” economic activity in the post-apartheid era. The reported stabilisation was largely anchored on the terms and conditions that the newly ushered democratic dispensation was prepared to accept. Hence he further argues that the GEAR policy as a corrective measure created an economic climate and environment that made it possible for “the post-apartheid economy to break the mould of 1 percent growth” (Boyle 2008:11). It was the favourable conditions that were created by the GEAR policy that acted as a clear catalyst and incentives for both international and domestic investors to display some elements of confidence in South Africa’s economy through visible investment activities

The negative aspect of the GEAR instrument was the in-built constraints to “curb government spending”. It is that fiscal posture of the Treasury that facilitated the privatisation drive of some state owned companies. The impact of curbing the expansion of the state expenditure could be credited for positive analysis by external investors, which entrenched the perception that their investment will yield greater returns and minimize risks. However the privatisation drive had a negative impact in terms of job losses⁷⁸. The economy experienced the so-called “job-less growth.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ See Terreblanche (2009:123). Terreblanche has a different take on the whole question of GEAR strategy. He propounds the notion that the economic conditions that were created to enable GEAR policies to thrive came at the expense of the poor and the vulnerable. He argues that the GEAR option was part of the “economic system and the power constellation” that had adverse effect for the quality life of the poor. Terreblanche suggests that the power arrangement of GEAR perpetuates economic

Companies counted profits and yet did not make adequate attempts to curb the rate of unemployment (Boyle 2008:7). The state failed to challenge the *status quo*⁸⁰ for fearing the perception that it was meddling in the free market economic systems. The proponents of free market economic model argued that their systems have inherent capacity to correct its internal contradictions. The poor and the unemployed still await such corrections to materialize⁸¹.

systems of dysfunctionality due to the fact that they are designed to serve sectional interests at the expense of the nation. Egan (2007:457) asserts that the introduction of Gear in some quarters simply meant that South Africa was “a neo-Liberal Imperial State” by embracing unfavourable policies that will not advance “economic justice” for the poor. The unwillingness of the private sector to make meaningful contribution in reducing joblessness while they reap huge profits was made visible by negative sentiments that transpired after the sale of Telkom shares to the private sector. The liberalization facilitated by Gear brought to the fore the dangers that came along with “unregulated privatisation”. The implication is that a viable state enterprise was literally handed over to foreign capital without monitoring systems ensuring that “effective transfer of economic resources to black people” materialised. Such a failure of duty of care on the part of the state gave credence to the perceptions that the “family silver” was given out without due consideration of possible outcomes (See Southall 2007:222).

⁷⁹ See Southall (2007:201). The question of “jobless growth” manifested some inherent contradictions within the GEAR policies. Since the given policy was designed to adjust to the framework of the free market system. The government could not then be seen to be fiddling with the markets by demanding accountability from the business regarding job creation. The state had subjected itself to self-imposed belt tightening and reduced spending. On the other hand the business racked in huge profits and yet failed to reciprocate to the crises of joblessness. Hence the government responding to external pressure from the trade unions began to make a shift towards a developmental state agenda.

⁸⁰ The status quo that the government could not challenge was the worsening living conditions of the poor. It is a status that was corroborated even by the United Nations Report (2006) in its South African Human Development Index. The GEAR was implemented with its restrictions on the part of the government regarding social spending. Though the UN Report alluded to the fact that the Gini Coefficient for South Africa “increased from 0.665 in 1994 to 0.685 in 2006” clearly indicating the worsening trends regarding inequality. The UN Report was pointing to the fact that the poorest 20 percent of the populace comprising 10 million people had access to only “1.7 per cent of total income in 2006”. In the same duration 72.5 per cent of total income was amassed by only the “richest 20.0 per cent of the population” which comprises 10 million people (The Presidency 2007:21-22). Peter Jacobs and Tim Hart (See Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:158) also lambasts the government for paying lip service when it comes to addressing issues of “equitable social transformation given the widening spatial inequalities” and subsequent social polarisation that is resurfacing in an alarming rate given the deepening dominance of the elite in politics and economic spaces.

⁸¹ See Meyiwa (*et al.* 2014:6) in his contention that South African economic landscape has not adequately addressed the aspirations of the poor, especially the black African youth. He reminds us that after the euphoria of our first democratic elections the majority of black youth hanged to the hope that their lives will be materially and qualitatively different from that of their parents. The youth “were hopeful for an end, not only to segregation, but also to poverty”. However two decades down the line, even though a lot of political changes have taken place, our country has seen the emergence of a new form of segregation, an “economic segregation” which has dashed the hopes of the youth about the possibility of change and attainment of economic freedom in their life time. The newly emerging economic segregation has come with some guarantees to the effect that the rich will “become much richer, and the poor, much poor” as attested by P. Commey, in “Mandela, 20 years on Change for whom?” *New African Magazine*, August 2010, 8-12. Reflecting on the changes that have taken place twenty years after the release of Mandela from incarceration, he asserts that “economic apartheid” has taken root in the new dispensation. Commey noted that if one makes a rough analysis of the state of black people, what stands out is the disturbing absence of black presence in areas of economic significance. Hence he asserted that “huge numbers work the bottom as hewers of wood. No wonder the trickle-down effect has created huge squalid informal settlements in the midst of opulence. Any

3.3.2 GEAR's impact on SA macro-economic environment

The impact of the GEAR policy on the broad inflation question is best understood from the objectives of the drafters of the policy. These are primarily the perspectives and perceptions of Mr. Thabo Mbeki. Carol Paton (2008:37) engages the personality of Mbeki with regards to his economics stance by presenting a number of issues for consideration. She asserts the fact that in 1999, the newly elected President was perceived as a “modernising President”. Thabo Mbeki was presented as having intentions of changing both the state machinery as well as the ruling party, the African National Congress. Hence Paton argues that Mbeki’s “idea on economic policy were miles from those of its constituency⁸² and closer to the Western capitalist orthodoxy”. This was an economic posture, which the ANC did not approve. Again the party that was put in office crafted economic policy that betrayed the aspirations of the electorate it claimed to represent (Paton 2008:37).

Paton (2008:37) goes on to say that the state of the economic boom experienced in South Africa since 2003 was largely driven by the emergence of the black middle class generally referred to as “Black Diamonds”. This is an economic class credited to having been decisively brought into existence by Thabo Mbeki. It becomes obvious that the operational logic of the GEAR policy was set to meet the targeted outcomes of acclimatising the South African economy in the sphere and scope of the “Western capitalist” paradigm. On the local front our economy had to open up possibilities of economic activity to all sectors of the population, in particular through

threat of changing the situation is met with threats of capital flight back to the North and job losses for the wretched”.

⁸² See Meyiwa (*et al.* 2014:2). The economic vision of South Africa under the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki was no longer responding to aspirations of the poor majority which was hoping for the attainment of the vision of the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). The premise of the RDP was an attempt to attend to the questions of “inequality, freedom, public accountability and efficiency” by aligning state policies with concrete realities of the lives of the poor majority. Thabo Mbeki’s policy of Gear took an opposite direction to that route on which the poor majority were already treading on. His policy was addressed to the markets and responding to their dictates without any terms and conditions or at least some measure of expectations from the markets to make an effort in the realization of the needs of the poor. Nicole Natrass (see Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:129) adds his voice to the condemnation of the ANC and government in its abandonment of the RDP as “as story of revolution betrayed, of how a pro-labour, supposedly expansionary, macroeconomic agenda was hijacked by pro-business, fiscally orthodox “neo-liberal’ policies”. The voices of contempt against GEAR were an attempt to caution against the likelihood of the state of being co-opted “by white monopoly capital” to dilute the demands of the working class and the poor majority. Nonetheless on a note of caution, Natrass brings to the attention of the reader that the fundamental “macroeconomic projections” of GEAR policy were flawed due inherent dependency of GEAR to the markets to partner with the state through private-public partnership investments in social infrastructure development.

the formation of black middle class. It is on that account that led to the perception that the black middleclass have been a multiplier factor in the recent economic growth.

The commencement and the impact of the GEAR's structural adjustments intentions had tangible results as early as 1996 when the first signs of economic breakthrough were registered with the 1% growth mark. Thus by 2003 SA economy reached an unprecedented level of growth "when GDP growth broke out of its 4%" levels. This incredible economic achievement brought about a decade of sustainable growth, "the longest period ever in SA history" (Paton 2008:29).

Be that as it may, one cannot ignore the fact that the subsequent economic boom that reached its climax in 2003 was launched from the four year period "of structural adjustment and fiscal discipline" which was intended to bring about solutions to the challenges of both the foreign and domestic debt.

Therefore by implication, GEAR's "fiscal discipline" which curb governments spending and facilitated privatisation, had positive impact on overall inflation patterns and created favourable interest rate climate. On the other hand social spending was limited. The State focused its energies on creating economic environment conducive for direct foreign investments. Unfortunately, the poor communities⁸³ were expected to bite-the-bullet of delayed social investment projects (Paton 2008:29).

⁸³ Southall (2007:21) brings to our attention that fact GEAR strategy created a situation whereby the majority of the people who elected the government to office were not at the centre of the Gear policies. It was the business and international investors that were given space to influence the policy directions of the state. The poor, the unemployed and the destitute became the "outsiders". Southall holds the view that the prevailing situation of two competing constituencies was a testimony to the fact of "dysfunctionality of state". This was dysfunctionality that was exacerbated by both "implementational and technical deficits" on the part of the state. Southall to some extends hold the view that the deficiencies of Gear were pointing to the abandonment of political views and positions of the poor by the state in favour of neo-liberal politics. Furthermore, Cuthbertsan and Jeyes (2008:37) expresses similar sentiments (about "dysfunctionality of state") of concern from those who might fit the profile of being the "outsiders". Such perceptions sensitizes the poor to embrace some form of "vigilance" and determination to stop the "new bourgeoisie from becoming tolls of monopoly interests that thrive on privilege and corruption". The manner in which GEAR was implemented as a top-down solution that was not open for discussion from the broader society justifies the perception that its exponents placed themselves in a position where they could be seen rightly or wrongly to be advocates of "monopoly interests".

3.4 ISSUES OF INFLATION AND THE CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The SA economic environment went through another phase of transformation given the publication of the Harvard Group report. The well acclaimed report and the issues it reflected on cannot be read in isolation. The current socio-economic constraints that are characteristic of both the global and domestic climate have negative lingering effects. The recession of 2008 had ripple effects that adversely affected developing economies. It is common knowledge that the reality of the rising oil prices, global food shortage and price hikes due to decline in demand largely from China and India “are expected to dampen global growth prospects and adversely affect inflation” (Langeni 2008:3).

Phumzile Langeni (2008:3) put forward the point that our economy apart from being hit by oil and food prices. It has also experienced the upswing in the extension of the credit from 20.8 to 22.6 percent in February by the private sector to the consumers. Such increases were far beyond the level range of 20 percent that was relatively expected by the market. In that regard money supply rose by a yearly 21 percent in March from 20.9 percent in February, ahead of the market expected increase of 20.7 percent.

It is therefore refreshing to observe an economic approach in the analysis of Nazmeera Moola (2008:16) that seeks to put human face in the maze of cold statistics. She asserts that different groups of our populace have suffered, but have not experienced the same impact. She states that the lower-income group have been grossly affected by high cost of food and transport. The middle-income earners had to bear “the full brunt of rate hikes”. It is clear that the population group that is currently managing to absorb the negative impact of high cost of living is in the upper-income earners. This group is advantaged by its position of scarce skills that are in high demand in our economy. Thus enabling this upper-income group to experience a slight rise of its income that becomes a buffer for them against the impact of the running inflation.

Similar analytical angle is pursued by the Stanlib economist Kevin Lings who builds his argument by stating that across the board “SA consumers spend on average 25-27 percent of their income on food”. This situation is made difficult by the fact that

food prices have increased on average by 15 percent, yet on the other hand the 38 percent increase in the price of fuel has impacted to the negative the 14 percent range of fuel products that are customary bought by the general public. In the same vein Nazmeera Moola is cited by Claire Bisseker (2008:40) to the effect that, the current state of affairs takes place in the backdrop of the decline in the real income growth “from 6,7 percent in 2006 to 2,2 percent in 2007, a decline that had to drop to as low as 3,4 percent”.

3.4.1 Harvard Group report and its perspective on inflation

In 2007 our economy experienced and attained 4.7 percent growth levels. We also witnessed the phenomenal growth of black middle class in a decade. Be that as it may, one cannot ignore the assertion that our economic boom in the last decade has drastically widened the gap between the haves and the have not's. Max Hastings (2008:13) paints a different picture than the one experienced by those in the middle class bracket and beyond. He alludes to the fact that “many of South Africa's population feel as painfully excluded from prosperity as they were under Apartheid”. He goes to a say that more than 4-million people were living on less than R10 a day.

We have to take note of the findings of the Harvard Group, an International Advisory Panel on South Africa's growth. The report came out with a set of recommendations forwarded by a panel comprising 30 academics and international economic analysts. The participants in the Panel undertook a two-year research. They subsequently submitted their findings and recommendations to the South African government in the beginning of 2008.

The Harvard Group report was premised on the realities of the unstable world economic climate. The reported collapse of Bear Stearns “on one of the Wall Street's oldest, and once one of its most respected, brokerage houses has triggered new waves of fear and turmoil on world financial markets” (Bisseker & McNutty 2008:62). It was that world economic climate that informed the outcomes and the recommendations of the panellists. Therefore the panellists made it clear that when we deliberate on the possible inflation outlook for our economy, we need to take note of the fact that our economic recovery and stabilisation will have to be mindful of the fact that “SA can't be isolated from global financial market fears and turmoil”.

The submissions of the Harvard Group comprised of overall 21 recommendations in five specific categories of our economy. The areas covered were Trade and competition, Labour market, Industrial policy, Public administration, Black Economic Empowerment as well as the Fiscal policy. Their reading was duly done within the broader scope of macro economy. The panellists suggested that “inflation targeting should be maintained, but more flexibility implemented”. They further suggested that the Central Bank play a more prominent and significant role in our economy by visibly intervening “to prevent the rand becoming too strong” (Boyle 2008:8). Those recommendations are still the guiding principle for our current economic directions.

The panellists advanced a macro economic model that has undoubtedly resulted in far reaching implications of South African economy. They pushed a policy that built a platform of “export for job” strategic outcomes. It is on the basis of that export intentions that Rejane Woodroffe (2008:6) highlighted the fact that a delicate choice and preference for an aggressive advancement of “one sector of the economy, can adversely affect other sectors”. Such a warning seeks to address the question of further increase in imports, which are not balanced at least on the same rate by the exports.

It was therefore argued that the intervention of the Reserve Bank in the “currency market” with a clear mandate of targeting “a weaker exchange rate”. Such interventions were expected to strengthen the rand. It was further hoped that it would possibly influence the downward trend of the interest and the inflation rates. At the same time enabling the economic growth through the anticipated production expansion that will be triggered by export boom. However the panel did not categorically push for a specific “target exchange rate”. Rather an emphasis was placed on creating conditions for a “competitive currency” (Woodroffe 2008:6).

John Cairns (2008:18) the currency expert suggested that the high level of the interest rates must be perceived with cautious optimism. The reason being that “the high interest rates make it difficult to speculate on further rand weakness”. One can argue that a stronger rand will yield better results to the man on the street, due to the fact that one’s buying power will be enhanced. Though on the other hand exports will suffer and then resulting to a significant drop in the volumes of exports. Given such a

scenario, the reduction in capital inflows, which could have been utilized to settle “the current account”. In essence resulting to the weakening of the rand, and consequently leading to the reduction of the trade account deficit.

3.4.2 Growth report and inflation consequences

Having place on the public domain the Harvard Group report, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel immediately released the results of 19 policy makers who were commissioned to research the aspects of growth in the SA economy. This commission “on growth and development, an independent, high think tank” of which Trevor Manuel was part, set out to study 13 economies. His intent was to determine how their economic strategies enabled those economies to achieve “GDP growth of over 5% for more than 3 years” (Bisseker 2008:50).

The Growth Report challenged the common fallacy “that poverty can be alleviated” without factoring the necessity of economic growth. This report placed on the public scoreboard the realities of SA low savings. It pointed out the required sacrifices of addressing the balance of payments that “require higher interest rates”. Noting further, the unavoidable option of “running larger fiscal surplus to offset the risk” (Bisseker 2008:50). These were the factors that were canvassed by the report for deliberate economic policy options that forced South Africa to align with the dictates of unstable Western economic trajectory.

The report is conscious of the fact that in the recent past, SA economy was drifting towards local demands, largely driven by retail, construction and services sectors of our economy. The obvious implication is that there has been less deliberate push for export market in commodities, resulting in the loss of much needed foreign currencies. The report placed much emphasis on the aggressive investment drive, and labour activity that encourage exports in the second quarter (Dawes 2008:2). Given the global upsurge in both the oil and food prices, at \$135 (2008) a barrel, implying the R1002 level in rand terms. The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni rightfully expressed a split in decision-making process. He alluded to the fact that “he was caught between those who believed his failure to stop inflation reaching the upper limit of the target range showed a lack of commitment to price stability and those who complained about inflation targeting, labelling its

implementers as insensitive to the plight of the poor” (Hazlehurst 2008:18). Mboweni being aware of the brief he was expected to accomplish, which was target inflation, rather than to focus on the level of the rand. He therefore stressed the point that his economic standpoint was not inflexible and none responsive to the prevailing economic climate.

3.5 INFLATION POLICY IN VIEW OF FOOD INSECURITY

The above-mentioned view of Tito Mboweni makes it difficult for one to categorically opt for a particular point of view with regard to the question of inflation. One cannot deny that inflation can be used as a tool to facilitate economic growth, and to address in particular socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment that is the result of a high rise in inflation. It is important to factor the possibility of unemployment in the equation of striking a balance between the “prevention of higher (or increasing) inflation and the actual reduction of the inflation rate” (Fourie 2007:219).

The implication being that high inflation makes it difficult for business to maintain excessive labour costs, resulting to job losses. Furthermore since SA labour force is largely unskilled. They are likely not to be absorbed by the job market. This state of affairs also has a negative impact to the aspiring new job seekers who are mostly school leavers, who do not have other marketable skills other than a final school year certificate (Fourie 2007:219).

On other levels high inflation compromises the SA competitive position in global markets when the price of export becomes expensive. Thus fewer exports literally mean less foreign currency. This affects our nation’s ability to settle its balance of payment. The other complication that comes with high inflation is its effects on the negative growth of domestic economy. Local businesses are forced to shut down due to the fact that the costs of running businesses tend to exceed the profit margins. Another question that must not be forgotten is that high inflation tends to have negative impact on pensioners. This is particularly those who “depend on interest income” for their monthly expenses. On the other hand, inflation disempowers but also benefits people with debt. The reason being that “the real value of debt”, either its upswing or downward curve, is determined by inflation. The most visible side effects of inflation in our economy is carried and directly felt by the low-income

earners. The fact being that by the very nature of their economic class, low-income earners spend a large portion of their earnings on food and transport. They generally reside in areas that are far from their working stations. Thus in the current situation of continuing rise of food and oil prices, they bear the brunt of high inflation due to high cost of transport (Fourie 2007:219).

The SA situation is further compounded by the fundamental question of inequality. It cannot be disputed that the new democratic order was expected to transform our country in its entirety. However the economic sphere was deliberately left unchallenged. The white capital interests were left intact by the government representing the black aspirations for equality and justice. This fact is pointed out by recent economic figures of economic benefits by different race groups. Fourie (2007:221) asserts that a minority of rich households comprising of 19%, receive up to 30% of total income. Whereas the majority, mostly poor, receive in total roughly 10% of overall income. These figures speak of a structural discrimination and marginalisation of the low-income earners in the face of privileged accumulation of economic power by the few (including lesser minority of black elites).

3.6 VULNERABILITY OF ECONOMIC SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

The assessment of both the economic and political position of the African Continent by Thabo Mbeki brings to fore a number of issues that needs to be tackled by the leadership elite. On the one hand by the voters that put such leaders in positions of power. Thus, it is imperative to investigate how the global dominance of the world economy by United States of America and Europe continues to contribute to the weakening of political sovereignty and economic independence of Africa.

The difficult position of the African Continent in global trade relations has resulted to the subjugation of the populace of Africa in situations of “chronic poverty”. The conditions of destitution in Africa are the outcomes of the disadvantaged position under which the African countries conducted trade among themselves and the world at large in the mid-1990. Therefore, Harry Stephan (*et al.* 2012:15) reflecting on the possible second scramble for the resources of Africa alludes to the fact that even by the beginning of the new millennium, Africa could not pull her weight above “one

percent of world trade”, though it represents 12 percent of global population. Africa is the richest continent with mineral resources yet the poorest of all continents. African people literally walk on gold and platinum but they live and die in poverty.

3.6.1 Africa’s capital debt and food insecurity

The disheartening factor definitive of the economic crunch experienced by African economies is that African countries have been servicing foreign debts at the expense of socio-economic needs of their populations. Stephan (*et al.* 2012:15) presents a case in highlighting that the African countries were expected to service their debts to the tune of two billion US Dollars. It must be noted that “Africa spent \$14.5 billion each year repaying debts and only received \$12.7 billion in official aid. In essence, the poorest region of the world was subsidising the nations of the developed world”. In the same line of thought Raymond Steenkamp Fonseca (Stephan *et al.* 2012, 191), deliberated about the dilemma faced by the African Continent in its dealings with the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The terms of engagement in the WTO are designed to advantage its founders, the European Union and the USA. This highlights the fact that global capital system is currently unashamedly benefiting the developed economies, excluding Africa and the rest of the so-called emerging economies.

Equally significant is the analysis advanced by Reuel J. Khoza, giving inputs in the 1998 African Renaissance Conference where he advanced some challenges. He unapologetically called upon the Africans to discard the “victim mentality” that stifle creativity in addressing Continental challenges. Khoza (Magkoba *et al.* 1999: 283) goes on to say that Africans needs to rally against the mentality of hopelessness even though confronted by manipulative systems of “world financial markets” that bears negative outcomes to the stability of local currency evaluations. One must only look at the unpredictability of offshore-determined prices of our natural resources. Patrick Bond took the argument further by linking the poor performance of local economies to the neo-economic imperialism and institutionalised “financialisation” systems (Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:442) of global economy. The implication is undoubtedly confirming the continuous status of exposure to hunger by the citizens of developing economies due to the volatility and instability of currency trade.

The exposure of the South African economy to the unfavourable global economic climate is exacerbated by the inherent policy formulation of our economic vision that encourages “a high degree of openness of our economy” (Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:143). According to Kenneth Creamer in his critical analysis of possible pitfalls and success of our economy policy directives. He argues that current South African economic strategy is duly premised on the newly constructed National Development Plan.

This new arrival treads the same path informed by the New Growth Path. Further economic framework positions⁸⁴ and the policy papers coming from various departments that culminated to the Department of Trade and Industries’ Industrial Policy Action Plans issued in 2014 are still failing to rise to the aspirations of the marginalised. The said policy constructs do not reflect and neither seeks to express the redress aspirations of the poor that are represented by the democratic state.

3.6.2 Global capitalism and food insecurity

Patrick Bond advises us that the output of various competing policy papers on the economy does not guarantee stability of the state of the nation. As much as we seek to understand the economic systems that give birth to social vulnerability with regard to food shortage, Patrick Bond has chosen to unpack the vulnerability of our country’s economy under the vicissitudes of global capitalist system⁸⁵ (Pillay *et al.* 2013:609).

⁸⁴ Margaret Chitinga-Mabungu (see Pillay *et al.* 2013:169) discusses the plethora of economic frameworks that have been suggested as possible solutions to the economic challenges we are facing particularly the three stubborn challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty which “are among the worst in the world”. She points out that our country the high rate of unemployment in our country surpasses even the rates of a number of “other upper-middle-income countries” that we are compared with by the World Bank. The conservative estimate of unemployment figures when applying a narrow definition of unemployment sat at 25 per cent in the third quarter of 2011, whereas using the broad definition the rate reached 36 per cent covering the same duration (Stats SA 2012b). By comparison South Africa registered worst figures compared to its BRICS counterparts Brazil and China, with the former sitting at 6 per cent and the latter accounting for 6.5 per cent respectively. Given such a state of affairs the democratic parliament has given us firstly the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). Two years later the RDP was followed by the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction Program (GEAR); the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa followed suit; the New Growth Path (NGP) and the National Development Plan (NPD) 2030 is currently the operational framework. In all the documents that came after the abandonment of the RDP have failed to put the poor at the centre. Chitinga-Mabungu cites the apartheid legislation that promoted investment in “capital-intensive techniques” that prompted underemployment and “low wage productivity” that has resulted to systemic vulnerability labelled by Miriam Altman “widespread marginalisation and unemployment” (Pillay *et al.* 2013:185)

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:429) reminds us that the nature of the global structural arrangements has begun to change. Sidiropoulos reached such conclusion after being persuaded by

Bond (Pillay *et al.* 2013:609) argues that the fault lines of vulnerability embedded in our economy had their origin during the presidency of the late President Nelson Mandela in 1995. The prevalence of vulnerability was initiated by the then Governor of the Reserve Bank, Chris Stals who removed the Financial Rand, which served the purpose of discouraging capital flight from our economy.

The prevailing rationale then for the scrapping of the Financial Rand was to make the South African financial image acceptable to the international investors, and also to enable South African businesses to transfer capital to offshore markets with fewer restrictions. This policy decision opened the floodgates for the “transfer” of our country’s wealth to offshore accounts. This issue can be seen in South African white capital having secured commitments in the black majority government that is focused on the protecting their financial interests. Thus they are opting to invest in Europe and USA than in their own backyard.

3.6.3 The 2008 great recession and food insecurity

The vulnerability of our economic systems was exposed to the global crash of the world economy in mid-September 2008. The crash came about when the leading credit banks in the US, the Lehman Brothers, followed by Merrill Lynch filed for bankruptcy. Rob Rose (2008:42) testify to the magnitude of this financial collapse by categorically pointing out that “never before has an entire sector been wiped out as rapidly as investment banks were” in a short space of fourteen days.

Ian Bremmer in his book *“Every nation for itself”*. In this work Bremmer suggests that the world has taken a direction towards “a G-Z phase” Therefore. Sidiropoulos incorporates Bremmer’s perspective in her assertions that the gradual shift taking place is effected by the continuous decline of the political and economic decline of the United States of America in the world. This gradual decline of US’s power for influence has been gaining momentum in the past decade, with new regional powers emerging. It is in this space that the formation of BRICS as political and economic block between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa need to be factored. We are witnessing and living through the coming into place of a new world system without a single superpower. This new reality is opening up the global systems of government to a multipolar world government. The obvious implication is that individual countries or regional power blocks will have a huge impact in national political interests. As such countries will form alliances informed by narrow national interests without giving much attention to the global impact of their decisions. In that regard national political and economic goals will be inward looking and short-term driven. These changes are taking place in a global financial context that has been radically altered by the 2008-2009 global recession. The patterns of systemic vulnerability that are manifesting in our country reflect the global patterns of systemic vulnerability analysed by Sidiropoulos. In the light of global financial instability, we need to respond to Francis Nyamnjoh, Gerald Hagg and Jonathan Jansen in their analysis of issues of systemic vulnerability and “peripheralisation of the poor” (Pillay *et al.* 2013:1) defined by hunger.

The crash of the Wall Street Stock Exchange resulted in the plummeting of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) to 35% in a year (Bisseker 2008:46). The jettison of the bonds reached R5, 7 billion, just in one day, on the first week of Wall Street implosion, and further contributing to the 16% drop of the value of the rand. The shedding of the total value South African economy, particularly the commodities, was evident in the sudden drop of the volume of export of metals such as gold. This shift had already materialized seven months before the crash resulting to R75 billion losses in export revenue.

The cost of the financial collapse of the world banking system pushed President George Bush administration to announce a \$700 billion dollars bailout. The Bush administration sought to assist the banks in “buying their toxic subprime debt”, to avert the collapse of the entire banking system of the world. Rob Rose (2008:42) points out the absurdity and contradictions of the whole credit meltdown by showing that the financial mess that was created by capitalist banking systems, was looking up to public funds of tax payer monies to rescue them through government interventions.

3.7 SOUTH AFRICA’S BANKING SECTOR EXPOSURE TO MARKET COLLAPSE

The extent of the financial collapse of the Lehman Bank had global impact across the banking industry. South African banks were not spared rapturing, due to their exposure to the American credit banks. Hence Clair Bisseker (2008:47) reports that the Reserve Banks across the globe opted to pump hundred billions of dollars in the global financial markets to prevent further erosion of local economies.

In that regard, Rose (2008:42) details the devastation visited upon South African banks by reminding us that South Africa’s Investment bank, Investec, was highly exposed. Their exposure had a huge impact to such a point that it had to cancel 49 million pounds of the assets in its books, resulting in a 35% drop of its share market value.

Furthermore the CEO of the SA insurance house Old Mutual was forced to resign due to his Company losing of \$135 million dollars precipitated by reckless house

loans landing by its offshore investors, Fannie and Freddie Mae. On top of that Old Mutual had to cancel \$149 million dollars from its overall \$20 billion dollars investment portfolio across US banks, including losses of \$55.7 million to Lehman Brothers and \$237 million dollars assets, invested with AIG.

3.7.1 Capital outflow and its impact on food security

It could be easy and understandable to simply project all the issues of food shortage; unemployment and social vulnerability that we are experiencing as a country to the slowdown and financial crash of the global economy in 2008. However Bond has given us a hint of the root causes currently defining the economic trajectory and vulnerability of South Africa's economy⁸⁶.

Patrick Bond (Pillay *et al.* 2013:610) has registered the worst decade of our economy as stretching from 1999-2001. This was a decade in which prime seven listed companies in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), such as Anglo, DeBeers, SA Breweries and Investec, were granted the permission by the then Minister of Finance Mr. Trevor Manuel, to list their firms at the London Stock Exchange. Listing offshore was approved, including more than R1 billions of capital by the black economic empowered Mr. Mzi Khumalo, to the London Stock Exchange. Thus depleting foreign currency reserves in the South African Reserve Bank. It is not surprising that both the ministers of Finance, Gordhan and his predecessor Manuel, incurred foreign debt amounting to US\$140 billion, far outstripping the US\$25 billion that the De Klerk administration handed over to Mandela's government in 1994.

⁸⁶ We need to take into account the fact that the difficult economic conditions that we are going through as country come with different levels of negative consequences. Jackie Dugard and Narnia Bohler-Miller (Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:237-238) put some faces on the statistics dealing with economic hardship. They remind us that in the face of economic decline, inequality has been on the increase. Secondly, inequality can now be categorised on race and gender factors. They point out that it is the blacks who are the most losers in the race of social upward-mobility. The disturbing factor is that it is the black women who are mostly disadvantaged, vulnerable and have more obstacles place before them by their place and gender/social roles the society has subscribed to them. The truth that is confronting us today is that the "face" of poverty and blatant discrimination is that of black women. Black women are discriminated against by the virtue of their gender, race, class and the social roles they are expected to maintain. Thus when we discuss economic hardship that we are experiencing, we need to factor in that black women are impacted by such hardships on many levels. The fact of the matter that we cannot dispute is that the South Africa of 2016 comprises of citizens experiencing wealth and poverty on the basis of race and gender lines. Hence those referred to as poor, are mostly black women and the richest mostly white males.

The outflow of capital from our shores, initiated by South Africans themselves seems to solidify among other things, the notion that South Africans have no confidence in the stability of their financial institutions. We could therefore agree grudgingly with Harry Stephan (*et al.* 2012:14) that history is repeating itself in our country since the opening of a one-way stream of the extraction of our natural resources to Europe. Then in reply the Reserve Bank opted to raise its repo rate, with the aim of attracting foreign investments with good returns.

Such attempts have not succeeded in masking the fundamental flaws of our economic strategic positioning that serves investors, and not national interests. It is a situation that is pushing South Africans to participate in the economy by incurring debt. Black South Africans must acknowledge that they cannot manage that which does not belong them. Our country's economy is in white hands. Blacks and Africans in particular can only claim the ownership of debts, credits and "a baptismal certificate...the only proof for black people that they truly existed"⁸⁷ (Kani 2001:5).

The outflow of capital in our country takes place on a number of levels. The transfer of investment to the so-called "safe havens" at a click of a button is a reality faced by the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on a daily basis. On the other hand the citizens resort to accessing loans to attend to basic needs. Such a state of affairs is worsened by individuals bent on living beyond their means.

Hence Bond (Pillay *et al.* 2013:610) cites the readings of the international rating agency, Standards and Poor's in April 2012. The rating agencies asserted that South Africa's growth depended on consumer credit. As such, most working South Africans are exposed to "unsecured personal loans for cars, home improvements, overdrafts and credit cards" including the vicious cycle of macro lenders (servicing the working class) driven by profits on unregulated interest charges.

⁸⁷ These sentiments about the reality of marginalised social and economic status of black South Africans are well captured in a dialogue between two main characters, Thando and Sipho in the play "*Nothing but the Truth*" by John Kani, (2001, Macmillan South Africa, Wits University Press, Johannesburg). The essence of the conversation points to the baptismal certificates at the hands of the natives as visible tokens of black ownership of the economy, whereas the wealth of the nation is in white hands.

The argument that is advanced by Bond is that on the structural level. The economy is driven by a permanent account deficit related to foreign ownership. Foreign ownership of our economy stands at 4% of foreign outflow of our economies profit annually in the context of persistence deterioration of economic output, every quarter in the last five years due to labour strikes. This state of affairs implies that our economy is debt driven and lack inherent capacity to pay its own debt. Therefore our government will always beholden to its creditors, locally and internationally.

3.7.2 The widening inequality gap and food insecurity

The level of vulnerability of the South Africans has been evident as early as 2005. This is attested by two results of the Fin Scope survey 2005. The survey reached 4000 participants conducted for the benefit of FinMark Trust. The study presented a grave picture of poverty, particularly among the African and Coloured communities. The study pointed out that 79% of the South Africans were searching for ways of avoiding succumbing to taking loans (Kalideen 2005:19).

Nonetheless the African and Coloured communities substantiated the need to buy food as the main reason for them taking loans. The obvious implication is that loans were “not necessarily taken out for asset purchase but for basic necessities” (Kalideen 2005:19). The same study showed how the Whites and Indians deviated to the Africans and Coloured. The latter largely took loans to pay water, electricity and school fees. The Indians would take loans to buy a car. The Whites mostly took loans to purchase property. Almost 50% of the loans were taken from close friends and family members. Thus further adding stress on family relationships.

Nonetheless, the grim reality was that seven years down the line social vulnerability was further highlighted by the August figures the General Household Survey released by Statistics SA. The figures testify to the fact that the number of citizens depended on social grants had more than doubled in a decade. The statistics trace the increment from 12.7% in 2002 to 29.6% in 2012. These figures tell us that more than 40% of families depend entirely on social grants for their livelihood (Williams 2013:1).

In the face of such grim poverty, it is disconcerting to see reports alleging that the government raised the figure of allocated funds for food parcels, to an amount of R200 million, in the eve of the start of 2014 general election campaigns. The same allegation surfaced in 2004 and 2005 with R300 million set aside for food relief projects. Followed by a R500 million budget, that was dedicated for 2009 election year. The state is not putting forward long lasting policy frameworks to stamp-out poverty. Yet public resources are used by the African National Congress (ANC) administration to buy votes with food parcels during election periods (du Plessis & Groenewald 2014:1). The ANC has reduced the dignity of the African voters to a level where they are structurally forced to cast a vote for the stomach, rather than a vote of conscience.

Moreover as recently as January 2014, the Oxford University's, Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, under the Carnegie 3 Conference Report held in Cape Town released figures that show further decline in the living standards of South Africans. Its research reflects that, unemployment has reached 24 percent. Also 1.3 million children are not beneficiaries of state grants, and about 11.3 million children experience poverty.

The exposure of vulnerable children to poverty got the attention to the country in 2011 in a heart-breaking story of the Mmupelo family in the North West Province, where four children died of hunger, heat stroke and exhaustion after walking a 10km distance in search of their mother, who herself had gone to scout for food (Tshehle 2013:7). However the figures of the Stats SA of mid-June 2015 have taken the unemployment levels to 5.5 million, with the unemployed youth representing 32 percent of the total figure.

The concerning issue still is the worsening crisis of food insecurity with the non-existence of policy measures to alleviate the challenge. The critical factor emerging from the research is that our country is failing to come up with corrective measures against inequality. It is a fact that we have the most "unequal societies in the world"⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See Thomas Piketty (2016:168) in his reflection on the state of Capital and the widening gap of inequality in South Africa. He argues that the "wealthiest 10 percent" controls 60-65 percent of national wealth, against 50-55 percent control of wealth in Brazil, and further "45-50 percent in the US, and 30-35 percent in Europe". In South Africa today 90 per cent of the population are mere spectators in the looting project of wealth by legitimate and illegitimate means without any consequence.

(Hosken 2014:4). The situation of inequality among the poor has become worse in the last 15 years. We are a nation that has failed to apply its moral and creative energies to come out with solutions regarding the challenges of inequality. Yet we were able to plan and activate the intentions to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. A campaign that mobilised all sections of our country to fully participate to make the tournament a success.

In the same breath Bond reminds us that (Pillay *et al.* 2013:610) our Finance Minister, Gordhan saw it fit to contribute US \$2 billion to The International Monetary Fund's drive to raise capital to bail out struggling European countries that were severely exposed to the 2008-2009 Wall Street Crash. The moral bankruptcy of this act by the Zuma administration is beyond description. Taking funds from an economy that has barely reached 1.3% growth. Choosing to grovel and appease the International Monetary Fund by donating to the coffers of the rich. This conduct gives credence to the arguments that South Africa is encouraged to participate in global systems of governance to benefit the institutions concerned, at the expense of mostly the poor sectors of our population.

3.7.3 Social marginalisation⁸⁹ of the vulnerable

⁸⁹Catherine Cross (Pillay *et al.* 2013:251) identifies the question of the marginalisation of the vulnerable at both the local and global level. She brings to our attention that the "peripheralisation of the poor" has become a recurrent occurrence across the world. The substantiated reasons for the deliberate and planned assault against the poor by city administration is that their growing numbers in the cities "threaten the core economy and its vested economic interests". Similar campaigns of forceful removal of poor city dwellers recently took place in Zimbabwe driven by political reprisal against the constituencies that were alleged to have voted for the opposition party. It is common practise in China to relocate people when the state officials intend to revitalize and reconstruct cities. Even India has embarked on the "cleaning up" campaigns such as the fight to remove its "massive Dharavi slum settlement" that is contested by the affected communities. The city of Johannesburg constantly experiences the eruption of protests directed at the metro-police especially when promoting compliance with city by-laws. In such situations the evicted city dwellers fight and push for the right to "re-establish themselves" in the CBD by also resorting to "underground war" tactics against the police and less aggressive dwellers or street vendors. Cross holds the view that the underlying causes of urban strife can be linked to the "underlying cycle of decay and regentrification of urban neighbourhood". The battles for space in cities brings to the fore the issue that the cities are not user-friendly environment for the low-income earners. In most cases the poor are drawn into the cities after the exodus of the middle and upper income earners. However they are not part of the power blocks with economic interests in the cities. The city administrators have not carved dedicated spaces for the low-income dwellers to utilise and express their creative and development energy as co-owners of the city they ought to claim as their place of residence. Thus the views of B. Magubane and J. Yarchik (Magubane *et al.* 2000: 262) attests that "the dominant mode of production and the social formation" from which that mode of production is premised determines the relationships and positions of all actors and competing interests in the politics of the city. Their argument is that the definitive character of cities is the dominance of capital in how cities are organised and how they function. Cities across

In South Africa on the eve of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Tournament, the Provincial and Municipal governments embarked on “clean-up” campaigns to prepare the country for foreign visitors. This drive was embarked upon as strategic initiatives to improve the image of the country and it was viewed as a marketing drive to lure back to the country, prospective tourists after the completion of the World Cup. In spite of the excitement created by South Africa hosting the tournament the homeless and the city informal traders held different views about the harsh treatment visited upon them by the municipal authorities in the “clean-up” drive particularly in the match hosting cities. The people who were mostly affected were city dwellers who are foreign nationals⁹⁰. Their vulnerability was worsened by the fact that when the metro-police

the world are organised and designed to advance the dominant interest of those who command wealth. The poor do not feature at all in that scenario of economic and financial domination of cities and urban neighbourhoods.

⁹⁰ We cannot engage in a discourse about the vulnerability of hunger, without reflecting on the crimes of xenophobia that as a country we have experienced in the recent past. Attacks of foreigners erupted in our country in 2008, and recently seven years after the initial outbreak. The public was informed that poverty and unemployment were the trigger factors. The suggestion that South Africans were xenophobic is contrary to the extent of resources that South Africa grants to its neighbors. Thus it must be noted that South Africa has given aid to Zimbabwe worth \$93 million “between 2005-2011” (Shoba & Tromp 2015:1). Furthermore in 2010 our country cancelled a R1.1 billion owed by Cuba. In 2012 South Africa contributed R123 million in aid to 19 African States, including Cuba as part of its obligation to the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund. In 2013 our country donated US\$2billion to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assist with bailout of European countries facing bankruptcy. The Republic has contributed R1.4 billion on peace missions undertaking in the African Continent in its 2015 financial year. Our annual contribution to the United Nations has been incremental since our return to the international community. In 2015 South Africa has met its R123 million contribution. South Africa is on top of the only four countries that pay their due at the African Union. In the 2014-2015 financial year, South Africa allocated \$33.23 million for African Union funding (Mataboge 2015:8). A further R2 billion has been committed to the Bricks New Development Bank. The figures of the support to the Bricks are expected to reach R24 billion in the next seven years. Nonetheless we cannot engage the spirituality of xenophobia purely in personal terms without locating it into the prevailing socio-economic context that has not changed since the violence of 2008. We cannot dispute that the spirituality of xenophobia reflects back to us both the communal and structural economic systems that ultimately influence individual moral conduct. We could purport that xenophobia is an embodiment of the power structures and the sanctioned systemic evil expressive of the global structural systems of governance. Such global apartheid against non-Europeans in particular, and on a limited scale against East European migrants cannot be swept under the carpet anymore. This Eurocentric xenophobia that has class categories is reflective of European attitudes in their global systems such as the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and local socio-economic position that benefit the rich and the politically connected. This has been attested by the political decision of the European Union to cut funding for the safety and rescue efforts for African and the Middle East immigrants who were seeking refugee status in Europe since September 2014. The xenophobic attitudes of Europe could not be ignored as was shown by the fatalities of more than 2000 African refugees in 2015 that have perished in the Mediterranean waters while trying to cross over to Europe. On the other hand Asia, particularly Thailand has been affected by human trafficking and xenophobic attacks directed at the lower economic classes. We witnessed in the middle of 2015 how approximately six thousand people were stranded in open seas for six weeks and refused assistance by Asia Pacific countries. In the same vein, the Australian government did not deny the allegations that it had paid the traffickers to return the stranded refugees back to the Pacific. Those individuals the Australians could not drive back to the Pacific were simply encamped at its camps commonly duped the “Guantanamo Bay” of the Pacific in Papua New Guinea.

confiscates their goods, they are usually afraid to report such incidents fearing arrests and possible deportation to their countries of origin. Their fears are justified given our recent history of xenophobic attacks against African foreign nationals in 2008 and in 2015.

The same voices of protest emerged across Brazil as the country was preparing to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup Tournament. The Brazilian experience of deliberately hiding the affected constituencies had a negative bearing to the city dwellers, including threatened indigenous communities. The driving force behind the public protests against the hosting of the World Cup in Brazil hinged on what the citizens referred to as the “broken promises and the ballooning cost” associated with the hosting of the games. It was well argued in the British Daily Telegraph that the Brazilian World Cup was the most expensive ever tournament in the history of the football. The hosting country was expected to spend as much as 14-billion US dollars bill for the overall expenses of the tournament (editorial The Times: 10 June 10, 2014:10).

The wave of the protests in Brazil drew an estimated one million protesters including groups with special interests such as the Homeless Workers Movement, who ventured to the streets of major hosting cities in the eve of the preparation of the warm-up games in the middle of 2013. The section of the population that bore the brunt of the World Cup games, were the Brazilian Indians. This vulnerable section of the community protested largely on the basis that the indigenous lands were under threat. They accused the government of not protecting their lands that are vital in their own survival and cultural identity and the posterity of their values and traditions. It is evident that the public representatives are more than willing to advance an open door policy when it comes to accommodating the interests of big business. Whereas

However we need to ascertain what could have been the trigger elements of the attacks directed to other Africans by fellow Africans that we witnessed in the winter of 2008 and earlier on in 2015. Is it possible that the democratic transformation of 1994 still waits to cast out the demonic spirituality of our colonial past? Can the attacks be attributed to self-hate and inferiority complex in the lives of the majority of the Africans? Is it possible that the definitive premise of corporate South Africa is failing to cross the threshold of past dehumanizing cheap labour practices, price fixing tendencies and prevalent token Black Economic Empowerment imperatives? Is xenophobia not expressed in the gross economic class divisions, poverty, inequality and unjustifiable affluence of the few, characteristic of South Africa twenty-two years after its first democratic elections?

the poor and socially marginalised have to resort to public protests to register their concerns before the state accords them due hearing (Bloomberg 2014:5).

3.8 THE VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE MINING SECTOR⁹¹

There is a similar situation characteristic of the constant violation of the rights of the workers in the mining sector. A prevalent silencing of the voices and the exploitative concealment of the murder of the vulnerable groups was clearly evident in the Koppie-massacre of 34 miners in August 2012 by the South African Police Service. The Platinum workers were on strike at the Northwest Province in Marikana. The strike had negative effects on three platinum mines, Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), Impala Platinum (Implats), and Lonmin.

The miner's representatives in The Association of Mining and Construction Union (AMCU) and the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) submit the dynamics of the levels of vulnerability amongst the workers themselves. The predicament of the miners emerged in the settlement outcomes on the five months strike that has resulted to the fall of the South African currency, and subsequently the negative grading of the Rand by the Washington based financial credit institutes Fitch, Standard and Poor's and Moody's.

The vulnerability of the working class within the mining sector began to show some signs of strains when the then members of the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) embarked on an unplanned wild cat strike against the advice of their respective union. The low paid workers held the perception that their shop stewards were aligning themselves with the mining bosses. The rank and file of the workers embarked on a dissent protest against monthly allowances the NUM shop Stewards

⁹¹ Claude Kabemba (see Meyiwa *et al.* 2014:464) points out that the mining sector in South Africa has shaped the economic trajectory of our country a significant way than any other economic sector since the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly and gold in the Johannesburg. The history therefore of our mining has been about the extraction of the minerals at all costs and by all means necessary. Hence the 1913 Land Act was drafted by the white government to create favourable conditions for white capital to extract minerals through access to the land for mining prospect and the provision of cheap migrant labour. Therefore "apartheid mining sector" had total ownership of the mining industry for over 160 years. Thus the post 1994 democratic order has inherited a monster of a system in the mining industry which has its own rules driven by greed and appetite for control of mineral resources by all means necessary. It is in the light of such horrendous history of our mining that we must understand the continuous violations of the rights of mine workers in the "post-apartheid mining regime" even under the democratic rule.

were receiving from the mining companies. The benefits that the workers' representatives were receiving were seen as divisive tokens by the management. The average workers felt that their shop stewards, who were allegedly in the pockets of the establishment, did not properly articulate their voices.

Dewald van Rensburg (2014:15) points out the Unions tabled a proposition to the effect that the lowest paid worker must be given an annual increment from R600 to R1000 a month. In euro terms the demand was "from 500 to 1000 euros" monthly. However this "distributional conflict" as perceived by Thomas Piketty (2014:39) was settled with an increment of merely 75 euros after such a calculated waste of human life. How cheap the labour, life, worth and dignity of the African workers !

It is an indictment against the political and capital leadership that in South Africa the worth of a black labour in the output of our mineral production is far less than the investments and subsidies directed to a European cow in the protection of agricultural interests by the European Union. Indeed "the Marikana tragedy" (Piketty 2014:39), the "systemic ill treatment of the natives by the colonists" (Plaatje 2007:68) and the cold blooded murder of black men in their ancestral land will always stand as a reminder that since colonialism the dignity and the worth of a black life does not carry any weight and significance even in post 1994 transition with the best constitution in the world. Black lives do not matter in South Africa.

3.9 TRANSFER PRICING AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ISSUES OF VULNERABILITY IN THE MINING SECTOR

The validity of the demands of the striking workers was emboldened by the publication of a report by the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC). The group rightly pointed out that the status of the wages of the 50% of the workers were stagnated since the last two decades.

The report gave shocking results in 2012 which indicated that by the middle of the year almost half of all the mining workers were receiving salaries less than R3 300 a month doing hard labour. The research undertaken by the (AIDC) clearly shows how hard earned South African resources are sold at a far cheaper price at international

markets resulting in approximately loss of 15 billion Rand between 2005 to 2013 respectively (Sangqu 2014:3).

3.9.1 Transfer pricing in the platinum sector

On the other hand the group executive member for sustainable and risk management at Impala Platinum concedes that their respective mining companies can make means to meet the R12 500 demands of the workers. His contention is that the conclusion of the AIDC was reached through collected data. This data, did not factor in the negative impacts of the loss of revenue to the shareholders in the aftermath of the 2008 global market offset. He further alludes to the fact that the platinum mines incurred loss due to honouring of discounts arrangements with established consumers, resulting to a loss of about 85 million US dollars (R910 million) (Sangqu 2014:3).

Sangqu's (2014:3) apologetics are rightly contradicted by his assertion that mining companies and their shareholders received high dividends between 2000 and 2008, "while the workers and the state gained little or nothing". Hence by implication the mining housing are in a position to meet the R12 500 demands of workers. The issues could be the precedent and possible impact and influence by such a capitulation in the entire spectrum of South African.

Paul Jourdan (2014:3) records the potential and actual monetary capital in the hands of the mining companies. He paints a picture of staggering propositions in terms of the actual wealth that was taken away from South Africa and stashed away in foreign banks and other financial institutions. Jourdan resume his argument by highlighting the fact that all the owners of natural resources are entitled to a "resource rent" that is separate from the actual price of selling the mineral commodities on both the local and offshore markets.

The "rent" in question is well calculated after the expenses of retrieving the raw materials and settling the salary bill of all workers and bank loans attached to the mining business. It must be noted that the mining operations in our country are the beneficiaries of huge subsidization from electricity utility even though they consume more power than households. Therefore this "rent" could best be described as

surplus price. The mining houses plead poverty when they have to pay living wages. Whereas the bulk of funds they can tap into are profits that far exceed the running costs of their businesses.

3.9.2 Transfer pricing in the oil and gas sectors

It is estimated that in 2012 alone the “rent” of all combined mining activity in South Africa, specifically mineral mines, specifically oil and gas sectors, reached a staggering 2 trillion US dollars (R43 trillion) per annum. In international terms, this rent results to 7% “of global gross domestic products” of our economy.

This analysis is affirmed by the locally initiated study (ANC State Intervention in the Mineral Sector-Sims study) by the ruling party which come to the conclusion that the “rent” benefits to mining housing, calculated after the deduction of the revenue by the Taxman, the mining sector holds in possession R80 billion per annum (Jourdan 2014:3).

3.9.3 Transfer pricing in the iron ore and coal mining sections

Jourdan (2014:3,) strengthens his case by making a reference to Wood Makenzie Study that reached the conclusion that the iron ore and coal mining industries benefits after tax deductions, remained with R40 billion in 2013-14 annual calendar. The very same study traced the role of colonial ownership of mineral rights in South Africa by noting that the present African Nation Congress administration had abdicated its responsibility in taking ownership of mineral rights on behalf of the majority of the populace by “allowing the super profits of the resources boom to be taken by mining companies” (Jourdan 2014:3).

It was that realisation of the obscene boom and packages allocated to the mining management that resulted to the 2012 wild cat mining strikes in which the workers were demanding due share and profits on the grounds that their hard labour significantly contributed to the boom in the sector.

3.9.4 Transfer pricing as practiced by Lonmin Mining

The issues of “renting” South Africa’s resources and selling them at a cheaper price in offshore trading markets contributes to daily violent protests that have been taking

place in the last two years. It is not only workers who are directly affected, but also the poor communities suffer as a consequence. The case in point is reflected by another publication of the Lonmin's mining company transfer accounts by the Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC), which gave an estimation of about R400 million that is transferred off-shore annually.

AIDC economist Dick Forslund suggested that the amount taken out of the country by Lonmin alone, negatively impacts on "its ability to fund decent wages and social investment". The report conclusively argues that R100-billion is taken out of the country on a yearly basis, both by legitimate and illegal means (Ann 2014:4).

As part of the same critical assessment of the "renting" practice Bridgette Radebe, of the South African Mining Development Association responded to the AIDC study by further arguing that the financial outflows negatively affect the workers as well as the prospective black empowerment hopefuls. She alluded to the fact that the prospective black miners struggle to raise funds to invest in mining activities.

Bridgette Radebe further linked the prevalent violent service delivery protests to the looting of South Africa's natural resources for the benefit of foreign interests. She stated that the looting of our natural resources leaves South Africans to deal with unemployment and social discontent (Ann 2014:4).

3.10 THE VULNERABILITY OF THE INDEBTED

There is another level of vulnerability within the mining sector whose roots are deeply entrenched in mining communities. This vulnerability was brought into light through the on-going strikes. The general causal factors for the said vulnerability are the nature of unbearable exposure to debts. The situation has been worsened by the level and extent of indebtedness the miners have incurred in the course of the five-month strike that crippled the mining sector in 2013.

The social and financial conditions of which the miners live, has never improved. They were victims of financial benefits in terms of loss in expected retirement benefits. On their social levels they are still servicing loans and credits incurred to sustain them during the course of protracted strikes.

The Senior Economist at Alternative Information and Development Centre based in Cape Town, Dick Forslund (2014:6) reflecting on the socio-economic conditions of the miners. He argues that the miners resorted to the “loan sharks” industry to augment their salaries. He regards the miner’s indebtedness as a social malice, and this crisis ought to be perceived as a new form of apartheid of the marginalised, by the credit industry.

Forslund resumes his argument by stating that the economical structural arrangements of the mining industry serves as the incubator and the breeding ground for the financial misery of its workforce. The structural enslavement in the mining sector ought to be seen as an as “objective factor” and a reality of powerlessness and destitute. The mining houses are not willing to undo or reverse such a *status quo* (Forslund 2014:6). Farm workers in the Western Cape experience similar conditions of vulnerability. This crisis is regarded as the contributory factor in the wildcat farm strike that engulfed the Cape in 2013.

However in one of unexpected occurrences in mid-June 2015, the Western Cape High Court Judge Siraj Desai delivered a favourable judgment for the farm workers. Companies producing this conduct were given a judgment against “illegally obtained emolument attachment order (EAO’s)”. The judgment had direct implication for Flemix, a loans company collecting credits on behalf of a number of micro lenders. Flemix was ordered to refund the farmworkers almost R1.6 billion which was wrongfully deducted from their accounts. Almost 1.5 million blue-collar workers are currently subjected to illegal deductions of debt for loans the workers are struggling to honour (Van Rensburg 2015:5).

3.11 GLOBAL FINANCIAL SYSTEMS AS ENABLERS OF VULNERABILITY

Social vulnerability of food shortage takes place in a broader macro context assisted by global financial instruments. The global mining activities serves as a study case to trace how profits are generally diverted to offshore accounts and share-holders coffers at the expense of local economies and its labour force.

The Anglo American mining interests take stringent measures to ensure the calculation of expected profits benefit the shareholders. The intended beneficiaries

are the international investors and bank financiers housing based in Europe and Washington. Mark Cutifani, the new chief executive officer of Anglo American, supports such business practice. Cutifani publicly stated that in the current economic climate in South Africa positive returns were still a possibility. This assessment was intended to assure the offshore investors about the guaranteed return to their investments. He then gave a forecast of a positive return of profitability of the mining production on the basis of the capital invested to yield a return of above 15%. He predicted such returns in an economy that does not create employment particularly for the youth who seats between 32% and 50% unemployment (Forslund 2014: 6).

3.11.1 Global capital interests and social vulnerability

Mark Cutifani's assertion of profitability in mining was specifically directed to the financial firms such as JP Morgan Cazenove, Deutsche Bank, Morgan Stanley and the likes of Citi Bank. Cutifani's commitment to the financial moguls with vast interest in the mineral resources of our country had another backing. The publication of the Anglo American annual report detailing 2013-14 activity in the Anglo stable further confirmed Cutifani's predictions. It gave an assuring tone confirming envisaged double profitability of returns for 2014 financial year cycle.

This was a bold undertaking to the investors and shareholders in the face of legitimate demands of the workers, notwithstanding the views of some sectors against the strike. The same prediction of profits castigated the demands of workers for R12 500 as "ignorant" demands. Keith Bryer (2014:4) reference to workers intelligence and understanding of mining sector as "economic ignorance" could only be interpreted as racist and immoral. He was defending unreasonable, selfish-driven and illogical investment returns in the context of an ailing global economic climate.

It is strange that the wage demands of the workers are painted as stupid at worst and ill-informed at best. Yet the profits margins entitled to the shareholders are regarded as a reflection of a 'principled policy position' of mining companies to the investors. Forslund (2014:6) could only make sense of the prevailing managerial ideology and perception as an outcome of a singular mind-set of the "corporate and political elite".

This capitalist mind-set perpetuates a kind of self-belief, hoping that the present economic *status quo* with its trickledown effect will win favour with workers. It is premised on the belief that the workers would eventually reap the benefits of uninterrupted production outcomes. The ideology of the “corporate and political elite” that Forslund refers to, contributes to the socio-economic conditions that nurture and foster collective vulnerability of the workers and their dependants.

3.12 THE ROLE OF EMERGING ELITES IN SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The vulnerability of the workers is deeply compounded by the social positioning and strategic interests of Forslund’s “corporate and political elite”. This fact is well evident in the response of the secretary general of the governing party, the African National Congress (ANC) Mr. Gwede Mantashe lashed out in criticism of individuals by labelling them as the “third force” behind the AMCU strike. Mr. Gwede Mantashe referred to the advisory role of a certain left wing international socialist grouping with extreme Communist ideology. He alleged that the group was bent on forcefully toppling democratically elected governments. This group is known as the Committee Workers International, which is based in Sweden.

Mantashe’s contention is that the said grouping served as a foreign White political consulting agency to AMCU. In turn, this largely undermined Black AMCU shop Stewards because an accusation was strongly denied with contempt by AMCU. AMCU noted that Mantashe’s comments contained negative racial tones. It further cited that the accusation had xenophobic insinuations. It served as an “attempt to divert attention from the ANC’s own responsibility for the suffering of the platinum mine workers” (Shoba 2014:11).

The seriousness of sanctioned and mediated vulnerability even by the senior officials of ruling party places the entire labour relations system in jeopardy. When a perception is created that the owners of industry have a favourable reception and hearing from the ruling party, and also by reference the state. It makes the mockery of the established system of collective bargaining. The fact that the serving members of parliament, some before they were seconded to the National Assembly, held significant shares in major corporates across the board.

This fact has been brought forward by the recent intervention of the Minister of Mineral Resources to avert the crippling platinum strike immediately after his appointment to the office. A recent investigative report (McKune & Brummer 2014:2) regarding the Mineral Resources Minister Mr. Ngaoko Ramatlhodi suggests he held platinum shares with an estimated worth of R20 million to the very same company he was assisting to reach an amicable solution with AMCU. The issue that raised concern was the fact that the minister entered those negotiations as a compromised candidate riddled with grievous conflict of interests⁹² in the matter. He could not advance the interest of the working class while on the pay roll of the very same company that has failed to offer better salaries and working conditions for miners.

3.12.1 The public representatives as mediators of vulnerability

In the same vein, an investigative journalist and assistant editor of City Press Mr. Adriaan Basson gave details of issues of corruption among prominent South African politicians in his publication of 2012, entitled “*Zuma Exposed*”. The current Minister of Mineral Resources Mr. Ngaoko Ramatlhodi is mentioned as a suspect while holding office as the then Premier of Limpopo, along with his MEC of Public Works. The allegations linked them as recipients of bribes and corrupt awarding process of social grants tender in 2003. Ramatlhodi and his colleague were under investigation by the special Police Unit, the Scorpions.

It is evident then that the question of compromised members of society, or special interests groups, such as small business operators are not immune from the corrupt influence of the “corporate and political elite”. In this manner Basson (2012:141-145) details how in 2009 among others, President Jacob Zuma’s nephew Khulubuse and former President Nelson Mandela’s grandson Zodwa acquired a liquidated Pamodzi gold mine at Orkney in the Free State, and other mining interests.

The duo operated as Aurora Empowerment Systems whose liquidation was effected by the North Gauteng High Court due to its failure to meet its financial obligations

⁹² This state of affairs gives credence to the perceptions of endemic corruption in government and the Executive is the not immune. Roger Southall (Kangwanja *et al.* 2009:8) suggests that such compromised practices have driven corruption in the public sector to “becoming systemic”. These allegations link public officials in corrupt deals that are driven by a “scramble for public and political

both to the workers in its mines, and to the service providers. There was a damning allegation against the company by The National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) and Solidarity Union. The unions asserted that the mines under the said company were literally being stripped of all assets. Workers were resorting to suicide due to debt burdens, and illegal miners were invading underground mines and committing violence with impunity. On top of the illegal mining issues, underground acid water was contaminating fresh water streams in the vicinity (Basson 2012:144).

In this grim picture presented by Basson (2012:144), one detects a kind of secondary victimisation and vulnerability of the mineworkers and upcoming small businesses at the hands of a new generational political connected elite group. These new groupings of black elites display insensitivity to moral and social responsibility. It is without surprise to take note of the statement that was credited to the then spokesperson of the National Union of Mine Workers referring to lavish lifestyle of Khulubuse Zuma and his donation of R1 million to the ANC fundraising drive.

The NUM spokesperson Mr. Lesiba Seshoka indignantly said that “over 2000 workers remain unpaid for a period of two years while the fat cats move around with expensive, luxurious vehicles”. Seshoka went on to say that Mr. Khulubuse Zuma had the audacity to flaunt his wealth while the workers in his mines were subjected to starvation and misery. The financial crisis of Aurora were alluded in Court in March 2015 when the its directors were to reply in the North Gauteng High Court against R1.8 billion claim for mismanaging the mine, and stripping it of its assets resulting in forced retrenchment of 3 500 miners without pay and benefits (De Lange 2014:6).

The High Court found in favour of the workers at the end of June 2015. The court found the defendants guilty of “wilful deception” and “reckless management of Aurora’s affairs”. The directors of Aurora were found guilty of all charges against them. They were instructed by the court to settle all their debts inclusive of unpaid salaries to miners for over thirty six months. The difficult part of this case is the expected delay due a possible appeal by the guilty party to the Court of Appeals.

office” with the intentions of influencing office bearers for favours that are rewarded with “private wealth”. In this regard corruption has been “allowed to gain ground” in the public sector.

The political-economic elite that blatantly conduct calculated criminal business dealings are acting in the same manner of the Askaris who are former freedom fighters. The Askaris are freedom fighters that were turned against their own comrades and communities by apartheid security forces. They were allegedly tortured and threatened with death and harm of their families if they did not assume the role of double agents. On another level, the elitist Askari criminal conduct can be placed on the same level with the criminal acts of the Nazis who plundered and looted the property belonging to the Jewish prisoners at various German concentration camps.

Hence Laurence Rees in his reflection of the atrocities that took place at the Auschwitz concentration camp recalls that Jewish life was cheap. Though Nazism sanctioned the violation of the human rights of the Jewish prisoners, the element of looting the prisoner's belongings created a new class of beneficiaries within Nazism.

The commanders of the camps could not tolerate the lower ranks to steal, resulting to the resentments by the prison guards against the "Nazi leadership that it was right to kill the Jews, but disagreed with Himmler's policy of not letting them individually profit from the crime" (Rees 2005:15). However, strangely enough, in the situation of the looting against the poor through tender riggings and corruption, the conducts of the Askari elite by yesterday's freedom fighters, has also created a new class of beneficiaries who have accorded themselves the right to "individually profit from the crime" against the socially vulnerable in South Africa. The Askari elites need to be reminded of the guiding principle applied by those who were in the negotiations for change, in their assertion that "we want freedom at all costs, but not at any price", particularly not at the expense of the poor (Sachs 2004:88).

The looting of mines (through ownership and acquiring shares) by the Askari elites has created deeper levels of vulnerability within the mining community. This was proven by the 2013 strikes in the platinum belt. Miners themselves attest to the level of fear and intimidation that they experienced if they ventured to report for work against the wishes of the majority workers who were on strike. In other words, the vulnerable were fighting each other. The major impacts of the strikes had far reaching implications on the families of the workers and the entire Northwest

economy, especially the self-employed. It is reported that even the Rustenburg Business Forum (Shoba 2014:11) issued a communiqué to the effect that more than a dozen business ventures had collapsed. Retrenchment was the norm, and most of the striking miners resorted in begging and accepting any food donation given to them.

3.13 SOUTH AFRICA'S ECONOMY AS A PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

It is common knowledge that South African economy is not equally enjoyed by all races and economic classes. When President Jacob Zuma delivered an opening address in the African National Congress Policy Conference at the end of May 2012. He alluded to the fact that the economic power dynamics of the apartheid economy have not changed. He asserted that the question of capital ownership “is still primarily in the hands of white males”.

The implication is obvious that political power has been transferred to black majority; yet economic power control is still in the hands of white South Africans, who are grudgingly opening up economic space to the rest of the population. However this political assessment of our economy by President Jacob Zuma does not give a full picture.

3.13.1 Ownership of South Africa's economy at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)

In giving a different point of view about the actual status of the ownership of our country's wealth. Dave Steward expressed his views as the executive director of the former president of the republic, FW de Klerk Foundation. He believes that stakes are changing for the benefit of the African population. Steward's (2012:11) response is premised on the number of participants represented at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). He enters the debate by pointing out that the economic activity reflected at the JSE only covers about 20 percent of the overall economic activity of the country. Other significant role players must account for the other eighty percent of economic activity.

Steward support his arguments by referring to the study that was conducted by Trevor Chandler and Associates in the October of 2011. The study came to conclusions that give a different picture of entities having significant ownership of South African economy. The report referred to by Steward (2012:11) reached a conclusion that the current Zuma administration has 2% stake shares at the JSE. Eleven percent of the shares are jointly owned, whereas foreign ownership amounts to 33 percent. The remaining 54 percent of the shares are made available to all sectors of South Africa who are willing to participate in the Stock Exchange. However the weakness of his argument is based on the assumptions that African participation in the JSE depends on their “willingness”. What kind of “willingness” is he referring to when the majority of black middle class who are possible participants at the JSE sustain their status by means credit? What about the “willingness” of white capital to stop controlling the economy of the country?

3.13.2 Black elite’s share in the spoils of white capital

A deeper analysis of Steward’s response is needed to unpack the 54 percent available shares to the ordinary man on the street. At least 28 percent shares, comprising of 3.4 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the shares are black owned. In the same vein the white population own in total 72 per cent of shares signifying 7.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The underlying point is that Black South Africans are in control of approximately 29.4 percent of our economic wealth through the active role of government. The State Owned Enterprises (SOE’s) has an 8 per cent control of shares at the Stock Exchange (Steward 2012:11).

Dave Steward is arguing forcefully for the fact that White ownership of South African economy is significantly declining whilst the Black ownership is gaining momentum. Therefore the reader can be at liberty to critique both the private capital as well as the black elite, who are fanatically “clinging to existing structures” (Bosch 1980:207) as beneficiaries of the current economic arrangements.

Under the same economic radar, Cameron Duodo, a Ghanaian analyst, paints a negative picture about the impact of our economy on the lives of ordinary citizens. Duodo (2007:18) traces his argument from the 2007 study of the South African

Institute of Race Relations detaining that the social conditions of Black South Africans has declined since the demise of apartheid.

The 2007 study of the Race Relations purported that round about 4.2 million citizens were surviving with less than \$1 a day, 11 years after the end of apartheid, compared to 1.9 million who were experiencing the same conditions in 1996. The figures were pointing to an actual increase of 2.3 million people living in poverty. The Race Relations study then surmised the situation of destitution as having been accelerated “both in absolute numbers and proportionally”. Such levels of poverty were acted out in the unfavourable labour conditions characterised by 26 percent of unemployment.

Duodo’s contention is that the government lacks the insight of resolving “economic and social gaps” in South Africa. His take is that our political leadership has invested much effort in meeting the expectations and demands of international financial bodies such as the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund rather than applying the same effort and time to address the needs of the poor communities. Thus David Bilchitz (2007:64) contends that South Africa has failed in advancing the notions of regarding all its citizens “as having equal importance”, and also to regard it as matter of priority to place its vulnerable in “enabling conditions” that will affirm their dignity.

South Africa has been experiencing Duodo’s “economic and social gaps” on many levels. Such “gaps” are taking root in our communities in the light of current economic trajectory that witnessed an 8.6% profit to the top 20 businesses in the 2012-13 calendar year, be it mining or retail industries. As such, when reflecting on our 22nd anniversary as a democracy we need to appreciate that South Africa’s inequality gap has surpassed Brazil as the most unequal society in the world since the end of apartheid (Merten 2014:3).

3.13.3 The obscene wealth of the few rich against the poor

The widening socio-economic gap, particularly the “various forces shaping inequality” (Stiglitz 2012: xv) saw individual’s wealth expounding globally. This is confirmed in the case of the CEO of the Mondi paper and packaging company, Mr. David Hathorn reached 330% in a year to earn R76 million (Prinsloo 2013:1). In the very same

context, Moyagabo Maake (2013:1) reported about the expansion of our country's Rich List. He noted the rising fortunes of the retail Shoprite's owner Christo Wiese, reaching R27.5 billion, which is more than the previous year level of R15.2 billion. A beneficiary of Black Economic Empowerment, Mr. Patrice Motsepe, the second on the Rich List follows Wiese, whose wealth is estimated to have reached R22.6 billion.

A recent study (Merten 2014:3) directly focusing on the remuneration packages of the CEO's of the top 50 companies of our country listed in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) came out with shocking statistics. It looked at the levels of salaries and related packages given to the executives and how such decisions contribute to the crises of "income inequalities". The research investigated the wealth gap between company executives and the poor working class. It made connection between affluence and social instability that precipitates the levels of poverty.

3.13.4 The template of social discontent

These "various forces shaping inequality" continue to determine the slow pace and depth of transformation in our country. The prelude of the same study by the former Finance Minister of South Africa, Mr. Pravin Gordhan (2014:3) placed the unpalatable facts and figures of income inequality in our society's template of "unemployment, poverty, and inequality".

This template of social discontent is duly characterised by the staggering unemployment figures, which sat at 25.2 percent, according to the Stats SA release (Vollgraaff 2013:9) in mid-year 2013. Vollgraaff makes further reference to the report of the National Credit Regulator, which stated that South African consumers are burdened with a R1.45 trillion debt in various financial commitments. The untenable conditions have trapped almost 6 million in poverty as reported (Hosken 2014:1) by the Oxford University in the United Kingdom, through its Global Multidimensional Poverty Index.

The alarming fact of the study is that each executive of the mentioned companies takes home roughly R49 million per annum, such as the CEO of the Shoprite retail stores Whitey Basson who has received R40.9m. The former chief executive officer of Naspers, Koos Bekker has earned R1 billion in 2012, including a number of share options at his disposal (Hosken 2014:1).

The study under discussion is a follow-up to the 2006 research by Ann Crotty and Renee Bonorchis on the executive salaries of 50 large companies in South Africa. Crotty and Bonorchis revealed that in the 2005 an average CEO of the companies looked at, received salary packages inclusive of bonus and share options to “more than R15 million a year. Their pay is more than 700 times the minimum wage” in comparative economic sectors (Massie *et al.* 2014:xxii).

Another work done by the Labour Research Service looking into the executive packages in 2012 found that an annual salary income would be R7 739 970, for an executive director, and R11 902 463, for a chief executive officer. The report concluded what the executive receives in contrast to the low paid worker shows huge disparities. It meant that the lowest paid worker “would therefore have to work 15 years, 174 years, and 267 years to earn what an average non-executive director, executive director, and CEO respectively were paid in 2012” (Massie *et al.* 2014:xxii).

The greed displayed by the corporate sector in our country is also mirrored by the same practices in the Western economies, particularly the US. Such global practices of corporate greed effectively entrench the “concentration of wealth at the top”. This dynamic is advanced through the systems such as “monopoly profits”. In this instance the system advantages a select few individuals, families, companies, and subsequently specific countries (Stiglitz 2012: xv).

3.14 CORRUPT BUSINESS DEALINGS AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

3.14.1 Africa’s lost revenue due to corrupt business practices

Another reality of corporate greed that could not be wished away is the ever-growing tendencies of price fixing by big and respected companies in South Africa. It must be noted that corruption practices are global phenomenon hence by 2007 Africa is estimated to have lost R1 Trillion due to corrupt practices in the public and private sectors.

The international report of the United Nations and the World Bank stolen asset recovery (STAR) project apportion blame to intermediary functionaries situated in the developed world. Thus a number of professionals such as lawyers, accountants and public representatives of companies in the developed economies knowingly

participated in dealings “to launder or hide the proceeds of assets theft” from third world countries (Schmidt 2007:13).

The scope of theft covers a wide range of areas such the cash from the trafficking of drugs, arms dealing, human trafficking and slavery, blood diamonds, unrecorded oil transactions, fraudulent acts, extortion, and bribery accompanied by tax evasion. The UN report estimates that R9 trillion is lauded annually and half of those funds “come from developing and transitional economies” (Schmidt 2007:15).

Paul Hoffman, the director of the Institute for Accountability in South Africa regards the seriousness of corruption practices as undermining the livelihood of vulnerable communities. He alluded to the fact that since the democratisation of the country in 1994, South African government has lost an estimated R700 Billion, through corruption due to weak tender monitoring systems (Hosken 2014:1).

Joseph E. Stiglitz (2012: xvii) reflected on the global scale of financial injustice practices. He asserts that the power of money is used to “gain advantage”. Money is also used to consolidate positions of dominance in specific sectors of the economy. In our context, such conduct perpetuates corrupt tendencies. The very same tendencies of using the “power of money” to perpetuate and maintain dominance has been hastily adopted by the black elites across the board.

The dominance of money, power and influence has reached all levels of leadership both in the public and private sectors. There is no level of leadership in our country that is not beholden to Mammon. The old demons of apartheid Mammon have democratised across race, class, gender and culture. It is not far from the truth to assert that the weakening of prosecutorial state agencies in our country has undauntedly advanced the interest of the dominance of money in the public and private sectors. The corrupt elites believe that they can buy justice since their criminal conduct is sustained by the “culture of impunity” (Mogoeng 2016:28).

3. 15 THE CULTURE OF CORRUPTION AND ITS IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

3.15.1 Unethical business practice in the insurance and pension fund sectors

The culture of corruption in the new South Africa has been gradually taking root at all levels of public and private institutions. In 2005 the presiding Pension Fund Adjudicator, Mr. Vuyani Ngalwana made a ruling against insurance companies. He compelled them to refund policyholders who were penalised for terminating their respective policies before the maturity date.

A similar scenario repeated itself in 2006 when Dube Tshidi, the head of the Financial Services Board compelled the pension fund bodies to payback more than R400 million from clients' accounts that were subjected to double deduction.

3.16 PRICE FIXING AS THE LOOTING OF THE POOR AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

3.16.1 Price fixing in the banking and food sectors

Furthermore in 2007 the Competition Commission resumed the year with public hearings regarding the high cost of bank charges in our country. The full report that was released the following year, detailed the practice of uncompetitive business practice within the banking sector. The collusion of the banks has made South African consumers subject to highest banking charges in the world. Thus unfairly benefitting the major banks with almost R53 billion in banking transactions charges.

As if that was not enough, by the end of 2007, the Competition Commission served a severe fine to the Tiger Foods with an exorbitant amount of R98 million for unfair bread pricing. Whereas another accomplice to the crime against the vulnerable since 1994 is the Premier Foods. This grouping was not fined due to its willingness to own up to its corrupt acts by testifying against Tiger Foods. However their willingness to testify against Premier Foods does not absolve them of moral culpability against the poor. The tragedy of the act by bread companies is that the management and directors of the said entities were bent on making profits against the poor who's survival depends on bread as a staple diet (editorial City Press, 18 November 2007:26).

3.16.2 Price fixing in the pharmaceutical sector

Beauregard Tromp (2008:1) further reported that the corrosion of morality affected the milk companies who also were dragged to the Commission to account for price

fixing. In 2008, the Competition Commission opened with a ruling against the drug companies who were fined for fixing prices of medicines that were sold to the public and private sectors respectively.

The investigations by the Commission that lasted 36 months alluded to the operations of a cartel within the pharmaceutical industry that influenced prices. The very Tiger Brands fined R98 million two months prior to the release of the drugs cartel report, was named as culprits via their subsidiary company, Adcock Ingram Critical Care. The Commission report gave details of the collusion by the R14 billion worth company to influence the awarding of tenders in the Department of Health. The Commission's report stated that the management of Adcock Ingram knowingly "would also agree that whenever tenders were not awarded as agreed or arranged between them, the winning firms would cede portions of the tender to one of their colluding partners". It also emerged that a number of senior executives of Tiger Brands were aware of the misconduct and did not take any remedial action.

3.16.3 Price fixing in the construction sector

The Construction industry has been implicated on colluding to fix prices for the construction of the stadia in preparations 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. Construction companies implicated include multinational groups such as the Grinaker-LTA, Murray and Roberts, WBHO, and Group Five. The Competition Commission charge against some major construction companies is based on the testimonies of those companies that sought leniency for their participation in the construction cartel (Lloyd Gedye 2013:3).

The Commission reached a conclusion that prices for the construction of the stadia were fixed at around 17.5% profit margins with the total overall price at R15.4 billion for five stadiums. The veracity of the price fixing allegation and estimates for benefits was substantiated by the 2011 Stats SA report, which placed the profit gains to respective construction companies in ranges between 12.5 to 17.5% during the commencement of construction in 2006.

The Competition Commission settled on a R1.46 billion fine to the 15 companies implicated in corrupt practices as part of its Fast Track Settlement Process for "price

fixing, cover–bidding and inflating profit margins” against major construction projects funded by various government departments. Prinsloo (2013:3) noted that the fines varied from R309 million against Murray & Roberts, to R315 million against WBHO and the AVENG respectively. Each fine was calculated on the basis of the strength of each company’s annual turnover profits.

3.16.4 Price fixing in the resources sector

In the same vein the Competition Commission recently as of June 2014, gave a corrective ruling against Sasol for overcharging South African consumers international prices for products manufactured locally. Ann Crotty (2014:3) rightly critique the business practice of Sasol that disadvantage South African customers knowing fully well that the privatisation of Sasol was intended to benefit South African citizens.

Strange enough the Competition Commission ruling against Sasol was similar to the same ruling handed against Mittal Steel South Africa in 2002 for excessive price fixing based on a complaint submitted by Harmony Gold, a Black Economic mining company.

3.16.5 Transfer pricing and tax evasion

The problem of capital outflow from our country has been practised and condoned through the mechanisms of avoiding tax compliance particularly by the corporate sector. It has been a normal practise for corporates to “shift profit” (Steyn 2014:8) to countries that provide tax incentives. This practice is not necessarily regarded as corrupt, but rather unethical considering the fact that due taxes to the state are transferred to overseas account, rather than alleviating poverty in our country.

The compounding effects of tax evasion to issues of social vulnerability are well documented in the 2013 report of the Global Financial Integrity. This organisation reported that South Africa, with other 15 developing countries “lost about \$100.7-billion”, from 2002-2011. In total an average loss of \$10-billion in a period of one year, for each country concerned. The crises of capital outflow has also got the attention of the South African Revenue Services (SARS), which reported that between 2012 to the end of 2014, it estimated financial loss to our country to the tune

of R5 billion. SARS further reported that by the financial year-end of March 31 2014, R3, 5 billion tax evasion settlements were being processed. Also, in the past 15 months from July 2015 to June 2014, R7-billion claims against tax evasion by corporate sector were being processed (Steyn 2014:8).

3.17 COMPROMISED SYSTEMS OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

A similar pattern of the violation of public trust recently emerged in the granting of permission for an R85 billion class action against the parastatal Transnet. This class act involves 66 000 pensioners. The Judge of the North Gauteng High Court, Judge Ephraim Makgoba, defined the case against Transnet as a “pattern-made for class proceedings”.

Furthermore the judgment acknowledges the applicants affected as those “from the very poorest within our society [old pensioners], those in need of statutory social assistance”. The Judge’s verdict, referring to the position of the affected pensioners, states that “what they have in common is that they are victims of official excess, bureaucratic misdirection and what they perceive as unlawful administrative methods” (Van Rensburg 2014:3).

It must be made clear that the case against Transnet confirms the reality of systemic vulnerability of the working class embedded in our country’s Corporate Governance, both in the public and private the sector.

The basis of the impending suit against Transnet is an allegation that the companies trustees, “systematically reduced the benefits of pensioners” as a cost saving measure to prevent Transnet’s books exposure to liabilities for over ten years. Hence the company in 2000, when it became a commercial entity, opted to swap R10 billions of pension bonds to MTN shares, at the cost of R75 million resulting in a total loss of R5.5 billion to the pension fund of the systemically vulnerable members of society.

Subsequently the overall value of the allocated shares fell to 47.6% since 2002. Thus placing the pensioners in a position of destitution, to a point that what they receive as

pension, is still far below the government's pension grant. The systematic vulnerability of the working class has again been reflected upon by another impending class action suit against two mining houses, the Anglo American SA, and Anglo Gold, for R7.6 billion, and R2.1 billion respectively.

The UK firm Leigh Day together with a local legal firm, filed court papers against Anglo American representing 4 335 claimants, and 1 204 claimants against Anglo Gold. The claimants are suffering from lung related diseases, attributed to silicosis dust prevalent in deep mining activities. However the responding affidavit by the mining companies suggests that it would be difficult to prove the possible negligence by companies in exposing their work force to silicosis dust. Their argument is that litigants need to prove the culpability of the mining companies by submitting medical records of each worker. They insist that the medical records must prove that each worker was exposed to silicosis dust while in the employment of the mines (Van Rensburg 2014:2)

3.18 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has addressed the economic factors that have contributed to food insecurity system. The fundamental economic policy document including the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) was engaged.

We have seen the impact of GEAR in the economy of our country, over a decade. We have also appreciated the publication of both the Harvard Report as well as the Growth Report by the Treasury to facilitate debate about the future economic direction of our country. Both reports need to be perceived as important instruments that continue to shape the economic policy direction of our economy. We have appreciated the interventions of the Reserve Bank by deliberately engaging the market to protect the vulnerable. We have noted how the context of globalisation and its inherent benefits for the rich and the powerful continues the exclusion of the developing nations thus entrenching socio-economic inequality.

The expectations that African governments must continue to service foreign debt at the expense of national obligations was deliberated. The private sector's practice of transfer pricing, more so in the mining sector was investigated. We also discussed

how the violation of the miner's rights contributes to their condition of structural vulnerability. We concluded the Chapter by putting a spotlight on the aggressive emergence of the political-economic elites. This newly emerging class is advancing and protecting its self-serving interests through corruption practices, both in the government machinery and the private sector. In the following Chapter we seek to focus on the empirical research we have conducted in the urban township with the intent of showing how its outcomes presents the state of poverty in affected communities.

In this Chapter the focus is given on the empirical aspect of our research with specific attention on the demographical character of the participants. Inputs will be provided regarding the nature of research instruments employed both in the formulation of the structured questionnaire and the data gathering phase that was undertaken. Further attention will be applied in the stages that will be followed in the utilisation of measuring tools to analyse the core results of the study.

Greater attention is also given to the prevailing challenges that have become lived experiences of the youth participants who are also burdened with parenting responsibilities. We will highlight the challenges of youth as primary caregivers, especially the challenges and expectations of paying rent bill whilst expected to provide food. At this stage we seek to present the results based on the structured questionnaire provided to the participants. Issues of characteristics of the gender sample, employment and income status of the participants will be presented, including the role of pensioners-as-caregivers.

The main thematic analysis of four major questions will be analysed. Emphasis will be given to the impact of food shortage on the question of self-respect of each individual facing challenges of food shortage. The analysis and the interpretation of the main questions will be accompanied by the results of the sub-questions comprising twenty-five responses in totality.

We will further deliberate on how those living with food vulnerability perceive the conduct of persons in positions of power. This aspect will be followed by the examination of the results pertaining to possible abuse of positions by the powerful at

the expense of the poor. Furthermore, the question of the widening gap of social inequality will be deliberated, based on the experiences of specific age groups. The emergence of vulnerable socio-economic groups will be evaluated and the concerns for moral decay within government will get a closer attention. Lastly the overall results and possible solutions for addressing social ills will be investigated.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter we attempt to provide meaningful spaces for the individuals and specific groups ravaged by hunger to present their case. In seeking to get the full picture of the construct of systemic vulnerabilities of hunger. It was important for us to identify various sectors of those living with hunger namely: youth, unemployed, pensioners, single parents, and child-headed households, to articulate their experiences and how food insecurity has negatively impacted their sense of well-being.

Our primary intention was to show that the experiences of living with hunger demands more than the brandishing of statistics and graphs with portraits of poverty maps, void of actual faces, voices and social locations of the victims of food struggle. Therefore as part of the research design we undertook a conscious decision to engage specific groupings with the intent of capturing their subjective experiences and perceptions and further conducting a comparison of given responses with other participants. The outcomes suggest that the impacts of food shortage (as attested by the four primary questions of the study), has grossly compromised peoples categories of self-identity, in-ability to relate to others as equals, shaped by a diminished sense of stewardship and impotent expressions of reconciliation imperatives towards fellow citizens.

We hold the view that the data emanating from this body of work is significant in the sense it details more than the figures of the affected. Rather it presents to the reader how each grouping attach meaning to the systems of vulnerability mediated by hunger. We need to take note of the fact that the empirical data gathered from the questionnaire (given to the participants) comprising of quantitative and qualitative instruments, enabled us to categorise and duly present the responses of each specific group by avoid giving general observations, instead of in-depth impacts of food shortage as recorded by the group concerned.

The main thematic analysis of four major questions will be analysed. Emphasis will be given to the impact of food shortage on the question of self-respect of each individual facing challenges of food shortage. The analysis and the interpretation of the main questions will be accompanied by the results of the sub-questions comprising twenty-five responses in totality.

We will further deliberate on how those living with food vulnerability perceive the conduct of persons in positions of power. This aspect will be followed by the examination of the results pertaining to possible abuse of positions by the powerful at the expense of the poor. Furthermore, the question of the widening gap of social inequality will be deliberated, based on the experiences of specific age groups. Thus the emergence of vulnerable socio-economic groups as a cohort and “orders of magnitude of inequality” (Piketty 2014:255) will be analysed. Lastly the overall results and possible suggested solutions for addressing social ills will be investigated.

We further endeavoured to present integrated results of the data with the aim of balancing objective aspects of the research with the individuals and groups stated inputs gleaned from the qualitative sections of the questionnaire. An effort was made to place the research instrument in Appendix A. Further data that points to other levels in the lives of the participants negatively affected by food shortage, are duly preserved in Appendix B, followed by the list of abbreviations in Appendix C.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

4.2.1 Background

In the past two years an in-depth grassroots research has been conducted in Gauteng, primarily in Soweto with 320 (90%) households, and on a limited scale 40 (10%) persons were interviewed in some areas of Pretoria. This resulted in an overall participation of 360 persons within family settings. In Soweto, six local churches allowed their members to participate in the study in their personal capacity and as such their views are not representing the respective denomination of the participant.

The conceptual framework of this research was to provide space for the interviewees to articulate opinions and perceptions in respect to four definitive categories. These included: self-consciousness, material possessions, social relations and issues of

reconciliation. It is imperative to recognize that this study was conducted in a twenty-four month period leading towards the twentieth anniversary elections of a free democratic South Africa. This is the very same period our country witnessed a ground swell of unprecedented social delivery protests of which the civil body Municipal IQ presumed that three protests were taking place daily in South Africa.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. It was hoped that the involvement of both the youth and adult participants, including pensioners would enable the researcher to draw a balanced picture of the actual experiences of vulnerability.

There were no specific criteria to determine who would be permitted to be part of the study or not, other than the fact one had to reside in the targeted community and meet the research requirements. Hence the participants were expected to sign a consent form which was part of the structured questionnaire for voluntary participation.

The interviews were undertaken based on the following minimal requirements:

- (1) Personal exposure to food shortage, both in the family setting and individual capacity.
- (2) At least 15 years and older, with the aim of determining the extent of child-headed households. There was no upper age limit due to the intention to get figures of pensioners who are supporting their families with their monthly pension grant.
- (3) Willingness to sign a consent form, which was part of the structured questionnaire, to declare that they voluntarily participated in the study.

Three hundred and sixty subjects who gave informed consent to be part of the study were invited for the research. The study was conducted in Soweto and Pretoria, Gauteng Province. The age range of the participants was between 15 and 90 years. The study was mostly conducted in homes, but also in a number of churches in Soweto who allowed their members to avail themselves for interviews after the main church service on Sunday afternoons.

4.4 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The study was conducted by using a questionnaire (see the prototype in Appendix A) that was divided into three sections. The researcher designed the questionnaire, its measurement and its interpretive tools as well as the systems of incorporating the findings into the study.

Section A was designed by the researcher to make a provision for biographical information of each participant. Section B to F provided five major questions, with five in-depth sub-questions for each major question. The last section (G) provided a space for the participant to provide qualitative responses. In this section a provision was made for the participant to use one's mother tongue, other than English.

4.5 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

4.5.1 Methodological instruments

4.5.1.1 Measuring instruments

A self-report checklist containing quantitative and qualitative questions was administered by the researcher to the identified participants in selected areas of the South Western Townships (Soweto), and Pretoria, in the Gauteng Province.

4.5.1.2 Statistical analysis

The quantitative questions in the checklist were analyzed using descriptive techniques in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

4.6 RESULTS

4.6.1 General expectations from the participants

The participants were given a survey consisting of quantitative and qualitative questions. With regard to the former, the participants were expected to express their opinions by grading each given statement. This enabled the outcomes to be verified by the employment of the scientific processes through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The quantitative results were captured, analyzed and integrated into the body material of the study.

With regard to the qualitative questionnaire, the participants were expected to write their opinions, feelings and suggestions in response to a given question. This part of

questionnaire was not designed with a grading scale as part of its format. Hence the researcher took into account the most prominent and repeatedly stated feelings, opinions and suggestions and grouped them thematically.

Qualitative results were interpreted following the thematic analysis format. The thematic analysis method enabled the study to identify broad themes that emerged from the given responses. These themes were then analyzed in order of their stated priority and preferences by the respondents for due assimilation into the study.

4.6.2 Descriptive statistics

The overall views of the entire study were analysed and interpreted as presented by the participants. However to gain further insights and detailed perspectives the answers were subsequently categorised according to specific age groups of 251 participants comprising 70% of the participants.

The views of this inner group were used to further highlight issues that are broadly raised in the study to determine how a given group would respond. This took into account common issues that are of direct concern and relevance to each age group.

4.6.3 Item analysis

Table 1: Overview categories of participants

No.	Item	Percentage
1.	Youth with Children (18-35 age)	3%
2.	Employed Participants	35%
3.	Unemployed Participants	7%
4.	Scholars	25%
5.	Middle Age Participants (40-55 age)	25%
6.	Social Grant Recipients	16%
7.	Participants with Dependants	60%
8.	Pensioners with Dependants	67%

The items raised in this table refer to broader demographical character of the participants, such as age, employment status, social grants recipient and the number of dependants for which each participant is responsible.

4.6.4 Table 2: Category of scholars (15-32 age)

No.	Gender	Quantity
1.	Females	52
2.	Males	40
3.	Total	92

The items reflected in this table register the fact that 92 respondents who are scholars participated in the study, with over 50 being females, and only 40 males.

4.6.5 Table 3: Overall participants with dependants

No	Females	Males	Total
1.	143	37	213

The figures captured show that the majority of the participants with dependants are females, who are responsible for 143 dependants, against males who have a responsibility of 37 dependants. This brings the total number of participants with dependants to 213, out of 360 respondents covered in the study.

4.6.6 Table 4: Youth participants with children and dependants

No.	Gender	Age	No. Children	No. Dependants
1.	Female	16	0	3
2.	Male	16	0	3
3.	Female	17	0	2
4.	Female	17	0	2
5.	Female	21	1	0
6.	Female	23	2	0
7.	Female	23	2	2
8.	Female	27	2	1
9.	Female	27	2	3
10.	Female	29	2	5
11.	Female	30	3	5
12.	Female	32	3	9
13.	Female	34	2	1
14.	Female	34	3	2
15.	Female	34	4	5
16.	Female	34	2	3
17.	Total		28	44

The above figures present a picture of young people though they are facing challenges of food shortage they still have to deal with the fact that in some cases they are parents themselves. On the other hand some youth are primary guardians to their siblings. The figures show that 16 female youths are either parents themselves or have dependants, with only single sixteen year-old male teenager who is looking after 3 dependants.

The figures also show that three female teenagers are responsible for not less than two dependants. A total number of 16 youths are raising and taking care of 28 children and 44 dependants respectively.

The challenges of child-headed households makes sense when viewed in the light the number of participants who have to dispose of their meagre resources in settling rent fees on a monthly basis. The picture that emerges shows a total number of 50 participants have rent obligations, with 29 females renting accommodation, followed by 21 males. Further, 36 participants are renting backyard rooms, followed by 13 who have are renting flats, and only a single participant is renting a house.

4.7 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.7.1 Social framework of the participants

It is imperative to note that the social readings of vulnerability necessitated that our study engage grassroots participants. The conceptual framework of this research was to provide space for the interviewees to articulate opinions and perceptions in respect to four definitive categories. These include: self-consciousness, material possessions, social relations and issues of reconciliation. Our analysis of the responses given need to be understood from the context from which they emanate.

Hence the readings and the interpretations of the rhetoric of the vulnerable becomes an enabling instrument to call into question the “contextual force”, and the material conditions (Arnal 2001:1) that sanctions unjust economic systems. Such unjust economic practices continue to justify the widening gap between those who have plenty in the midst of destitute in our country.

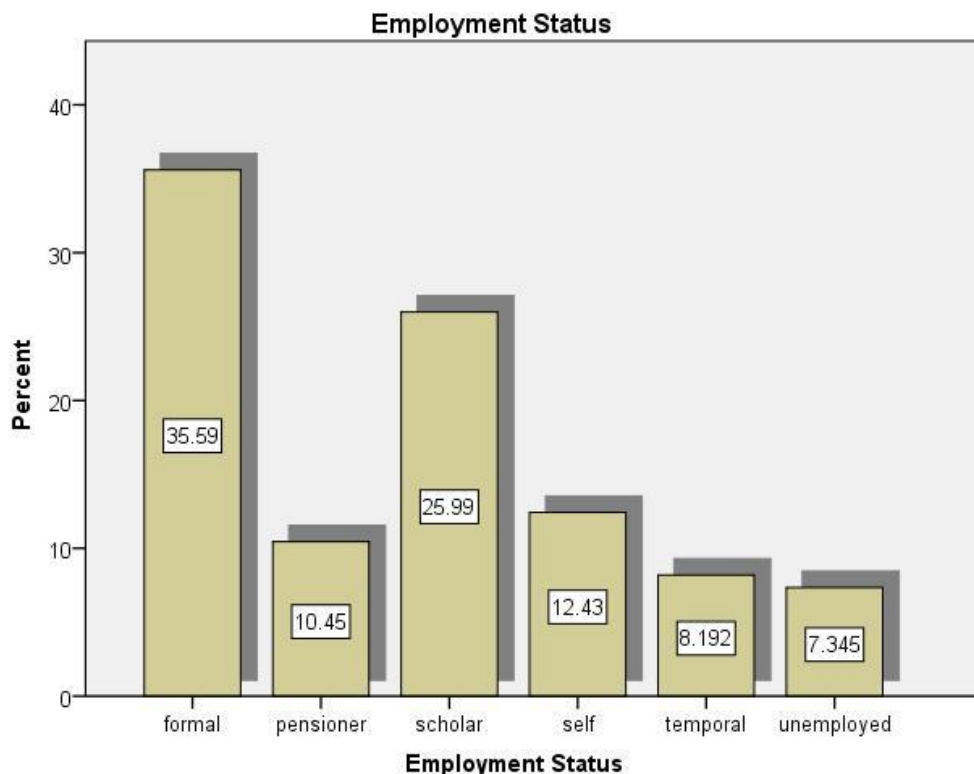
4.7.2 Table 5: Characteristics of the gender sample in formal employment

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Female	73	57.9	57.9	57.9
	Male	53	42.1	42.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

In the study, the majority of participants with formal employment are females comprising of 57%. This dynamic places more responsibility on the shoulders of women who have to provide for families as single parents. At the same time to act as breadwinners. The results show that male participants who have the benefits of formal employment are 42%.

It must not come as anomaly that males have a less representation. These figures are reflective of the huge number of female participants who generally are the majority within family circles including in the churches visited.

4.7.3 Figure 1: Employment status



The employment status of the participants shows the desperate situation the people are experiencing. The possibility of having full employment comes with huge responsibilities or “black tax” from family members for extra support. The figures show that only 35% of the participants are in the formal employment.

Further, 12% reported they were self-employed, while 8% stated they were engaged in some form of temporal employment, which is a seasonal type of employment that is driven by demand for extra labour by the employers. It is only 7% that referred self as unemployed.

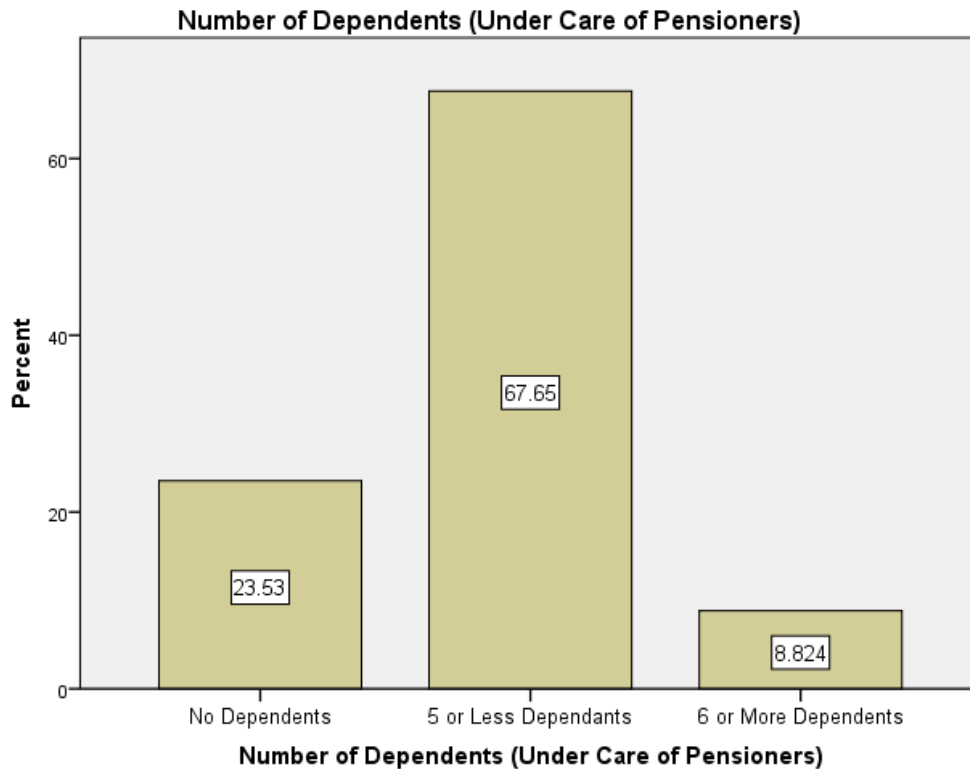
The statistics also show that 25% of the participants are scholars, and 10% are pensioners. The figures show that only the 35% who are employed carry the burden of providing support to their dependants. The worrying factor of the figures is that the pensioners carry a huge burden of supporting their dependants through their pension grants. The pensioners as grand-mothers carry an added responsibility of raising grand children orphaned by the passing of their parents through AIDS.

4.7.4 Table 6: Income status

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid grant	31	10.0	10.0	10.0
other	92	29.7	29.7	39.7
pension	35	11.3	11.3	51.0
salary	151	48.7	48.7	99.7
salary and grant	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	310	100.0	100.0	

The income figures show that less than 50% of the participants receive a salary income, followed by 29% who receive financial support mostly through assistance. Again 11% stated they make a living through state pension, with 10% depending on state grants. Adults’ participants comprising 3% reported that they receive both salary and state grants for dependants under their care. These participants are part of the 66% “unemployed, self-employed, students, pensioners, and survivalist” covered in the *Class in Soweto* study and Census 2011 (City Press, 5 May 2013:11).

4.7.5 Figure 2: Pensioners as caregivers



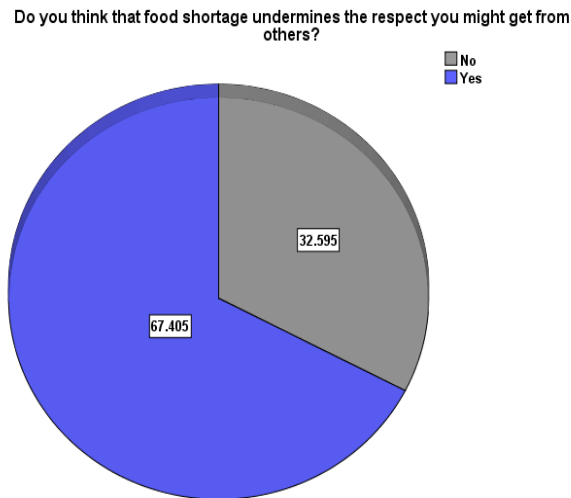
The figures that register concern deal with the forced role of pensioners as primary care givers to their families. The pensioners have been burdened by circumstances to become sole providers with pension incomes. On some occasion these pensioners have become breadwinners.

The figures show that 67% of the pensioners are solely responsible for at least 5 dependants with the stretch of their pension grants. More importantly the statistics show the majority of the pensioners have embraced the role and function of parenthood due to their own adult children being mostly unemployed.

The critical issues around these figures are that the said pensioners had to bear the challenges of raising their own children. However, they are now expected to parent their grandchildren. It is only 8% of pensioners who look after more than 6 dependants, with 23% reporting they have no dependants under their care. It becomes clear it is only 23% of pensioners who have the privilege to enjoy their pension and spend it as they wish.

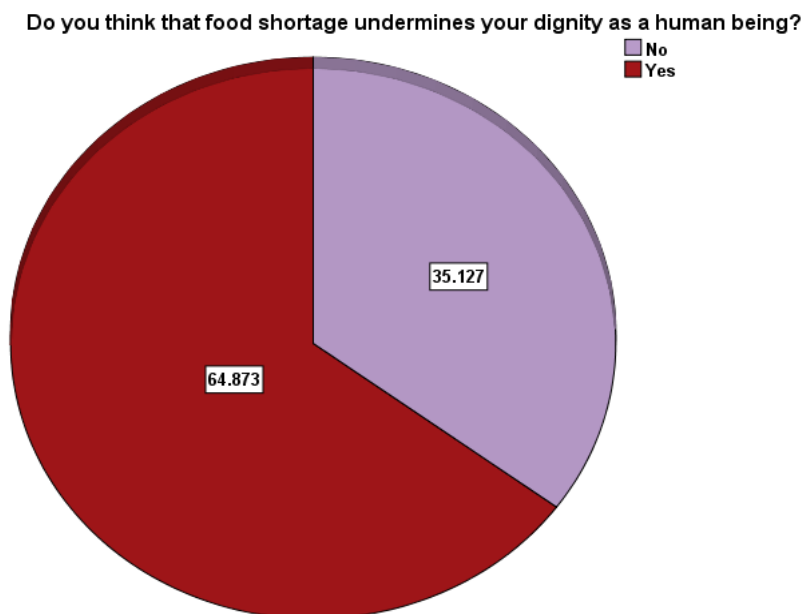
4.8 THE MAIN THEMATIC ANALYSIS

4.8.1 Figure 3: Impact of food shortage on self-respect



When participants were asked whether food shortage puts them in a situation that makes them to lose respect, 67% responded affirmatively. It is only 32% of the respondents that give a negative response. It is alarming that such a huge number of individuals and families perceive a deficit of respect from the people that know them very closely.

4.8.2 Figure 4: Impact of food shortage on one's dignity



Sixty-four per cent of the participants stated that food shortage undermined their sense of personal dignity, against 35% who did not share the same sentiments. This figure corresponds with the 67% response that felt that food shortage contributes to their deep loss of respect from others. These figures show that food shortage inflicts deep wounds and pain in the space of personal identity of those living with hunger. The violation of human dignity in the categories of Ubuntu-botho signifies the very loss of being in relation to others.

In light of the expression of such raw vulnerability, it is therefore disconcerting for the Head of State to label the experiences of despondency of poor South Africans as mere laziness, by stating that “our people are not used to standing up and doing things” in comparison to foreigners who come to our country and make success of economic opportunities (Makhanya 2014:2). Such a position taken by the Head of State seems to be confirmed by the critical analysis of Walter Wink in his assertion that the history of post oppressive governments shows that newly formed states are likely to produce yesterday’s freedom fighters who “have too often yielded to the seduction of power”, and in the process are likely to display governance tendencies that “may be worse than the first” oppressor’s system (Wink 1989:4). The challenge and warning advanced in this regard is that the new experiment of governance might mean that “yesterday’s oppressed have become today’s oppressors” due to their insensitivity and lack of insight in addressing issues of poverty (Freire 1970:57).

It is therefore important to take note of the Citizen newspaper editorial, which reminds us, “it is well documented that convicted fraudster Schaibir Shaik gave money to Zuma, paid his rent, supplied his children with pocket money and forked out for his many debts. He even paid R10 to cover the cost of a “wash and vacuum” of Zuma’s car. Shaik also paid doctors, hospital, traffic fines, electricity, and water accounts, car repayments, insurance and phone bills for Zuma. How does a man who has taken charge of so few of his own affairs are taken seriously when he urges his people to stand up and do things for themselves? Can someone whose swimming pool, chicken run and R1 million kraal was paid for by government be the right person to call on citizens not to depend on the state?” (Editorial, Citizen, 21 October 2011:12).

Makhanya goes to the heart of the matter in his reference to the Nkandla scandal⁹³ and the corruption that took place under the watch of President Zuma. Makhanya

⁹³ The findings of the Public Protector contained in her report entitled “*Secure in Comfort*” viewed on the 29 March 2016, at <http://www.timesliv.co.za/local/Public-Protector->, is an in-depth “investigation conducted into allegations of impropriety and unethical conduct relating to the installation and implementation of security and related measures at the private residence of the President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency J G Zuma, at Nkandla in the KwaZulu-Natal Province” (Madonsela 2014:4). The report give details of how state departments participated in acts of corruption with the full knowledge of the President. The report provides a historical background of how the renovation project commenced in 2009 at an estimated cost of R65 million. However the project gained momentum of its own when “more items were added to the project after the concerns were raised in 2009 ... bringing the cost, to R215 million, which has since been spent, while outstanding work is currently estimated at R36 million bringing the envisaged total cost to R246 million” (Madonsela 2014:6). The depth of maladministration, corruption and disregard for law, forced the Public Protector “to reach the conclusion that a license to loot situation was created by government”. The whole project was based on deliberate disregard of management processes for monitoring and evaluation of a project of such magnitude by the relevant state functionaries as stipulated for in the “Cabinet Memorandum, the National Key Points Act, relevant health care and transport regulations as well as National Treasury Guides and directives on procurement” (Madonsela 2014:39). The Public Protector identified “systemic policy gaps and administrative deficiencies” in as far as the procurement systems are concern. Hence she asserted that President Zuma’s part in the whole mismanagement of the upgrades in his homestead resulted on his failure “to apply his mind”. Therefore she came to the conclusion that the President “failed to discharge his responsibilities” and as such his act of omission to arrest wasteful expenditure meant the violation of the Constitution and the Executive Ethics Code. What makes these violations serious is the fact that the person of the President is “the ultimate custodian of executive accountability” (Madonsela 2014:90). The President failed to exercise his accountability obligations by allowing his private architect Mr Makhanya to be seconded to the Department of Public works as an adviser. The Public Protector detected that when the involvement of the Presidents architect was effected, the costs of the project spiralled out of control. Hence her report points out that “It would appear that the course of events changed significantly around August 2009, when Mr Makhanya, the President’s private architect who had been involved in the President’s non-security construction works, was brought in, without going on tender, to act as the DPW’s Principal Agent in respect of the entire Nkandla Project, while retaining his position as the President’s Principal Agent and architect. This is the period when the scale of work increased exponentially, leading to installations that were not recommended in any of the authorizing instruments or Security Evaluation Reports and the cost of works escalating to over R215 million. It is also the point at which the Director: Architectural Services at the DPW expressed concerns about moving from “humble beginnings” to establishing “a full township” (Madonsela 2014:21). The secondment of Mr Makhanya to be the Project Team manager unashamedly “shifted power from state officials to Mr Makhanya”. Thus a public official noted that Mr Makhanya usurped the “official” role of managing the work to the effect that he “became the de facto project manager and that it was difficult to exercise control over him”. The report rightly regarded such a situation as reflecting blatant conflict of interests resulting to the scenario of “the tail wagging the dog”. It is therefore understandable to appreciate the difficulty faced by public officials, “particularly at a fairly low level of the food chain, would have difficulty controlling a consultant who was presented by and claims to speak with the President’s concurrence or authority” (Madonsela 2014:33). The disconcerting outcome on the whole scandal is the deliberate intransigence of the President to assist the Public Protector to conduct her investigation without undue interference. On numerous occasions the President refused to respond to the questions from the Public Protector in her investigations. One of the reasons substantiated by the legal advisors of the President insinuated that the Public Protector had delayed to respond to their questions within the required legal time frame of 30 days. Even though she pointed out that her delays were the result of other state organs who did not submit documents in time for her to respond promptly to the President. On the basis of her ‘failure’, the President insisted that the investigation ought to be abandoned. The issue of concern is that the President was pressurizing Thuli Madonsela to stop the Nkandla inquiry just because she could not respond to his questions within the duration required by law. He was not interested in founding out the depth of corruption and maladministration that took place under his watch. The President was not prepared to bring any state official to account, yet he found it within himself to call on Thuli Madonsela to terminate the investigation without going into the bottom of the problem. The

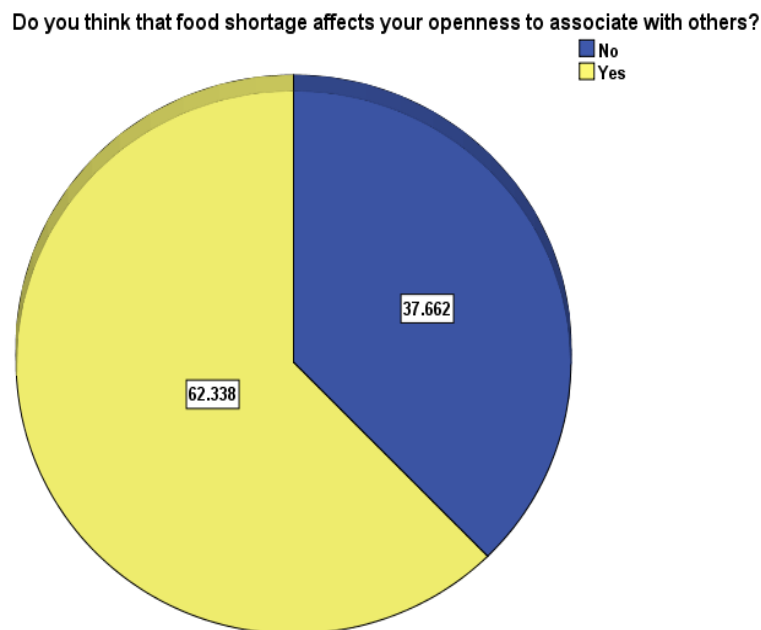
(2015:13) duly points out that “the Nkandla project was born out of corruption and grubby politics ... it has come to be emblematic of all that is wrong, corrupt, dirty, unethical and morally decrepit in South Africa” in three levels of governance.

In the same breath, it could be noted that the position taken by Zuma against the vulnerable, is similar to the actions of an Askari (a turned freedom fighter against his people and comrades) that reflect a deep sense of abandonment visited upon the poor by the very people they elected into office. Antjie Krog reflects such feelings of abandonment in her analysis of the narratives before the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Krog 1998:88).

These reports were part of the broader work of the commission that was set in motion on the 15 of April 1996, in East London. Krog interrogates the testimonies of five security officers, among the perpetrators who applied for amnesty was Mr. Joe Mamasela. Mamasela was a former liberation fighter who crossed the line and decided to work with the system to track and arrest his former comrades. Such individuals were named Askaris. The testimonials are summed up as a narrative “where the powerful are struggling with the powerless, the armed with the defenceless”. Such is the positioning of Zuma’s statements against the unemployed and vulnerable under his watch (Krog 1998:88).

Public Protector was flabbergasted by such a posture. Hence she noted that “the President suggested, in submissions to me during the investigation, that I failed to comply with the 30 day period and also to report that my investigation had not been completed. He requested that I should indicate in my report whether I had complied with the said provisions, and if not, whether the delay in doing so is justifiable. The President further required of me to indicate whether he has the power to condone any non-compliance. The President’s legal team further contended that the provisions of sections 3(2) and 3(3) are prescriptive and that non-compliance would negate the validity of the investigation” (Madonsela 2014:89). The given assertions indicate the extent that Jacob Zuma was prepared to undertake to frustrate and intimidate Thuli Madonsela in her investigations. Thus for the President to be found in violation of the very governance precepts that he is constitutionally bound to advance is nothing less than tragic. Hence the Constitutional Court reached its historical judgment (in the matter of Economic Freedom Fighters and Democratic Alliance, against Jacob Zuma, the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the Minister of Police.) heard on 9 February 2016, viewed on the 8th April 2016, at <http://www.timesliv.co.za/local/Constitutional Court>. The verdict asserted that the unwillingness of the President to adhere to “constitutionally-sanctioned obligation” (Mogoeng 2016:21) demanding that he implement the remedial actions stipulated by the Public Protector, meant that he “failed to uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the land” (Mogoeng 2016:41). The Chief Justice was at pains in articulating that Jacob Zuma failed to show respect to the office of the Public Protector. As such his conduct will encourage the prevalence of the “culture of impunity” and corruption that is being rooted in the public service (Mogoeng 2016:28).

4.8.3 Figure 5: Impact of food shortage on openness to others



With a sense of respect and dignity severely compromised, it is not surprising that 62% of the participants felt their desperate conditions affect their abilities to openly associate with other community members. It is only 37% who reported they were not affected.

The whole dignity and identity of individuals and families is under assault. It is no wonder that our society is characterised by the increase of domestic violence, road rage, and abuse of women, children and the elderly. This culture of violence (the story of how human life, and mostly how black lives do not matter in our country) against the mostly vulnerable in our society has been attested by the recent South African Health Ombudsman⁹⁴ Report detailing the suffering and humiliation visited against mentally challenged⁹⁵ patients in 2015 (Khumalo 2007:23).

This report gives full details of how the MEC for Health (a medical doctor), in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature embarked on a financial drive to reduce health expenditure in the Gauteng Province. Thus over one thousand mentally ill patients

⁹⁴See Esidimeni 94 Dead and Still Counting Report, www.m.ewm.co.za/2017/02/01/health-ombudsman-94-from-esidimeni-died, viewed on the 05th February 2017.

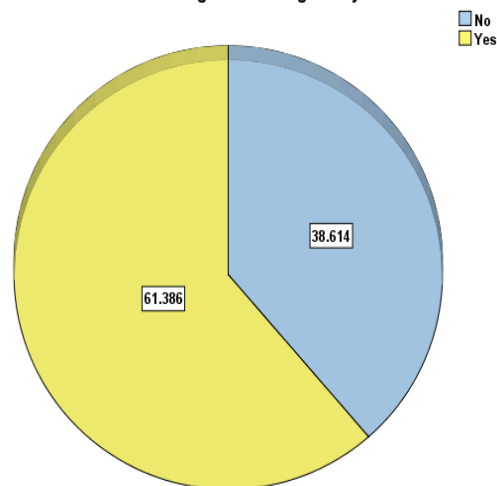
⁹⁵ Esidimeni crimes need to be read in the context of systemic neglect of the provision of mental health, particularly to black communities. This state of affairs is deliberated by the report of the TRC (1988:3, para, 47) to the effect that “in South Africa, the area of mental health has been historically neglected”, (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1988, Extract 4, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Findings and conclusions, The Perpetrators Causes, motives, perspectives*).

were removed from a private run mental care facility, and placed in unlicensed community based-care institutions (with poorly trained staff) at highly reduced rates. In the process ninety four (and still counting, as the Report title suggests) patients died under mostly undignified conditions.

It has emerged that even the South African Police Service was informed six months earlier about the death of thirty-six patients. On the release of the report, the Police have not yet done even a single investigation claiming that they are ‘still gathering facts’. The South African Human Rights Commission is also facing allegations that it did not respond with urgency when the matter was brought to its attention by affected families. Even the Speaker of Parliament on the 2017 Opening of Parliament refused a request to observe a moment of silence in the honour of the victims of esidimeni. The Speaker turned down the request since it was suggested by the opposition, instead she admonished the house to “to proceed with the business of the House as planned”. With all the powers invested in her office, she “postponed the mourning for a week” (Makhanya 2017:13). What is it going to take for human life and mostly black life to matter in South Africa?

4.8.4 Figure 6: Impact of food shortage on good relations with others

Do you think that food shortage makes it difficult for you to understand the way of living in a meaningful way with others?



Furthermore, a staggering 61% reported that food shortage interferes with them having meaningful relationships with others, against 38% who felt they were not affected. These figures are an astounding indictment against a people whose ontological framework is premised on the philosophy of Ubuntu-botho. Thus the figures tell a story of deep loss of self-identity and collective purpose of being an

African in a country with a constitution that celebrates racial and cultural diversity. Yet such a staggering number of community members lack the capacity to relate to fellow human beings on a human-to-human level.

The 61% dislocated individuals remind us that indigenous South Africans are still shaped by the traditional worldview with a locus of relational categories for meaningful social interaction. Attempts must be made to evaluate and put in proper perspective the depth and influence of the phenomenological categories of indigenous cultural heritage and its spirituality, and how it could shape human interactions against hunger. This existential encounter of African phenomenological reality is attested by the experiences of the founding father of depth psychology, Carl Jung in his first visit to East Africa in the summer of 1925 (Keteyi 1991:25).

The visit of Carl Jung to Africa created an existential crisis for him, which resulted in a deep sense of self-introspection on his part. His encounter with Africa tested the formative processes of his personhood (Mashinini 2010:15). It also placed upon him the obligation to confront his “European identity, and it exposed an existential tension that his conceptual thought” processes were not in a position to comprehend and integrate within the duration of his visit. Jung made sense of the African “world” experiences and civilisation to the effect that he believed Africa had been waiting for him “for five thousand years” (Brooke 1991:53). He acknowledged the ancient role of the spirituality of the African civilisation in shaping the journey of Europe for self-discovery both in the individual and collective sense (Brooke 1991:53).

The phenomenology of African values and moral systems that were made evident to Jung, registered in his mind-set that Europe and Africa are “state of mind” as much as “geographical locations”. He could thus state the incongruity of conceptualising “an African experience in European terms”. Jung’s experiential encounter with an Afrocentric worldview showed him that one’s perception goes deeper than social location and the locality of its limited definition of self and others (Brooke 1991:55).

The implication therefore is that to address food shortage in Afrocentric teleological categories can also mean the reorientation of ones “individuation process and the realisation of the self” in relation to others, particularly those facing food shortage.

Jung’s mediated ontological reorientation and discovery of an Afrocentric worldview, enabled him to review how he relates to self, others, things, and God (Mashinini 2010:15).

It can be asserted that Jung’s transformed individuation reality mediated by the indigenous African spirituality placed him in a position where he had to return to his “original place in the world”. In a sense it can be asserted that Africa reconnected Jung to his sense of true identity. We could argue that the 61% statistics simply means that food shortage has disoriented our interactions on a deeper level (Brooke 1991:55).

4.8.5 Table 7: Impact of food shortage on attaining one’s wishes

Food shortage makes it difficult for you to get the things you wish to have

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Strongly Disagree	39	10.8	10.8	10.8
Disagree	74	20.6	20.6	31.4
Neutral	38	10.6	10.6	41.9
Agree	134	37.2	37.2	79.2
Strongly Agree	75	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	360	100.0	100.0	

In attempting to ascertain whether participants feel they are in a position to meet their wants, almost 50% felt they are able to acquire the things they wish to have. On the other hand almost 30% gave a negative answer, with 10% being neutral. In this case it is roughly a 10% difference that separates the two groups.

This would suggest that food shortage does put pressure on participants in fulfilling their wants. These figures, when compared with the responses of specific age groups respondents, bring outcomes that are contrary to the current sentiments. The response of different age groups speaks of a desperate situation. It is also informative to compare the number of those who have full employment with those who either have temporal jobs or are not fully employed.

The group that disturbs the researcher is those who take a neutral position, though the research instrument and the questionnaire gives each participant the option to indicate one’s actual experiences. It is still mindboggling to one to realise that some participants will rather not commit or be clear about the negative effects of not being able to meet even basic wants. The vulnerable communities are placed in a situation where, acknowledging the needs and wants becomes a kind of betrayal. The poor and vulnerable have learned to put their interests at the mercy of those in authority. These figures show that the fact that in our country in the past twenty two years the poor were never place at the centre of national agenda. The responses give a clear indication that the participants are almost split equally. However if we push the question further it would be fascinating to find what kind of basic need the participants can meet.

4.8.6 Table 8: Impact of food shortage on meeting basic needs

Food shortage makes you not to get the things you need

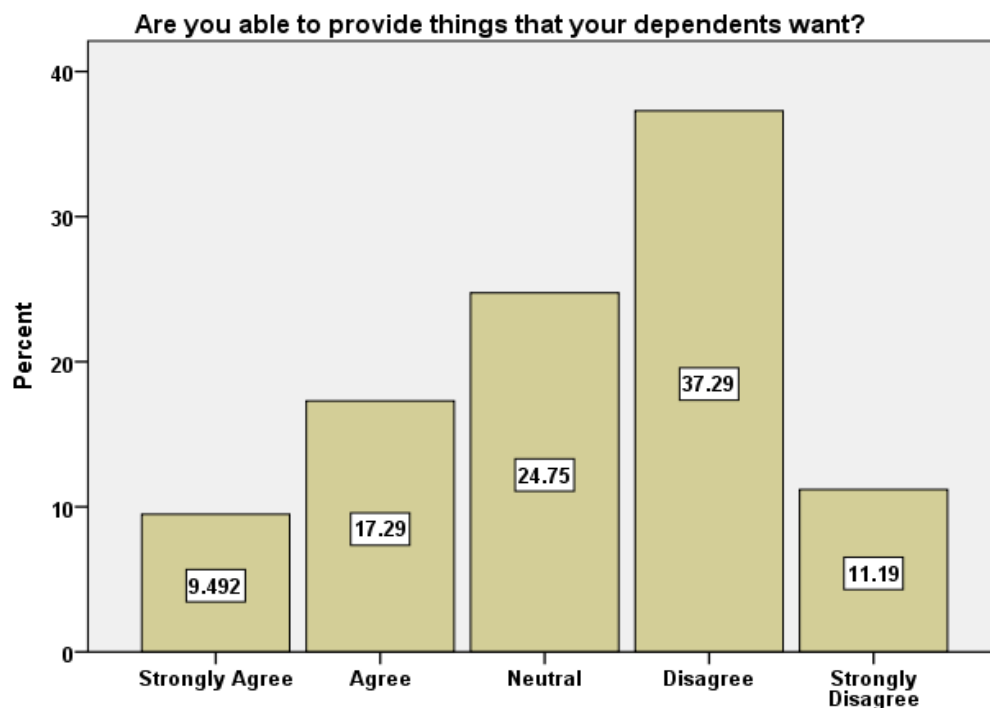
		Frequency	%	Valid%	Cumulative%
Valid	Strongly Disagree	37	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Disagree	81	22.8	22.8	33.1
	Neutral	45	12.6	12.6	45.8
	Agree	122	34.3	34.3	80.1
	Strongly Agree	71	19.9	19.9	100.0
	Total	356	100.0	100.0	

A question was posed about the contribution of food shortage in placing obstacles for the participants to meet their basic needs. A joint 53% stated that they cannot meet their needs, against 32% whose needs are meet. It is again a slightly bigger number 12% compared to those who opted for neutrality in question of attaining wants.

The question of understanding the failure of affected families to meet basic needs of their members is reflected in deliberations of the United Nations conducted in Addis-Ababa in July 2015, which came out with new Millennium Development Goals.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) placed eight indicators that were supposed to be reached by respective governments. The first indicator speaks of the need to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, nonetheless our countries economic strategic direction prioritises the interests of foreign investors. The international demands for governments to attend to the needs of the poor are frustrated by invested interests of the rich and the powerful. Thus the challenge faced by township residence to meet basic need of their families suggests that our country still need to make the MDGs a reality (Kabukuru 2015:16).

4.8.7 Figure 7: Impact of food shortage on wants



With regard to the possibility of being able to provide what their dependants wants, 37%% gave a negative answer, only 26% were positive, whereas a worrying 26% were neutral. It is important to appreciate that the crisis of food shortage has affected people’s ability even to take a position about their circumstances of desperation. A huge number of the participants are reluctant to put plainly that they are struggling even to attend to simple wants. Thus we could observe that the question of needs will make it even more difficult for those exposed to hunger to consider and at least to entertain the idea or possibility that those in authority will be open enough to address their concerns.

4.8.8 Table 9: Societies lack of understanding the impact of food shortage

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Strongly Disagree	53	14.8	14.8	14.8
	Disagree	80	22.3	22.3	37.2
	Neutral	41	11.5	11.5	48.6
	Agree	105	29.3	29.3	77.9
	Strongly Agree	79	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Agree				
	Total	358	100.0	100.0	

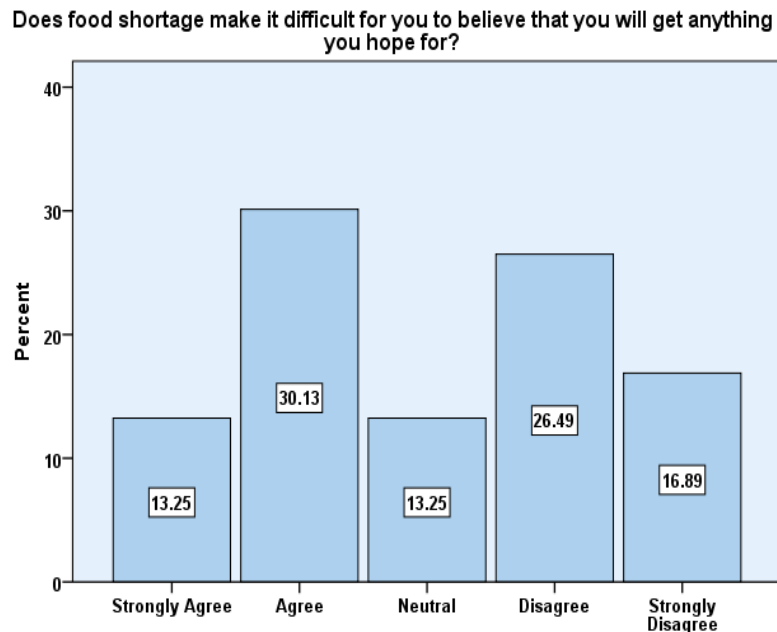
When it was placed before the participants whether the South African society understands the difficult situation of living under hunger, 51% gave a positive response, against 36% who disagreed, with another worrying 11% who were neutral, implying that they were not sure whether our country cares enough about those who go to bed hungry on a daily basis.

The positive responses advanced by the participants when read in the context of the now daily experiences of service delivery strikes undoubtedly contradicts such remarks. The vast majority of the participants in this study are affected in one way or another by poor service delivery and yet they do not link their conditions of hunger with broader mandate of public representatives to provide amelioration of their conditions.

The intent of phrasing the questionnaire in the given manner was to gain the participants responses on a number of levels. The responses given firstly confirm the perception that individuals and families living with hunger holds the view that their struggle is theirs alone. On another level the responses of those who opted to take a neutral position tell the reader that we have citizens who do not believe that their country has a responsibility to them.

We have citizens who do not have the courage to place claims and demands on those they have elected to present remedial interventions to address their plight.

4.8.9 Figure 8: Impact of food shortage on hope



With regard to the possibility of seeing their hopes being realised though facing hunger, 43% gave a negative response, only 42% believe that hunger is not a hindrance in their dreams, and 13% were neutral. These figures give a schizophrenic picture that is made possible by a 1% difference between the two camps.

These figures paint a picture of rooted mistrust of those in position of leaderships and their inability to infuse a sense of meaning and direction to those affected. We can reach a conclusion that the vulnerability of hunger has the potential of affecting people on deeper levels that cannot be appropriated on the superficial level. The capacity to hope is the basic definitive quality that kicks in and become tangible when one faces challenges. It gives a person the reason to face whatever obstacles with the possibility of a breakthrough. What happens when hope is shuttered?

These figures magnifies the extent of the crisis by affirming that less than 50% of the participants believe that food shortage does not impede that inherent capacity to better their situations. Thus if the reader combines the 42% and the despondent 13% that chose to be neutral, a truly depressing situation emerges.

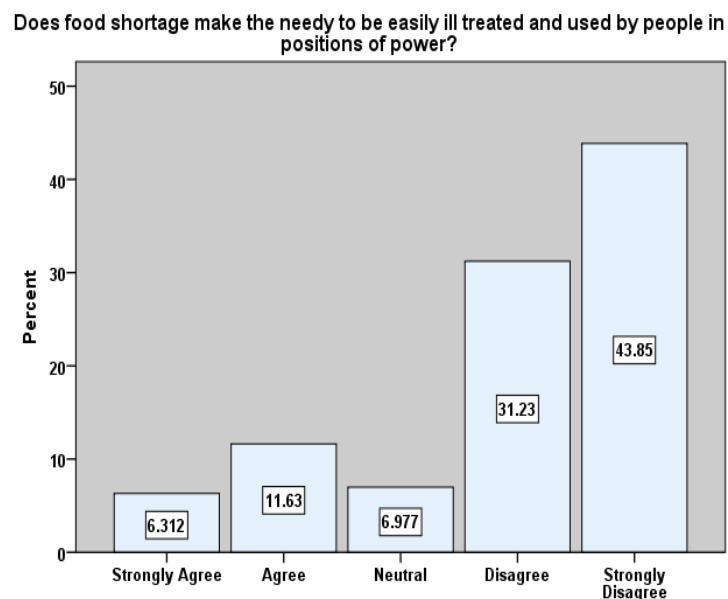
4.9 THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants were all given a questionnaire that comprised of five sections. They were expected to provide biographical personal details, followed by five broad-based quantitative questions. However, the section of the five quantitative questions was subdivided by five in-depth questions intended to solicit more perspectives on any given issue raised. There were twenty-five quantitative questions in total.

The last part of the questionnaire was a qualitative section with two open-ended questions. In the qualitative section, participants were given an opportunity to provide suggestions they deemed necessary to address the question of food insecurity.

Lastly the questionnaire provided a space for the participants to acknowledge with a signature that they voluntarily participated in the study without any pressure. We will therefore reflect on responses of the participants on the five quantitative questions presented before them.

4.9.1 Figure 9: In-depth analysis of quantitative questionnaire (Section D, 5)



In-depth questions were given to the participants to determine how they relate to people in positions of authority, and to find out if such persons are likely to misuse their positions of power against them, 74 per cent felt that food shortage does not place them in a position of being taken advantage by those in positions of power. It is only 17% who strongly felt their position of hunger renders them susceptible to abuse by persons in powerful positions in society. However 6% were neutral. These figures seem to contradict the prolonged labour strikes and daily reality of violent service

delivery protests that have become a norm in our country, with communities expressing displeasure against elected public representative (Masondo 2014:11). Is it possible that when people face hunger, they feel too intimidated and powerless even to articulate their grievances honestly without fear of retaliation by the powers that be?

4.9.2 The effects of food Insecurity in one's personhood

The impact of food insecurity has resulted in a grave degree of personal and societal fragmentation with far reaching consequences. It could be argued that the government is intervening with necessary interim social relief through the provision of social grants, of which 16% of the participants are direct beneficiaries.

Furthermore, a significant number of the 217 participants comprising (60%) have reported to carry responsibilities with regard to dependants whose livelihood hangs on their shoulders. The primary negative effects of food insecurity clearly emerges in the direct questions that were posed to the participants in relation to categories of self-respect, personal dignity, social relations and openness to reconciliation respectively.

4.9.3 How food shortage impacts self-respect, personal dignity and relationships

In respect to the question of whether food insecurity contributes to low levels of self-respect, 223 (61%) responded affirmatively, with only 38% stating that food shortage does not affect their sense of self-respect. With regard to the impact of food shortage to the sense of personal dignity, 216 (60%) responded yes to loss of personal dignity due to food shortage, whilst 144 (40%) testified to the negative. It can be deduced from the responses of the participants that their "collective reality" (Wationgo 1981:6) and experiences of food shortage has seriously affected how the historicity of vulnerability has imposed a negative definition of their world in relation to group identity.

In the South African context, particularly the worldview of the Africans, the notion of personhood commonly referred to as "Ubuntu-botho", carries a conceptualisation that

has far-reaching implication. In African categories of being human, a person's sense of being is expressed in relationships with all of reality.

The African worldview has no dual dichotomy of the sacred and the secular. In African worldview, one can lose all material things, except "Ubuntu-botho". Ubuntu-botho connects one with self, others and Divinity. In biblical categories "Ubuntu-botho" could be equated with the concept of the Imago Dei (the image of God). Yet the township residents testify to the affect that food shortage has stolen their sense of "Ubuntu-botho" (Seteloane 1988:44).

When asked if their perceived lack of food, negatively affects how they relate to other people. Almost 156 (43%) stated that their relationships are not affected, against 204 (56%) who claim that food insecurity negatively impinges on their relationships.

4.10 THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE IN RECONCILIATION (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION E)

The logical argument of vulnerability must be closely linked with the question of relationships aimed at ascertaining how the reconciliation project in South Africa is affected by food shortage. It is not surprising that 154 persons (42%) claim that their capacity to relate to other South Africans is not compromised. Whilst 206 (57%) participants report their ability to relate to others is seriously affected.

These negative perceptions are put in perspective by the recently debated Gauteng City-Region Observatory's Biannual Quality of Life Survey (2014), conducted in early Autumn, reaching 27 000 people across Gauteng. The survey noted that income inequality was high compared to global standards. What was concerning is the fact that race relations were reported to be severely affected, xenophobia is rising, and public trust of government is very low.

The survey outlined perceptions held by different race groups that reflected some levels of distance and mistrust between blacks and whites. Hence, 44% of whites held the view that there is no possibility that black and white will ever trust each other. At the same time, 40% disagreed, and 17% of whites remained neutral. On the other hand, 73% of blacks held the view that trust between whites and blacks will never materialise. Nonetheless, 8% took a neutral stance, against 16% who

disagreed. All these attitudes are being rooted in an economic environment in Gauteng that contributed to the rise in unemployment from 22.6% in 2008, to the current 25.8%, as the survey contended (Masondo 2014:11).

4.11 THE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The study was designed in such a way that the questions that were presented to the participants were in a structured format. These quantitative questions were arranged in two categories. The initial five questions were addressing broad perceptual issues. Furthermore each of the five quantitative questions was further broadened with five sub-questions aimed at allowing the participant to unpack and express oneself on broader issues raised. In this section, we will both present and provide a brief analysis on selected six sub-quantitative questions which must be taken as a deeper analysis of the five broad quantitative questions already deliberated.

4.12 THE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF VANDALIZED PERSONHOOD

4.12.1 The ravages of hopelessness

In the above paragraphs, we observed that 223 (61%) of the participants responded negatively when asked how the effects of food insecurity contribute to their sense of self-respect. We further noted that it is only 38% who said that they are not affected in any way. It is not surprising that in the recent past, South Africa has witness with shame and disbelief the mobilisation of the so-called “poo” strikes, as an expression of the community’s anger against poor service delivery among the shack dwellers of the Western Cape. When communities have no sense of self-respect, anything is possible.

It cannot be disputed that people’s sense of personal respect and dignity is violated by the reality of food shortage. In an Africa concept of being, one can state there is a sense of the violation of “Ubuntu-botho”, the concept of being fully human. Perhaps in biblical terminology, this sense of personal violation also impacts negatively the “image of God in man”.

Nonetheless when posing a follow-up question of whether food shortage makes it difficult for one to have hope of attaining anything that one wish for, a gloomy picture emerges. In this instance 151 (41%) of the respondents argued that their capacity to

muster hope amidst food shortage is not impeded in anyway. On the other hand 163 (44%) of the participants reported their ability to hope is affected, with only 44 (12%) who held a neutral position, while 0.5 % did not express any opinion.

One wonders how difficult it is as a parent to raise children when one barely retains an ounce of self-respect in the eyes of one's own offspring due to inability to provide the basic necessities of life such as food. These figures bring to our attention the fact that the question of hunger in the townships is about human rights. Therefore we can only conclude that these figures tell us that a significant number of township residents have a low sense of self-respect and are hopeless about the possibilities of a better future. They have no hope for themselves and the future of their children. What then is the implication of this reality of low self-regard in how people express themselves in family circles, in workplaces, churches, and the society at large, especially when faced with the demands of living?

4.13. THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE VULNERABLE

It has come to our attention that an overwhelming number of township folk are striving to lead meaningful lives whilst under the assailing of low dosage of self-respect, as if fate has not dealt a fatal blow. We further posed another question to the participants to find out about the possibilities of having feelings of powerlessness as a result experiencing food shortage.

To the question at hand, 64 (17%) of the people stated they do not feel powerless though experiencing food shortage. However 234 (64%) of the participants agreed that they were experiencing feelings of powerlessness in the face of food insecurity. It is just 56 (15%) who settled for a neutral position, and only 1.6 % did not articulate a position. This study is spitting mind-boggling facts and feelings regarding a section of South Africa's vibrant communities who are literally crucified on the cross of vulnerability. When an individual, family and community are harbouring deep-seated feelings of powerlessness, where does anyone begin to talk about salvation reconciliation and hope for a better tomorrow?

4.13.1 How the powerless are used and abused by the powerful (Questionnaire, Section D, 5)

It is without doubt at this stage of our study we can begin to see the link between powerlessness and the misuse of the office of leadership against the victims of food insecurity. A straight follow-up question was addressed to the participants with regard to the possibilities that the vulnerable individuals can easily be ill-treated and used by those who hold positions of power, in all levels of social formations.

A lesser number (61) of respondents disputed the assertion of the above question. This number was followed by 23 (6%) of participants who were either for or against the question. This left 268 (74%) who without any hint of doubt stated it is highly likely that those in positions of power will ill-treat and abuse the vulnerable. The insignificant 2.2 % did not advance any opinion. The response of the participants in this specific group of 251 comprising 70% of the participants differs sharply with the general overview of the responses of the entire study.

The cross-section (in the whole study) responses provide a perception that possibilities of being taken advantage by those in position of authority are diminished, as asserted by the responses on the main question. In the contrary, the same question posed to different age groups yields totally different responses confirming the assumptions that vulnerable members are at a greater risk of being disadvantaged by persons in positions of authority.

In this regard we can reach a conclusion that when individuals are asked to give their opinions on possibilities of being taken advantage they are reluctant to come and take stand. It is only when the same question is ascertained in group responses that it emerges that collectively people hold the view that they are violated by those in positions of authority.

Thus we safely assume that the same question when given to different age groups yields total different response. This dynamic confirms to the researcher that the vulnerable members are at a greater risk of being disadvantaged by persons in positions of authority.

4.13.2 How food shortage creates conditions of social instability (Questionnaire, Section E, 2)

Reconciliation will remain a pipe dream in South Africa if the conditions that breed food insecurity are not ameliorated with immediate effect. The figures that are emerging from the in-depth analysis of the effects of food shortage tend to concur with that thesis. The study has given witness to the corroding consequences of food insecurity in the personhood, sense of self-respect and reaching one's capacity of mustering hope against hope, in the face of harsh realities of poverty.

We have observed that food insecurity brings tidal waves of destruction that erode all the defensive walls on their path, up to the last line of defence, the sense worth of any human life. Nevertheless the scaffolding of human dignity could not keep the resilience of the poor intact, as the figures attesting to mounting desperation were nailed at the mast for all to see.

Any attempt to arrest the negative impacts of food insecurity among affected communities and households could serve as a barometer for reconciliation in our country. It is therefore important for us to come to terms with the views of the affected about that their social conditions are a breeding ground for instability, both in their personal and respective communities at large.

In this regard 45 (12%) of the participants hold the view that their food struggles do not foster a sense that South Africa will be swept by a wave of instability and social unrest. Only 20 (5%) people settled for neutrality. It is a significant number of 289 comprising (79%) of the respondents that register their fears and concerns about the contributory role of food shortage in creating conditions that will foster instability across the land.

4.13.3 The advantages of the Black and White rich class against the poor (Questionnaire, Section E, 5)

A pertinent question was raised regarding the impact of food shortage to the attempts of fostering reconciliation in our country. We have witnessed the public role of the South African Truth and Reconciliation in facilitating forgiveness, amnesty, restitution and possible rehabilitation of the victims of gross human violations, in the our public "theatre of pain and catharsis" (Doxtader & Salazar 2007:xi). It is therefore important to get the views of persons who are the least beneficiaries of the

democratic changes in the twenty second anniversary of the present administration of the African National Congress.

The underlying reason for the soliciting views of those affected by food shortage was to determine how the extent of deprivation will influence peoples intentions to lead meaningful lives with others, both those of their same class, race and also those who they perceive to be well-off, whether Black or White. In the initial attempt of linking the negative impacts of food shortage to the national project of reconciliation, we noted that 206 (57%) participants stated their capacity to relate to others is severely affected.

Therefore the questions needs to be pressed further by seeking to determine how the destitute perceive the prevalence of opportunities to access more resources for self-benefit by the rich regardless of race. This questioning sought to find out if the destitute hold any notion about the level playing field in as far as taking advantages and opportunities for self-development is concern. Thus it is only 63 (16%) who claimed there is equal access to resources for all race groups and without discriminating the poor. Be that as it may, 226 (62%) hold a view contrary to the former, with 17 % taking a neutral position. These results put forward a new analysis of the rich and the current social power arrangements by the poor.

The destitute have reached a stage where they understand that wealth is no longer defined by race, particularly white race. As far as they are concerned wealth is a system that benefits the few across colour line. They have come to a point where they have observed that the rich serve and protect each other's interest without giving significance to the colour of one's skin. Njabulo Ndebele (2000:15) articulates the raw feeling of the vulnerable when he asserts that the "autonomy of expectations" of the poor is by political choices of convenience, "located outside" of considerations by the white capital and of the Black Economic Empowerment arrangements.

The implication is clear that while the hungry are striving and praying for the provision of "our daily bread". The rich on the other hand (it does not matter the race) are squandering "more than enough" (Crossan 2010:130) resources for their own benefit. Perhaps it is such perceptions that fuel the spread of poor service delivery

strikes in the townships across the country. The poor communities are expected to be patient about the slow pace of service delivery. While on the other hand the rich and politically connected elites place more demands on the resources of the state to meet their privileges as a matter of urgency.

The service delivery protests that have engulfed the country have displayed the level of violence in the entire country. However the nature of violence that accompanies the protests also points to the inward direction to where the violence is aimed. Even though on the face value the anger is directed to the state. In actuality it is the communities themselves that suffer the consequences of the protests. It could be argued that the township violence, domestic violence and the destruction of municipal infrastructure attest to the notion of misdirected anger to family structure “which is the last defence” sacrificed by incompetent governance (Biko 1978:118). It is obvious that if township populace hold such views about the rich, attempts to promote reconciliation are doomed to fail.

4.13.4 Table 10: The contribution of food shortage on the widening gap between the rich and the poor (Questionnaire, Section E, 1)

Age group	Quantity	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
22-35	118	104 (88%)	14 (7%)	
40-55	94	80 (85%)	14 (15%)	
18-21	39	29 (74%)	5 (12%)	5 (14%)

With regards to the widening gap between the have and the have not's, given the same age group dynamics, it does not come as a surprise to observe that the middle age youth comprising 118, 104 (88%) hold a sharp observation of the widening gap, with 14 (7%) disagreeing. The inequality gap is interrogated by the 2014 Credit Suisse's global wealth report (Credit Suisse Research Institute), which stated that global wealth has risen by 8.3% to \$263-trillion, in the context of worsening inequality. The report cites the figures that show that since 2008 inequality has become worse. It further notes that globally there are 34.8 million dollar millionaires,

reflecting a 164% increment since 2000, and 41% of them residing in the US (Isa 2014:5).

The increase in the numbers of the rich reveals a shocking reality of 1 billion people on the globe who are consigned to middle class category, whilst 47 000 South Africans have managed to accumulate \$1-million status, thus an overall 67 000 South Africans belonging to “the top 1 % richest people in the world”. This growth of figures of million dollar South Africans takes place in a year when our country’s unemployment rate has reached 35%, which has by default castigated South Africa to the stable of those countries with “very high inequality”, such as Brazil, Russia, and India (Isa 2014:5).

4.13.4.1 Perceptions on the widening gap in 40-55 age group

The middle age group in our study concurs with the 2014 Credit Suisse’s global wealth report (Credit Suisse Research Institute) in its conclusion that global wealth has reached \$263-trillion in the escalating figures of inequality across the globe. Thus in light of the global recession of 2008 the middle age citizens were highly affected by retrenchments that did not spare our country of its devastating consequences.

Whereas the 2014 Sunday Times Rich List, states that the wealth of South Africa’s ten rich individuals has reached R205 billion. Their shares rose from 81.4%, to 113 billion rand ownership in March 2013. The new entrant into the list, Mr. Ivan Glasenburg (Swiss based) tops the list with R61.3 billion by the end of November 2014 (Lefifi 2014:10).

Andrew McGregor (2014: 7) analysed the figures in view of the wage demands of R12, 500 by work force mobilised by AMCU strike at Lonmin. The analysis depicts the ever widening gap and income inequality in 2014 between the companies CEO’S and low paid worker. The table below brings to the attention of the reader the immorality of economic disparity in our country today. The figures speak to the reality of how the free market system in South Africa is arranged in such a way that a tiny minority benefits at the expense of the majority. Hence within the mining sector, the recruited black elites give credibility to a system that disempowers their fellow African counterparts. This exploitative arrangement instils a sense of worth on the part of the black elite whilst suffocating the low paid workers below inflation wages.

4.13.4.1.1 Table: 11 CEO's remuneration in multiples of R12 500

CEO`s REMUNERATION IN MULTIPLES OF R12 500			
CEO	Company	Monthly salary (incl. gains on shares)	Multiplies of R12 500 as demanded by AMCU
Julian Roberts	Old Mutual	R6 102 748	488
Richard Lepeu	Compagnie Financiere Richemont SA	R5 942 780	475
Simon Crutchley	AVI	R5 257 000	421
Nic Durante	British American Tobacco	R5 240 029	419
David Constable	Sasol	R4 472 333	358
Whitey Basson	Shoprite Holdings	R4 166 750	333
Sifiso Dabengwa	MTN Group	R4 006 416	321
David Hathorn	Mondi	R3 744 928	300
Markus Jooste	Steinhoff International	R3 193 115	255
Sim Tshabalala	Standard Bank Group	R2 390 167	191

Source: WHO OWNS WHOM

The other group that expressed its opinions about their perception on the negative impact of the wealth gap in their sense of worth and belonging to a common citizenship is the 18-21-age group. Their perception must serve as a warning about the national reconciliation and social stability. If more than 70% of the youth in that category feel they are marginalised and have no stake in the further of the country, then all the attempts of development are doomed to fail if the youth are not on board.

4.13.4.2 Perceptions on the widening gap in 18-21 age group

We have observed that ninety-four middle age adults, 80 (85%) also attest to the reality of the poles of opulence and desperations pulling communities apart. It is just 14 (14%) who disagree with the opinions of the rest in this group. However of the overall 39 early youth, 29 (74%) are aware of unequal distribution of wealth in our country, 5 (12%) disagreeing and the last 5 (12%) holding a neutral stance. The

actual lived experiences of destitution by the participants confirmed by Massie (*et al.* 2014,xxii) that the unequal distribution of wealth in our country exacerbate the challenges of skewed living standards, household income, and the wealth gap has widened further since the end of apartheid in 1994. There is a correspondence of actual life experiences exacerbated by the rich/poor poverty gap.

The 2014 Statistics SA (2014) confirms the seriousness of the reality of the widening gap. The report points out that 56% of youth younger than 18 years of age are poor. In the same vein 49% of the youth in age category of 18-24 comprise of 49% of people affected by poverty, whilst 30% of adults between the age-bracket of 45-54 are categorised as poor.

Another report (Strydom 2013:1) that could be read in tandem with the Stats SA (2014) view is the Momentum's Household Financial Index that issued its report on the 23rd of July 2013. The research canvassed the views of 3 500 families from different backgrounds and class levels. It concluded that our country's households are undergoing traumatic financial constraints. Even those families within the middle class status, classified as "anchored", are currently "drifting" towards vulnerable levels. The Momentum study shows that vulnerability visited upon families does not discriminate. Even high-income earners households are not spared from the ravages of high cost of living. The rising cost of living, accompanied by raising electricity bills, petrol, food and escalating levels of household debts are depleting family's disposable incomes.

4.14 EMERGING VULNERABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

At this stage we must direct our focus on the extent and the nature of exposure to systemic vulnerability of the two groups emerging in the study basically representing "orders of magnitude of inequality" (Piketty 2014:255). William E. Arnal (2001:10) postulated a hypothesis of "social up rootedness" in his analysis of the economic conditions that informed the formative stages of the first century Jesus Movement. It is logical therefore for us in this study to frame and locate these two emerging groups with a stamp of vulnerability within South Africa's prevailing economic context of opulence and reflect on how it operate as a frame of reference for their formation and maintenance.

4.14.1 In-depth analysis of focus groups

In the same vein, the intentions of this study are to identify and analyse the root causes of food insecurity systems both in the affected communities and all layers of South Africa's social formation. This study in its totality is an earnest attempt to register and respond to the voices of distinctly two emerging vulnerable groups that were identified in the course of data collection.

The said groupings, which are the vulnerable transitional social group and on the other hand the vulnerable socio-economic group have become the centre of gravity of the entire study. The emerging groups of vulnerability speak to us about the locus of poverty and social marginalization in concrete lives of people who have attested to that reality.

The writer will attempt to reflect on the actual experiences, precisely the "material situation" (Arnal 2001:10) rather than the prevailing ideological political rhetoric explaining the reasons giving birth to the emergence of such groups. The lived reality of hunger in the given groups contradict any form of justifying poverty.

4.14.2 Groups on social periphery

The perceived vulnerability and a burden of responsibility or "black tax" carried by the (40-55) age group (25%), mostly women came as a surprise. These women are primary caregivers to child orphans as a result of AIDS related mortalities, and yet still strive to create stable conditions for family life.

On the other hand, the youth (22-35 age group 53%) attest to vulnerability in transitional expectations and social demands that are not met in the face of unemployment and stagnation in social mobility. The precarious social conditions experienced by the youth, leaves much to be desired.

The recent report of Statistics SA (2014), in its twenty-year review of the levels of skills and employability among the youth, depicts African youth as highly disadvantaged compared to other races. The report states that the youth in age group 25-34, "have regressed in terms of skills". It further shows that in contrast, skills and employment opportunities among white youth are at 61.5%, 50.7% among

Indians/Asians, whilst Coloureds attained 22.5%, and Africans were at 17.9%. African youth are lagging behind in acquiring skills (Maswanganyi 2014:7). The critical vulnerable status of the youth was further raised by the results of the research conducted by McKinsey, which reported that available jobs stands at 1,25 million, against 3.5 million unemployed youth (Netshitenzhe 2014:3).

In the same vein, the African Centre for Economic Transformation argues that in the next ten to twenty years, the majority of African people will be based in the cities, with a high percentage of them being youth. The African youth are the most vulnerable sector in our country today. The high levels of unemployment are found within this group. They are also the group that is less educated and skilled compared to the white and Indian youths. In the townships the African youth are likely to drop out of school, most young people who resume their schooling do not sit for grade twelve examinations. These factors structurally locate African youth in social maps that literally arrests and confine them in vulnerability without any hope for a breakthrough. The obvious implication is that if this shift is not handled properly, it could lead to social instability similar to the “chaos such as that of the Arab Spring” (Ford 2014:17). This concern needs to be taken seriously in the light of the challenges of poverty traps and the demands for free education in high institutions of learning.

4.15 ISSUES OF CONCERN

4.15.1 Table 12: Misuse of positions of power

Age group	Quantity	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
22-35	118	92 (77%)	16 (13%)	10 (8%)
40-55	94	71 (75 %)	19 (20%)	4 (5%)
18-21	39	14 (14%)	6 (15%)	5 (10%)

In this section we will come face to face with the accumulation and application of power by those in positions of authority. The responses of the participants speak to us about how the powerful use the political mandate they are given by the electorate to advance interests that are contrary to the needs and aspirations of the vulnerable.

This section has to do with the participants’ perceptions of the misuse of power by all in leadership positions both in the public and the private sector. An in-depth analysis of responses from different age groups was undertaken. Furthermore the views of 251 (70%) participants from different ages between 18-21, 22-35 and 40-55 respectively were analysed with the aim of determining how a specific group will feature.

The dominant view within this focus group accentuates the fact that the current leadership in our country is prone “to exploit their vulnerabilities” (*TRC Extract, 1998:3, Consequences of gross human rights violations, Vol 4, para 51*) hence 92 (77%) from 118 pool of the youth between 22-35 assent to that view, followed by 71(75%) of the middle age adults, with the only exception of 14 (14%) 18-21 youth who hold the least assertive view. In the middle age adults group 19 (20%) disagreed whilst 4 (4%) held a neutral position.

4.16 Table 13: Impact of food shortage in social relations

Age Group	Quantity	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
18-21	39	20 (51%)	17 (43%)	2 (6%)
22-35	118	70 (60%)	43 (36%)	5 (4%)
40-55	94	61 (64%)	26 (27%)	7 (6%)

The very same focus group of 251 (70%) expressed views on how food shortage affects their relationships. We could conclude that 151(62%) respondents, against 86 (35%) affirms that food shortage has a negative bearing on their relationships, with possible effect on race, class and social group relations

Since we have mentioned that each major quantitative question had tributaries of five sub-questions. We have so far deliberated on two tributary questions emanating from the major question on reconciliation. We have witnessed that under broader concerns for the advancement of reconciliation, the number of participants reporting difficulty in embracing the reconciliation vision of our country, has moved from 206 (57%), followed by 226 (62%). This is a growing dissatisfaction and disillusionment

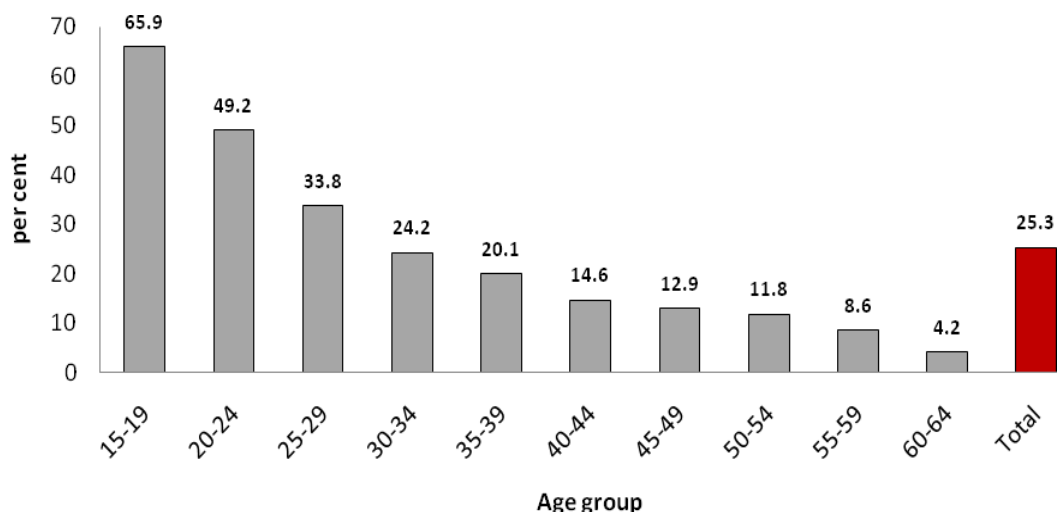
with the government intention to promote reconciliation without adequately addressing socio-economic factors that have a bearing on the matter.

The outcome to the question posed, took the figures of desperation from the (57%) alluded earlier, to a staggering (295) 82% of discontent. We cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand when such figures scream for attention. These figures say to us that the remedy for food insecurity has gone beyond the provision of “soup kitchens” and food parcels. Something greater is at stake.

The call for reconciliation in the face of the stench of hunger and grinding poverty simply means that the poor are expected to reconcile with broken promises that have not come to fruition in the past twenty two years of our democracy. The new democratic dispensation has dismally failed to meet the basic needs of the populace in terms that defies logic. Reconciliation in South Africa is surely dying a violent death, with serious consequences. Could we be stretching the argument to far by making a reference to the xenophobia attacks that took place in our country, to the 82% upsurge of sentiments, and the inability of the township folk to make sense of the reasons for wealth disparities in South Africa?

4.17 Youth vulnerability (22-35 age group)

Figure 10: Unemployment rates are much higher for the youth (3Q 2010)



(Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force survey, September 2010)

The vulnerability of the youth driven by unemployment is clearly reflected on the Stats SA report (Sep, 2010), which alluded that almost 3 million young people were unemployed since December 2010. Further 5.7 million young people were unemployed because they were in institutions of training and learning. Forty per cent

(320 000) of South African youth (18-24 ages) lost jobs since December 2010. Thus one point three million youth were considered as discouraged job seekers.

The employment ratio for 15 to 24 year olds in our country in 2010 was 12.5%, meaning that only 1 in 8 youth had a job. Eighty-six percent of South African youth have not completed grade 12. Although the Stats SA 2015 reports the rate of unemployment has reached 5.5 million, with 36% of youth unemployed. Almost two thirds (66.6%), of the youth have never been exposed to the work environment, thus have never worked at all. Youth unemployment rate has reached 52.8% according to the 18th July 2013 Report of the Reserve Bank Governor, Gill Marcus.

This implies that more than half of South African youth were unemployed in mid-2013. This report concurs with the opinions of the participants by going in details of unpacking the plight of the youth with substantiated factors that show the unemployment of the youth has declined by 22% since 2008 resulting in more than 500 000 job losses for the youth annually.

On the other hand, the youth in the (22-35) age group (53%) attest to vulnerability in transitional expectations and social demands, in the face of unemployment and stagnation in social mobility. The precarious social conditions experienced by the youth leaves much to be desired. The recent report of Statistics SA, in its 20th year review of the levels of skills and employability among the youth, depicts African youth as highly disadvantaged compared to other races.

The critical status of the youth based on the experiences of the participants is further attested by the youth unemployment report published by the Statistics South Africa in its Quarterly Labour Force Survey that was made public in September 2014. The report focuses largely on the youth from the age of 15-34, in line with South African's definition of youth, which includes a further ten-year age group not covered by the International Labour Organisation's age bracket of (15-24). The report states that the youth in age group 25-34 "have regress in terms of skills". The report showed that in contrast, skills and employment opportunities among white youth are at 61.5%, 50.7% among Indians/Asians, whilst Coloureds attained 22.5%, and Africans were at 17.9%. (Maswanganyi 2014:7). The critical vulnerable status of the youth was further

raised by the results of the research conducted by McKinsey, which reported that available jobs stands at 1,25 million, against 3.5 million unemployed youth (Netshitenzhe:2014,3).

4.17.1 Vulnerable socio-economic group among adults (40-55 age group)

We have noted with concern the prevalence of a growing perception of vulnerability and a heavy burden of responsibility carried by the (40-55) age group (25%) particularly women. These women link their responsibility of care and parenting to the growing demand to provide care-giving to the children of their close relatives who demised as a result of AIDS. This situation attest to the lived reality of African and black women who have to contend with continued discrimination based on gender, race and class which has worsened in the post-apartheid South Africa.

The concerns of women are confirmed by the 2014 Female Nation Survey, commissioned by Women 24 represents one million women residing in the metropolitan areas across the country. The study found among other issues that 46% of the women in metropolitan areas “are bread-winners and contribute to the largest share to household finances”. It further stated that 44% of women are raising at least two children. The disturbing finding of the study is that 87% of the women are found to “worry about money”.

The single parenthood by women in some cases is an act of choice. Yet on numerous occasions women who are single parents were deserted by their partners for various reasons. The figures before us speak of a new reality of children growing in single headed families in particular it is black families that are experiencing this devastating trend. In this regard women by choice or circumstances beyond their control bear the sole responsibility of raising children alone. (Editorial City Press, 23 November 2014:8).

4.17.2 Demographic characteristics of accommodation

Table 14: Gender accommodation cross-tabula rasa

			Accommodation				Total
			house	Informal Settlement	renting backyard room	renting flat	
Gender female	Count	185	4	22	8	219	
	% within Gender	84.5%	1.8%	10.0%	3.7%	100.0%	
Accommodate	% within Gender	64.9%	33.3%	59.5%	66.7%	63.3%	
	% of Total	53.5%	1.2%	6.4%	2.3%	63.3%	
male	Count	100	8	15	4	127	
	% within Gender	78.7%	6.3%	11.8%	3.1%	100.0%	
Accomod	% within Gender	35.1%	66.7%	40.5%	33.3%	36.7%	
	% of Total	28.9%	2.3%	4.3%	1.2%	36.7%	
Total	Count	285	12	37	12	346	
	% within Gender	82.4%	3.5%	10.7%	3.5%	100.0%	
Accomod	% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	82.4%	3.5%	10.7%	3.5%	100.0%	

The impact of food shortage is further complicated by the fact that most of the participants gave opinions to the fact that whatever resources they accumulate are somehow depleted by expenses of paying for accommodation. In this regard 10% females and 11.8% of males are renting backyard rooms. It is only the participants whose accommodation is located within the informal settlement (females 1.8% and males at 6.3%) that is exposed to other expenses other than accommodation. These items included issues such as transport to their places of work that force them to dig deep into their pockets to cover the costs. It is relatively accepted that flats as an option for accommodation are expensive. Thus the study shows that 3% females,

with a slightly 3.5% of males are renting flats. Therefore both genders are relatively exposed to the high expenses of paying for accommodation.

4.18 INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

The integration of both the quantitative and qualitative results show a confluence of opinions with regard to issues regarded as primary. This fact is well attested by the two emerging groups of vulnerability, the youth (22-35), and adults (40-55) age bracket. The opinions reflected in the entire study are best integrated when viewed along the perceptions of the focus group of 251 (70%), who largely expressed the same views of the entire study, but emphasising the particularity of their context and special needs. In understanding the comprehensive views of the participants, it is imperative to note the significance of special vulnerability among the youth and middle age groups. The results have highlighted how the question of food shortage directly impinges on the quality of life of the affected groups.

A further interrogation of the results shows the need for the qualitative responses to be grouped thematically with the aim of highlighting critical issues suggested by the participants. Such groupings both yield clear directives in terms of the causes of food shortage, and suggested solutions. In total, nine major issues were suggested as primary contributory factors for food shortage.

Furthermore the study shows how factors such as economy, morality, ethics, education and skills were placed on top of the list of issues to be addressed (see Appendix B). Challenges facing families were also considered. The broader socio-economic factors that have wide implications to our neighbouring countries were highlighted. Thus issues relating to population and immigration, land, and environmental factors also emerged. Furthermore, the question of accountable governance, politics, and call for the revival of spiritual consciousness was brought to the forefront.

From the nine major questions raised, ten in-depth sub-questions were substantiated as further evidence to unpack the fundamental causes of food shortage, resulting in an overwhelming 491 issues regarded by the participants to have a bearing on the conditions of food shortage in urban townships around Gauteng.

In the same light, the suggested solutions were categorised into nine major related themes (namely: governance and political solutions, economy, societal, individuals and family, education and skills, spirituality, morality and ethics related, population and immigration, agri-business solutions). All the raised issues jointly give 367 items that must be factored into considerations as possible solutions to the challenges of food insecurity systems.

4.19 CONCLUSION

This Chapter attempted to give attention on the aspects of the outcomes of the empirical research conducted in the urban areas reached by the study. The demographic character of the participants was discussed. Inputs were provided regarding the nature of research instruments that were employed both in the drafting of the structured questionnaire and the steps taken to gather data.

The researcher explored the stages that were undertaken in the application of measuring instruments to analyse the results emanating from the study. In conclusion we were able to present the challenges facing youth participants as parents and primary care-givers to their siblings. Their situation is further complicated by the challenges and the obligations of paying municipal bills or rent bills for family accommodation.

We have covered the results based on the structured questionnaire that the participants completed. Thus issues of the characteristics of the gender sample, employment and income status of the participants were scrutinised, including the consideration of the role of pensioners as caregiver.

Five major questions, together with twenty-five sub questions were discussed, including the question of the impact of food shortage on the self-respect of each individual participant.

Furthermore we discussed how those living with food vulnerability perceive the conduct of people in position of authority, with the intentions of detecting possible abuse of positions by the powerful at the expense of the poor. The question of the widening gap of socio-economic inequity was confronted, informed by the experiences of specific age groups.

As such the emergence of vulnerable socio-economic groups, within the youth and adults were subjected to rigorous analysis and evaluation, with specific concerns for perceptions of the prevalence of moral decay within government structures on all levels of governance. Lastly the overall results and possible suggested solutions for addressing issues of social systems of vulnerability were engaged.

Five major questions, together with twenty-five sub questions were discussed, including the question of the impact of food shortage on the self-respect of each individual participant.

Furthermore we discussed how those living with food vulnerability perceive the conduct of people in position of authority, with the intentions of detecting possible abuse of positions by the powerful at the expense of the poor. The question of the widening gap of socio-economic inequity was confronted, informed by the experiences of specific age groups. We have noted that when individuals were dealing with the question of negative impacts of social disparities and growing inequalities they responded as though they are not negatively affected. Yet when the very same question is analysed on specific groups an answer contrary to the one given by the individuals emerges.

In the next Chapter we will address the reading of the parables of the historical Jesus as symbols of social transformation within the broad scope of reading scenarios of the historical Jesus as informed by Van Ecks' 12 theses. The given scenarios will assist the reader to identify issues of exploitation in the 1st century Palestine, which will cover the following aspects: background, patronage and clientism, limited good, purity and pollution, meals as ceremonies, honour and shame, friendship and frameworks for the parables will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

THE PARABLES OF JESUS AS SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter we intend to give special focus to the reading of the parables by Van Eck. We have deliberately chosen his 12 theses as interpretive tools of the parables. Our primary reason being the fact that he is one of the parable scholar who explicitly propounds a transformative reading of the parables. The Chapter seek to appropriate Van Eck's presupposition that the parables are the "symbols" of social transformation and justice. His readings show how issues of systemic vulnerability in South Africa can be addressed.

A brief summation of the history of interpretation of the parables will be undertaken, and an in-depth deliberation of the twelve theses by Van Eck as interpretative frameworks for the parables will be discussed. Van Eck's theses are presented as readings that "open up" different perspectives of the parables as broad scope in the reading scenarios of the intents of the historical Jesus with reference to the relevance to our empirical study. Therefore Van Eck's methodology of reading the parables will be followed by the description of a number of reading scenarios of the parables. The given scenarios will assist the reader to identify issues of exploitation in the 1st century Palestine, which will cover the following aspects: background, patronage and clientism, limited good, purity and pollution, meals as ceremonies, honour and shame, friendship and reciprocity.

The second section of this Chapter will be dedicated to the socio-economic background of the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels. In this section we set to discuss issues related to the economy and taxation system enacted in the 1st century Palestine by Rome and temple elites. Furthermore the political ideology of Roman Imperialism will be addressed. Thereafter we will highlight the social positioning of the elites and non-elites. Subsequently we will reflect on the conditions that mediated the exploitation of the peasantry by the "kingdom of the temple and the

kingdom of Rome”. We will resume our readings of the parables by looking at the socio-political environment of the historical Jesus. We intend to show how the Roman rule shaped the formation of the spirituality and public ministry of the historical Jesus. Detailed reflection will be given to the influence and specific interests of various social and religious groups during the period of the ministry of the historical Jesus. The social and economic context between 4 CE and the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 CE will serve as a background of the parables selected to interpret the study. The suggested period overlaps with the traditions used in the formation of the Synoptic Gospels. Particularly the traditions regarding the parables as transmitted by the earliest followers of Jesus the Galilean.

A critical analytical reading of the parables will be undertaken. The reading of ten parables by Van Eck will be presented. The ten parables to be reflected upon are the following: the parable of the minas, the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom.* 65/Mark 12:1-12). The primary focus on the ten parables will seek to address the aspects that will assist the reader in the analysis of the issues of food vulnerability in the next Chapter.

5.2 HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

5.2.1 The use of the allegorical interpretation of the parables of Jesus

Many varied attempts have been undertaken to interpret the parables of Jesus. Van Eck highlights the fact that the approach and contributions of Jülicher has impacted the scholarship around the question of the interpretation of the parables. Hence Van Eck points out that the work of Jülicher has pushed contemporary interpreters of the parable material into two camps. One camp of the scholars upholds the interpretation of the parables “as if they are the very word of Jesus” (Van Eck 2009:2). This school of thought does not take into cognisance the differences in the construction of the parables as presented by different Gospel writings.

A second group of scholars shares Jülicher's perspectives that "the authenticity of the parables cannot simply be assumed" (Van Eck 2009:2). The reader is challenged to interrogate the reasons and motives of seeking to determine the meaning and the message of each given parable. An attempt to interpret the parables of Jesus must address whether one is "interested in the parables of Jesus, the Galilean peasant, or the Synoptic version thereof" (Van Eck 2009:2).

Van Eck (2009:1) suggests that the interpretation of the parables has been dominated by the use of the allegorical interpretation. The application of the allegorical methodology of interpretation occupied the early scholarship of the "first 18 centuries of parable interpretation". Allegorical interpretation of the parables focussed on the "hidden or symbolic meanings" (Van Eck 2009:2) embedded in the text. The allegorical interpretation demands and expects the interpreter to unpack the meaning attached to symbolic aspects of any given parable.

Jülicher challenged this school of thought in 1910. He approached the parables from the vantage point of "historical-critical reading" (Van Eck 2009:2). The basic argument of Jülicher regarding the parables of Jesus is premised on the notion that the parables "are similes and not metaphors or allegories". As such their composition does not require an interpretive exercise. Their intent, aim and purpose points to clarity of meaning.

5.2.2 Theological interpretations of the parables of Jesus

Van Eck (2013:1) maintains that the history of the interpretations of the parables speaks of a variety of approaches adopted by a number of scholars. He alludes to the fact that parables were engaged "either allegorically or theologically". On other occasions, interpretive processes were informed by the literary context of the origin of the parable. The definitive argument of the theological interpretation of the parables raises a number of issues. The scholars attempted the theological interpretive approach with expressed aims of "deconstructing prevalent allegorical interpretations of the parables" (Van Eck 2013:227).

It is evident that the theological interpretive approach provides opportunity to the evangelist to narrate and present the parables in a manner that "serve their own

interests” (Van Eck 2009:1). The reader is also made aware of the fact that each evangelist tapped into the parables of Jesus with the aim of addressing issues of concern in the community of believers. The logical conclusion is that the parables of Jesus were utilised to address issues of concern and to “serve the interest of the early church” (Van Eck 2009:3).

In such situations the evangelist or the Gospel writer narrates a given parable from the vantage point of his perspectives in the light of the issues he seeks engage. Furthermore, the parable would be arranged and positioned or located in the broader context of the textual narrative in a manner that would achieve specific intentions of the writer. Theological interpretations of the parables also seek to identify and locate the meaning of each parable “in its literary context in the Synoptics” (Van Eck 2013:228).

Theological analysis of the parables points to direct handling of the textual formulation of the parable by the narrator. It speaks of the search for the meaning of the parables of Jesus through the interpretive lenses of the literary construction of each parable. Hence the “voice of Jesus” in the parables is mediated and detectable in the tone of the writer concerned. Van Eck (2009:3) goes on to argue that the theological interpretation of the parables brings to the fore “ideological” biases of the writer. In this regard the reader ought to attempt a “critical reading” of the interpretive perspective of the parables advanced by each evangelist both in the manner of the composition and placement of each parable in the broader narrative of the Gospel.

The literary interpretive methodology of the parables impresses upon the reader the need of appreciating the “micro” and the “macro” context of each parable around 27-30 CE (Van Eck 2011:2). As such the interpretation must take note of specific immediate circumstances that the parable seeks to address. Whereas the broader conditions that shapes the construction of the given text are also subjected to the critic of the parable.

5.3 BROADER SOCIAL CONTEXT AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLES OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

5.3.1 Social milieu of the parables as a vehicle to trace the “original” voice of Jesus the Galilean

Van Eck (2009:2), in presenting his twelve theses’ of interpreting the parables of Jesus, convicts the reader that it is imperative to put across the interpretive model of undertaking the task at hand. Van Eck insists that the intent to engage the parables of Jesus must stem from the desire to come to terms with “Jesus the Galilean peasant”. Other than that one would only be interrogating the version(s) presented by the Synoptic Gospels. Therefore this is an endeavour to trace the “original voice” of the historical Jesus. The appropriation of the parables seen through the lenses of a social-scientific reading gives room for discovering the original voice of Jesus⁹⁶. It is imperative to be conscious of how we “read” the Bible. Van Eck (2008:1155) has suggested that there are “three ways of reading the Bible”. He refers to “a fundamentalist, foundationalist and critical reading”. The fundamentalist reading is conducted within the parameters of “a canon in the canon”. On the other hand, the foundationalist approach is carried out “with a canon outside the canon” while the critical reading which traces its roots to the Reformation “takes cognizance of the historical and cultural distance between the text and the reader” (Van Eck 2008:1155). Therefore, in our attempts of tracing the voice of the historical Jesus we will apply the critical reading approach.

Van Eck (2009:2) carries the argument further by asserting that an intentional appropriation of the parables of Jesus will enable the reader to come to terms with a number of questions. Firstly the reader will appreciate the impact of the social context in the first-century Mediterranean and how it shaped the personality of the historical Jesus. Therefore it is imperative not to read our modern perspectives into the parables of Jesus. We have to stretch ourselves to the position of embracing “the message” of the parables of Jesus in the same way the immediate hearers of Jesus would have heard them. Van Eck (2009:2) reminds the reader that the reading of the parables of Jesus in view of their historicity raises a lot of questions⁹⁷ that points to the transformation paradigm of the kingdom of God.

⁹⁶ On another level the reading of the parables from the socio-scientific perspective enables the reader to appreciate the social context that inform the “ethic of Jesus” (Harvey 1990:1) as reflected in the views of the earliest Jesus tradition.

⁹⁷ Van Eck (2009:2) presents his theses’ to interpret the parables from the angle of the socio- scientific analysis. The given interpretive tool raises a number of questions such as “What, most probably, was

5.3.2 Social context and positioning of the texts dealing with the parables of Jesus

An informed reading of the parables of Jesus demands the reader to appreciate the contribution advanced by Van Eck's application of the social-scientific analysis⁹⁸. Van Eck (2009:1) argues that his 12 theses unlock the meaning of the text in its concrete context. We are deliberate in our intents to align with Van Eck's approach in understanding the placing of the parables of Jesus in their original situation⁹⁹ and also how contemporary scholarship¹⁰⁰ appropriates the context of the historical Jesus. Therefore Van Eck's 12 theses as interpretive tools, handles the text as a

Jesus' aim in telling parables? Are Jesus' parables theocentric (i.e. telling us something about the character of God)? In other words, are the parables of Jesus about religion or theology? Can the parables help us to understand something of who the historical Jesus was? Do Jesus' parables make ethical points? More specifically, can we identify certain values in the parables of Jesus that can be applied morally in a postmodern society? And finally, what picture of Jesus the Galilean can be drawn from the parables he told?"

⁹⁸ Van Eck (2009:1) proposes that "Social-scientific criticism, as an exegetical method, analyses texts in terms of their strategy (the pragmatic and rhetorical dimensions of the text) and situation (the social circumstances in which the text was produced)".

⁹⁹ See also Herzog (2000:47). In this study Herzog undertakes a corrective reading of the parables of Jesus he presented in his initial study of the "Parables as subversive speech" (1994). In this body of work we encounter Herzog's approach of interpreting the parables of Jesus as liberative tools to expose the domination system prevalent in Jesus' day. Herzog acknowledges the fact that in his reading of the parables of Jesus, he placed much emphasis on the role of Jesus "as a pedagogue of the oppressed who used the parables to illumine the dark world of oppression" and point out alternative "options" opened to those living under oppression. The approach of Herzog gave much attention on the sociological aspects of the critic of the parables of Jesus against the domination of the peasantry by the religious and political elites. Herzog brings out to our attention the fact that his handling of the parable of Jesus as instruments of liberation gave an impression that he was downplaying the theological presuppositions of the parables.

¹⁰⁰ See also Borg (1994:69) in his suggestions that the historical Jesus needs to be regarded "as a teacher of wisdom". As such his pedagogical approach of conveying his message through the use of the parables must be placed in the oral tradition employed by Jesus to ignite transformative imagination on the part of the first hearers of the parables (Borg 1994:71). It is in the same line of thought that Dominic Crossan (1991:80) locates the "parabolic corpus" of the historical Jesus within the "Cynic-Stoic" of itinerant wisdom teachers. In the light of this tradition, the parables of Jesus falls within the scope of religious teaching that encompassed elements of contradicting established status quo in ideology and praxis. On the other hand, Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) (2007:188, 192), in his work, "*Jesus of Nazareth*" has a different take on the parables. He regards the parables as containing "a hidden and multi-layered" dynamism that imposes some demands on the recipients. The parables "invites" the listeners on hearing the parable to trust its message and meaning by opening themselves to its "dynamic and to go beyond their existing horizons". In this sense parables places demands and stretches the imagination of the hearers about their dispositional, perceptual, moral and ethical decisions they must take about the here and now. However Jeffrey Archer and Francis J. Moloney (2007) in their collaborative effort, "*The gospel according to Judas Benjamin Iscariot*", regards the teachings of Jesus as informed by his deep sense of justice and solidarity with ordinary members of society. Archer and Moloney (2007:24) makes a reference of the attitude of Jesus about the levels of injustice visited upon the masses by the Jewish elites. Hence in Chapter 8:14-15, the critical mind-set of Jesus is articulated in that "Jesus was aware of the injustices the local people were suffering at the hands of a foreign power. Every town and village was administered by a group of corrupt Jewish leaders who were becoming wealthier by the day, while the Romans remained their paymasters". It is this social reality of domination mediated by native Jewish collaborators that shaped the teachings of Jesus against the powers that be.

material that conveys cultural and ideological perspective¹⁰¹ (s) of the milieu that gives birth to its existence.

The question that is addressed by the Van Eck's criticism engages the positioning of the text under investigation on the platform of its social and cultural value system (Van Eck 2013:6). In that regard the application of the 12 theses as analytical systems with reference to the parables makes it possible for the exegete "to open up the social world of the parable". The usage of the 12 theses as interpretive methodology attests to a "realistic reading" of the texts (Van Eck 2013:6).

Van Eck elaborates what the "opening up" of the text implies. The opening up of the parable material tactically places the reader in situation in which he can appreciate the point of view of the immediate hearers of the parables of Jesus. This position of advantage is referred to by Van Eck (2013:7) as "an emic reading". It is a reading that takes into cognisance the socio-cultural perspectives of the first hearers of the parables of the historical Jesus.

Furthermore Van Eck's (2009:1) critical and interpretive methodology brings to the fore the strategic and the "rhetorical dimensions of the text"¹⁰². In this line of thought he concurs with Elliott¹⁰³ that this methodological instrument assists the reader to

¹⁰¹ Van Eck (2009:5) agrees with Elliott in his assertion that "Social-scientific criticism studies the text as both a reflection of and a response to the social and cultural settings in which the text was produced" to determine "the meaning(s) explicit and implicit in the text, meanings made possible and shaped by the social and cultural systems inhabited by both authors and intended audiences" (Elliott 1993:8).

¹⁰² Van Eck (2011:8) articulates the view that Social-scientific criticism regards texts as collective of "meaningful" dialogues. However such dialogues are grounded on intentional world-views within dynamic ideological and cultural frame of reference. In that instance Van Eck agrees with Elliott's view that "texts either legitimate social institutions, or serve as vehicles of social change" (Elliott 1993:49–51). Social-scientific criticism, as an exegetical method, analyses texts in terms of their *strategy* and *situation*. The situation of a text refers to the social circumstances in which the text was produced (Elliott 1993:54–55) and the text's strategy, as defined by Elliott (1993:55), refers to "its pragmatic and rhetorical dimension [its structure], the manner in which the text in its totality of form and content (syntactic and semantic dimensions) is designed to have a specific effect upon ... [its] ... receiver(s)".

¹⁰³ Van Eck (2009:5) suggests that Elliott (1993:36–59) has given depth description of the Social-scientific methodology by listing a number of "salient features of the social-scientific". Van Eck points out that Elliott's listing "considers all knowledge as socially conditioned and perspectival in nature; it distinguishes and clarifies the differences between the social location of the interpreter and the social location of the authors and objects to be interpreted; it tries to avoid a reductionist, anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of the text (by distinguishing between emic and etic information and perspectives in the text); it employs theories and models as critical tools to clarify the differences between the contexts of ancient texts and of modern readers; it involves a process of logic that can be characterised as abduction; it considers the social and cultural models constructed on the basis of research and data pertaining to the geographical, social and cultural region inhabited by the biblical communities, that is the area of the circum-Mediterranean and ancient Near East; it presumes that this

reflect the intended meaning of the text while being conscious of one's possible biases and their potentiality to interfere with the interpretation process.

5.4 VAN ECK'S METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERPRETING THE PARABLES OF JESUS

5.4.1 Thesis 1

Thesis 1 asserts that "the authenticity of the parables, as we have them in the Synoptic Gospels, cannot simply be assumed" (Van Eck 2009:2). Van Eck constructs his argument on the basis of Jülicher's work. Building on Jülicher, Van Eck (2009:3) notes that the parables as presented in the Gospels are laden with allegorical content. The allegorical interpretation of the parables reflects the input of the Gospel writer's intent to use them to address specific issues arising from the early church.

We need to get clarity about the issues addressed by the evangelists in the period around 70 CE, by implication making a reference to the period between 30 to 40 years later after the completion of the public ministry of Jesus. Van Eck (2009:3) is challenging the reader to be conscious of the timeframe that one would choose to locate the parables. When the parables are read within the locality of Galilean ministry of Jesus in 30 CE, the reader can trace the authentic voice of the historical Jesus and its impact on his early followers as they were responding to the message of the parables. Therefore the Gospels' version, interpretation and re-application of the parables as tools to address issues emerging in the early church (30-40 years later) must be put in perspective with due respect of the intents of the evangelist in their endeavour's to re-appropriate the parables materials for the empowerment of the early church.

5.4.2 Thesis 2

Thesis 2 puts the transformative demands of thesis 8 in perspective. In that it acknowledges that "Jesus told his parables in first-century Palestine, an advanced agrarian society under the control of the Roman Empire" (Van Eck 2009:4). Thesis 2

method is different from but complementary to a historical orientation; it holds the presupposition that the study of "religion" in the Bible and its environment requires a study of social structures and relations; it draws on the full range of social-science theory, methods and research; and it is concerned not only with the original meanings of the biblical documents but also with the aggregations of meanings down through the centuries".

brings to our attention the picture of the everyday life under Roman rule in the first-century Palestine. The parables confront the social arrangement of both the political and religious aristocracy prevalent during the course of the ministry of Jesus.

The thesis (Van Eck 2009:4) alludes to the fact that the social world of Galilean Jesus was characterised by a relatively advanced socio-political system. The agricultural sector was developed in such a way that the entire population under Rome was no longer conducting farming with the sole reason of feeding their families. Roman Imperialism, through its regional administrators, elevated farming from serving the family needs to large-scale conglomerates that supplied cities with a variety of produce.

Rome administrators and the temple aristocracy managed to own large tracts of land by offering original landowners loans they could not afford to repay. As a consequence, the elites would forcefully take ownership of the land as a way of settling the debt. In turn the very peasants, who were for generations living in family farms, ended up living as tenants in their father's land, and became working day labourers. It was a world that operated on well-defined social roles; classes and approved spaces where every member was expected to fall in line.

The predominant feature of the social conditions of the Galilean Jesus is that the class structure was prominent. Societal divisions and roles classifications were evident in two distinct social classes. Those belonging to the ruling elite were highly rich compared to peasants. The societal division presented a formidable picture of “the *haves* (rulers) and the *have-nots* (the ruled)”. It is not surprising to note that “the ruling class (elite) comprised of only 2% of the population and lived in the cities while the rest of the population, namely the peasants (the ruled or non-elite), lived in rural areas” (Van Eck 2009:4).

Such power arrangements permitted the elites to live extravagant lives at the expense of the peasants. The agriculture driven economic system exploited the rural areas, the peasants of their labour, land, and the quantity of their produce. The rich having amassed the means of mass production through cheap labour took a step further by demanding taxes.

The Roman tax system was designed in such a way that the elites would benefit more compared to the peasants. All the taxes were channelled to the benefit of the elite in the cities. The peasants were driven to social margins and had to rely on the exorbitant loans from the elites to make a living and to comply with tax obligations. The tax requirement crept into the sphere of religious practice as well. The priesthood had an obligation to pay taxes to Rome. Thus the temple aristocracy pushed the peasants to pay tithes and other offerings. More funds were raised during religious festivals (Van Eck 2009:5). The temple leaders used offerings not as means of religious practice, but as a systemic way of raising capital to pay the expected share to Rome and still remain with more than enough resources to run the temple.

5.4.3 Thesis 3

Thesis 3 forcefully links the benefits, and favourable conditions of living under Rome with the privileged. It is “because of the elite’s exploitation of the non-elite, the peasantry in first-century Palestine lived at the edge of destitution” (Van Eck 2009:4). The indignity of living under the oppressive system of Roman Imperialism was a manifestation of how Rome ruled every aspect of the peasants. Rome had a stake over land and sea and its products. Hence Rome could strengthen its grip on the lives of the marginalised rural peasants by the imposition of a dual tribute system of the land and poll tax. Non-compliance with the tax demands was regarded as an act of treason against Rome.

What made the success of Roman tributary system was the role of the “native collaborators”, both in political and religious offices. On the political level the tetrarchs exercised administrative duties of collecting taxes in respective provincial structures. The temple aristocracy had to enforce tax duties compliance through religious taxes and offerings. In this regard the compliance with religious taxes must not be perceived as an expression of devotion or an act of true worship. These taxes represented subjugation to civil duties demanded by Rome and the temple. They drove the peasants to destitution to such an extent that “food and debt were a constant problem. Rising indebtedness led to the loss of land (which had been the base of the peasant’s subsistence) as well as the loss of the peasant’s place in the traditional social structure”, eventually driving the peasants to the margins of society (Van Eck 2009:4).

5.4.4 Thesis 4

Thesis 4 suggests that “to avoid an ethnocentric reading of the parables of Jesus the interpreter must take cognisance of the dominant cultural values and norms of the first-century Mediterranean world” (Van Eck 2009:5). The basic argument of this thesis is that we must not read the parables of Jesus through the lenses and perspectives of our modern experiences. Such a starting point will be a deliberate imposition of contemporary societal value systems to the first-century Mediterranean worldview. We must strive to hear the authentic voice of Jesus in its time and history.

Accordingly, Van Eck (2009:5) suggests that the post-modern readings of Jesus’ parables must preserve the integrity of the parables’ thought patterns. We must respect how the first hearers of Jesus’ parables would have understood and appropriated his message. Further, we must be aware of the given oppressive social and political conditions that birthed the parables. Any attempt at our reading to downplay the formative cultural systems and worldview of the New Testament with our Western oriented worldview would result to a more “ethnocentric reading”. In order to open ourselves to meaningful readings of the parables, Van Eck (2009:5) draws our attention to the modern value systems we need to confront.

Ours is a materialistic driven society. We place significance in wealth accumulation. Our self-worth and prestige is driven by the pursuance of individual self-actualisation. First-century Palestine, on the other hand, was a society of “honour and shame” (Van Eck 2009:5) defined by group consciousness.

5.4.5 Thesis 5

Thesis 5 takes the interpretation of the parables further by substantiating the fact that “social-scientific criticism facilitates a cultural-sensitive reading of the parables of Jesus”. The parables must be read in their own terms. Even though such terms of reference might pose perceptual disjuncture to the modern reader. Compliance must be the norm. The meaning intended by Jesus in the parables needs firstly to be appropriated, as the first hearers originally understood it. It is that “culture sensitive reading” that we must employ in understanding the socio-cultural dynamics prevalent in the communities that were responding to the parable teachings of Jesus. The parables therefore should be read within the context of first-century Mediterranean

(Roman) era. The modern reader needs to muster the social language of “social system presupposed in Jesus parables” (Van Eck 2009:6).

The parables of the Galilean Jesus respond to and reflect the social context that gave birth to their existence. Hence Van Eck could argue that the fabric of the text of the parables reflects the influence of the broader socio-political institutions of the time. Such influences take cognisance of the collective cultural practices. Respective social ideologies and knowledge systems “as socially determined” constructs that have a bearing on formative events of the parables of Jesus (Van Eck 2009:6). Therefore, in reading the parables of Jesus, both the historical and social environment must be factored in the interpretation phase. Another factor raised by Van Eck (2009:6) is the need to apply social-scientific skills in handling the “cultural scripts” of the context that inform the construction of the parables. The manner in which we handle and assimilate the “social scripts” will yield a meaningful interpretation of any body of parable material. It is Van Eck’s view that social-scientific criticism provides us with “reading scenarios” that will enhance our interpretation of the parables of Jesus. The “reading scenarios” envisaged incorporate the ability to link the synergistic interaction between the texts of the parables with broader social codes.

Interpretation of the parables must entail an appreciation of the ideological religious thought patterns and their socio-economic framework that have a bearing on texts. We could then assert that the very same skills need to be applied in our appropriation of the parables for current challenges. This approach of reading the parables requires of us to come to terms with “social scripts” embedded in the collective consciousness of the first hearers of the parables of Jesus. The “reading scenarios” definitive of thesis 5 could be used as points of entry into issues that affected the early hearers of the parables. The other benefit of this reading tool is that it unlocks the text of the social fabric of the parables in such a way that the reader can assimilate its “intended rhetorical effect” (Van Eck 2009:6).

In interpreting the parables, thesis 5 assists us with the means of identifying and handling the text as “a vehicle” of conveying its narrative. It rests upon the reader to raise his/her level of consciousness regarding the broader dynamism of socio-

historical systems that influence the text under scrutiny. The reader needs to make an appreciation through the use of the parables of what was their overall meaning. We need to understand that a balanced interpretation of the parables demands interaction with the “historical setting” under Roman rule. The application of the parables cannot be dealt with outside their historical milieu (Van Eck 2009:6).

5.4.6 Thesis 6

Thesis 6 categorically asserts that the central theme of Jesus’ parables was the non-apocalyptic kingdom of God (Van Eck 2009:6). This statement is premised on the assumption that Jesus, both in his teachings and conduct, was proclaiming the concrete realisation of the kingdom of God in the here and now. However, Van Eck is cognizant of the fact that different scholars canvassed divergent opinions. The dominant view that was prevalent in the last century was that of apocalyptic eschatology. The chief exponents of the notion of “imminent eschatology” were Weiss and Schweitzer. The apocalyptic eschatology with reference to Jesus as propounded by its early exponents was understood to mean a “cataclysmic” end of the present age. Van Eck (2009:6) subscribes¹⁰⁴ to the doctrine of eschatology that is transformative in intent and actuality.

Van Eck (2009:6) further clarifies the fact that Käsemann argued against the destructive eschatology of John the Baptist. He argued that Jesus perceived the reality of an eschatology embedded in his identity and mission. Van Eck builds this understanding on Kloppenborg’s views who argues for the non-existence of an apocalyptic bent in the teaching of Jesus¹⁰⁵. We can assert that Van Eck regards the kingdom of God as a present reality that confronts day-to-day realities of human life with transformative intent. In the same vein, the reader is challenged to consider the

¹⁰⁴ Van Eck (2009:6) locates his position on eschatology in line with Crossan’s perspective. Crossan holds the view that “Jesus was eschatological, but not apocalyptic. This “odd” statement is clarified by Crossan’s understanding of eschatology, either being apocalyptic or ethical in character: Ethical eschatology can be defined as transformative, social, active and durative; while apocalyptic eschatology refers to an eschatology that is destructive, material, passive and instantive (see Crossan 1999:257–292; Crossan, in Borg, Crossan & Patterson 2001:69).”

¹⁰⁵ Van Eck (2009:7) agrees with Kloppenborg in his literary analysis of Q. Kloppenborg is acknowledged in that he “identified in Q a layer of wisdom sayings of Jesus (which he called Q1) that have an absence of apocalypticism. Koester (1990) and Patterson (Kloppenborg, Meyer, Patterson & Steinhauser 1990) came to the same conclusion in their work on the *Gospel of Thomas* by indicating that also in Thomas an early stage in its development can be identified that has no apocalyptic references.”

opinions of writers such as Cupitt (2001), Borg (2006) and Funk (2007)¹⁰⁶ for detailed arguments in support of transformative eschatology. The final word on the arguments for the realistic eschatology for the historical Jesus is accorded to Miller (2001a:1).

Van Eck agrees with Miller's contention that the apocalyptic views of the Galilean could not be separated from his self-identity. Hence, Van Eck interprets Jesus' prophetic role as concrete, such as the parable of the mustard seed.¹⁰⁷

5.4.7 Thesis 7

The interpretation of the parables makes sense when understood from the rural setting and life experiences of the peasants. Thesis 7 brings to the readers' attention the presumption that the first hearers of the parables of Jesus in Galilee could easily relate to the parables. Their indigenous connection to the imagery and symbolism carried by each parable placed the early hearers of Jesus' parables at an advantageous position compared to the modern reader.

In thesis 7 Van Eck (2009:7) brings to our attention that the parables of Jesus were primarily aimed at the rural audience because of the richness of symbolism that has connection to agriculture and the maintenance of the land. The rural background of the parables must be kept intact. The modern reader must acknowledge the language and the worldview of the peasant as first recipients of the parables.

The given thesis presents the aspect that "since the social location of Jesus was that of the peasantry, the interpreter of the parables should always ask the question: what message the parables of Jesus carried in their rural context, and how the rural audience did hear them?" This interpretative stance challenges the modern reader

¹⁰⁶ Van Eck's (2009:7) positions of transformative eschatology align itself with the scholar's views in which the kingdom is defined in the same manner: "Jesus' kingdom had been ethical and this-worldly. It was about committing oneself ethically to life and to one's neighbour here and now, in this world, and in the present" (Cupitt 2001:55); "The kingdom was for the earth, political and religious and involved a transformed world" (Borg 2006:186); and "[t]he kingdom of God was a kingdom of this world. Jesus always talked about God's reign in everyday, mundane terms – dinner parties, travellers being mugged, truant sons, labourers in a vineyard, the hungry and tearful" (Funk 2007:89-93).

¹⁰⁷ Thus he could agree with Miller that (2009:7) "if not, these parables are "wickedly clever satires of imperial values and religious respectability" (Miller 2001b:113). The latter interpretation clearly relates to a non-apocalyptic kingdom here and now. A transformed world, a kingdom "that challenged the kingdoms of this world" (Borg 2006:186), a kingdom that challenged the exploitative social and

on a couple of respects. This thesis demands from the reader the willingness to understand the “social location” of the schism between the “have and the have-nots”. Further the thesis expects the reader to seek to determine how such conditions “carry” and sustain self-defeating notions of social separation.

Thesis 7 suggests that “to avoid an ethnocentric reading of the parables of Jesus the interpreter must take cognisance of the dominant cultural values and norms of the first-century Mediterranean world” (Van Eck 2009:5). The basic argument of this thesis is that we must not read the parables of Jesus through the lenses and perspectives of our modern experiences. Such a starting point will be a deliberate imposition of contemporary societal value systems to the first-century Mediterranean worldview. We must strive to identify and respond to the authentic voice of Jesus within the matrix of its time and context.

5.4.8 Thesis 8

Thesis 8 states that the parables of Jesus “are atypical stories (comparisons). This renders the classification of the parables obsolete” (Van Eck 2009:8). The opinion canvased by this thesis is that the “content” of the parables tells a story about the intent of Jesus in communicating in parables. The initial aspect that stands out is that Jesus is using everyday images and symbols with which his audience could easily relate and identify in constructing the parables. The modern reader must be aware of the fact that the question of distance and preoccupation with closing the gap between the parables and present readers did not apply to the original hearers.

The second question that Van Eck (2009:8) presents in the given thesis is the fact that parables as stories can have a dual functionality. The first intent of any story can be to work as a legitimating medium of the dominant *status quo* in any given culture. On the other hand, a story can also be handled as a tool to confront entrenched cultural practises that are taken as normative. In this instance the parables of Jesus serves as conduits to challenge the assumed privilege and ruler ship of Rome and its alliance partners (the temple aristocracy). Parables as instruments of social

economic relations in Jesus’ society (Moxnes 1988). It is from this perspective of present and concrete consciousness of the kingdom that the parables of Jesus the Galilean should be interpreted.

transformation carry with them an intent to “subvert” the powers that be with an expressed aim of bringing about the kingdom of God.

Van Eck (2009:8) insists that Jesus’ parables “cut against the social and religious grain of his day. They go against the expected and acceptable. They are in direct opposition to the way ‘we do things here’. His parables are not ‘business as usual’. But rather surprising and shocking; questioned the *status quo*, characteristically called for a reversal of roles and frustrated common expectations”. It is imperative that the modern reader of the parables must not sanitise the harsh critical posture of the Galilean. The voice of Jesus against the system of religious stigmatisation and exclusion directed to the “unclean” must reverberate without any hindrance. Jesus’ critique of Roman Imperialism with its syncretistic political agenda of the “*pax Romana*” is “subverted” by the parables.

In the same vein, we can appropriate the parables as vehicles of confronting and transforming the social conditions that have placed 68% of the participants (in our empirical study) in a position of mistrust. The parables as intended by Jesus have the inherent potential to call into question systems that endorse presumed privilege status and powerlessness. They open up every social reality to the scrutiny and critical appraisal by the values of the kingdom of God. The parables call into being the actualisation of the kingdom of God against the kingdom of Rome (the *pax Romana*) and the kingdom of the temple (Van Eck 2009:8). Similarly, the parables challenge the attitudes and perceptions of those who are on the receiving end of social injustice. The powerless and the oppressed are challenged to subvert cultural and all legitimated practices that undermine ones’ dignity. The underdogs are challenged not to endorse and perpetuate their own oppression and demeaning conduct.

The fundamental factor that cannot be downplayed is that the parables of Jesus are espousing a new reality against the engrained systems of conduct and social stratification. The parables reverse social mores, but also plant a seed for a totally reoriented worldview. The message of the parables is to convey a narrative (Van Eck 2009:8) and “tell the story of a different world, of the way things ought to be, life as ruled by God’s generosity and goodness” (Hoover 2001:92). They re-envision the

actual world in wholly unaccustomed ways (Scott 2007:15-16), and offer its hearers an alternative world to the world created by aristocratic society (Rome), privilege and power, tradition and custom, religious authorities, temple ritual and sacred texts (Borg 2006:167; Hoover 2001:98). Therefore when we embrace what the parables represent to the contemporary reader we can open our modern lives to be re-oriented to the kingdom values that foster meaningful neighbourliness.

5.4.9 Thesis 9

The former thesis states that “the parables depict Jesus the Galilean as a social prophet” (Van Eck 2009:8). Thesis 9 asserts that “the parables of Jesus the Galilean do make ethical points” (Van Eck 2009:9). With regard to the former, it is imperative to appreciate how it challenges the view that personal faith to God renders one insulated from social problems. Hence the ministry of Jesus as a social prophet is characterised by a deliberate stance to challenge both the Roman Imperial system of domination as well as its satellite Temple regime.

A clear endorsement of the prophetic office of Jesus serves as an affirmation of the concerns of the rural peasantry who are negatively affected by Roman and temple domination. Jesus, as a social prophet, articulates their anger, frustrations and demands for justice and dignity as an actualisation of the kingdom of God. The “politics” of Jesus accentuate God’s rulership representing socio-political values that becomes “an alternative for the power and privilege of Rome and the temple” (Van Eck 2009:8). The other dimension to which this thesis points the reader is the attitude of Jesus that speaks of the emerging reality of the kingdom of God as a political substance.

The prophetic pronouncement of the Jesus’ office substitutes the demands of the hungry with pie in the sky. Jesus, as social prophet, he is a symbol of concrete hope. This responds to tangible concerns that anticipate social political outcomes that ought to manifest and be appropriated in the present.

5.4.10 Thesis 10

Van Eck (2009: 9) postulates the position that “the parables of Jesus are not stories about God (theocentric), but stories about God’s kingdom”. Thesis 10’s assertion

warns the reader from the common practice of reading into any given parable the personality of God or Jesus. The view canvassed by Van Eck is that in addressing his listeners with parables, Jesus was not advocating a theological or doctrinal stance. He argues that the focus of the parables is not a commentary about God. We do not have to read the person of Jesus in the parables. Instead we must respond to the simplicity of the parables in the very manner they were intended and presented.

The parables are stories about daily life experiences under Roman and temple oppressive elites. They reminisce “about the gory details of how oppression served the interest of the ruling class” (Hertzog 19994:3) and the expression of political and religious power by Rome and Jerusalem.

Thesis 10 redirects the reality of Roman and temple oppression in view of the kingdom of God. This enables the sufferers to perceive their conditions from the angle of the kingdom of God. Such a repositioning of Roman Imperialism speaks of its impending transformation by the values of the kingdom of God. The parables’ message transports the perception of the oppressed to envisage a kingdom inspired social reality. Those living under Roman and temple domination must nurture a perception and perspective that expects the kingdom to break into their mundane daily existence. The parables represent a discourse that seeks to elevate the hope of those undergoing hardship and exploitation to imagine their lives as shaped by the concrete presence of the reality of the kingdom of God.

5.4.11 Thesis 11

In discussing thesis 11 Van Eck (2009:9) points out that “the parables of Jesus do make ethical points”. However, it cannot be disputed that Jesus did not set out to formulate an “ethical system”. Jesus also did not seek to develop a code of conduct as part of his mission. Nonetheless the parables of Jesus respond to and confront social ills with a clear and simple ethical perspective within the theological context of his hearers. Having acknowledged that most of biblical scholars subscribe to the view of the parables having ethical content in their make-up. However there is no consensus as to the exact nature of the ethics of the parables.

There is a fundamental challenge having to do with the locality of the presumed ethics. Some scholars are of the notion the ethical imperatives of the parables can be deduced directly from “their literary context in the Synoptic gospels”. Others point to the broader social fabric (around 30 CE) of the parables as a fertile ground from which inference for ethical directives can be ascertained. In this instance the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) can be taken as a model to engage deeply entrenched divisions among the first audiences of Jesus. The parable can either be seen as an instruction on prayer or confronting¹⁰⁸ conditions of poverty as experienced by the listeners.

Thesis 11 views the parables of Jesus as having embedded aspects of ethical position and directly confronting the false notion that faith in God will minimise the impact social of oppression. The ethical principles carried by the parables of Jesus unapologetically “unmasked the pretence of the bogus civility” (Van Eck 2009:9) and faith which purports a religious and social discrimination insulated by faith in God. The ethical imperatives of the parables of the Galilean Jesus postulate the concrete realisation of the kingdom of God that dictates God’s rule to be tangible as a “here and now” reality.

Van Eck (2009:9) argues that the ethics of the parables propagate a reconfigured social political reality. The ethics of the kingdom purport a “re-imagined” social order that regards the kingdom of God as a “here and now” entity that protest against all forms of domination. Thesis 11 is advancing the view that principled kingdom ethics go hand-in-hand with personal ethical renewal. The ethics of Jesus the Galilean points to a total re-alignment of economic, cultural, political and religious structures to reflect the reversal intent of God’s reign here on earth as it is in heaven.

5.4.12 Theses 12

In the discourse of the final thesis, Van Eck (2009:10) brings to the attention of the reader the multi-dimensional character of each parable. It is on those very grounds the reader must take note of the fluid composition of the parables. There is an

¹⁰⁸ Van Eck (2009:9) argues that the appropriation of the parable as confronting systems of exploitation in the first-century Palestine will enable the reader to handle the parables as mediators of “personal and social ethics”.

emphasis that “indeterminacy exists in the reading of the parables”. The positioning of the parables in the Synoptic gospels yields different meanings and interpretations. The diversity of meaning and applications of each parable points to multiple approaches adopted in ascertaining the arrangement, and the positioning of each parable in the broader context of the gospel material. This fact also includes the attempts of making sense of the processes of “constructing the original context of the parables” (Van Eck 2009:10).

In further engaging the challenges associated with “the polyvalency of the parables”, Van Eck (2009:10) clarifies conceptual stances taken by different scholars. Three diametrically opposed positions dominate the discourse around the parables. The first attitude conveys the opinion that the parables have an “open-ended” formulation and application. In this argument differences in meaning and interpretation cannot be avoided. It is an open season in interpretation.

The second position suggests that we can make sense of the parables if we engage them “in their narrative context”, notwithstanding the “fictional” (Van Eck 2009:10) content present in all parables. In this case the meaning of each parable is deemed to be in line with the literary cohesion of the specific narrative. This assertion resigns itself to the pronouncements that the composers of the parables (Gospel writers) were much closer to the worldview and the person of Jesus. Thus their recollections cannot be challenged or contradicted. This viewpoint discourages the application of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation¹⁰⁹.

The third approach seeking meaningful reading of the parables argues for a comprehensive reading of the historicity of each parable. The scholars who hold such opinions propose that the parables must be read in the light of the social economic conditions from which they arise¹¹⁰. In this instance the first-century Mediterranean context under Roman Imperialism must be factored in the analysis of

¹⁰⁹ See Van Eck (2009:10) in stating the views that “these scholars are also particularly negative towards any attempt to construct a historical and social context for the parables (e.g. the context of first-century Palestine peasantry). This context, they argue, will never be rich enough to curb the polyvalency of the parables of Jesus (see e.g. Liebenberg 2000:59, 69)”.

¹¹⁰ Van Eck (2009:10) believes that the application of “a social-scientific approach to the parables”, within “the specific historical context and social world (cultural norms) in which the parables originated” can be counted as a responsible reading of parables. He concludes by suggesting that a deliberate use of socio-scientific analysis that opts for a “de-contextualisation” of the parables from their narrative contexts in the gospels, as well as a consistent “de-apocalyptisation”.

the parable material. Van Eck regards the third group attempts of finding meaning in the parable material in concrete socio-historical context will result in minimising uncertainties when analysing the Synoptic Gospels.

5.5 THE BROADER SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS THE GALILEAN

The present reader needs to appreciate the critical stance of the historical Jesus against Roman Imperialism and temple governance. The critical posture of Jesus against the powers that be was informed by concrete social entities of calculated discrimination and marginalisation of the peasantry by the elites¹¹¹. The 1st century Mediterranean world comprised of “a tiny percentage of wealthy and powerful families” that lived in opulence “in the cities from the tithes, taxes, tribute, and interest that they extracted from the vast majority of peasants who were rural based” (Horsley 2006:1202).

The prevalent social conditions created a hostile environment “between the rulers and the ruled” and had ripple effects in the cultural, social and political-economic spheres (Horsley 2006:1202). The social template definitive of conflicts between the Roman imperialist and the Jewish elites comprised of the conservatives and those who held radical views against those in authority. A significant segment among the early followers¹¹² of Jesus who propagated and held strong convictions regarding observance of Mosaic traditions were vocal opponents of the elites.

On the other hand the conservative groups¹¹³ supported Roman Imperialism due to the benefits and privileges they derived from the system. Whereas the radical elements were mostly located within the religious and political ranks named the

¹¹¹ Horsley (2006:1202) gives details about the “fundamental societal divisions” in the 1st century Palestine in his work on the early Jesus movements. These movements, he suggests, are acknowledged by the Gospel of Mark and Q.

¹¹² The early followers of Jesus were primarily concerned about “the renewal of Israel in resistance” to the imperialist. Their “agenda” was premised on the revival of socio-economic structures of the Galilean villages in accordance with Mosaic covenant (Horsley 2006:1223).

¹¹³ The Herodians were the prime beneficiaries from Roman Imperialism. Hence Unterbrink (2014: xvii) argues that “this ruling family in Israel collaborated with the Roman occupation. It was founded by Herod the Great in 37 BCE.” The Herodian dynasty became surrogate ruler-ship of Israel from 37 BCE to 70 CE. This joint rule left its trace of violent oppression in Palestine for over a century.

“Fourth Philosophy”¹¹⁴ by Josephus. The radicalism of this movement had a great influence on the formative stages of the followers of Jesus the Galilean. Their kind of radicalism¹¹⁵ planted a desire in the hearts and minds of the followers¹¹⁶ of the social visionaries of the kingdom of God to look toward to the realisation of freedom in their lifetime.

5.5.1 A socio-political reading of the Roman rule in the greater Mediterranean region

A socio-political reading of the Roman rule in the first century Mediterranean presents to us some specific perspective about life in the times of Jesus. The parables of Jesus uttered in the social milieu of Roman rule reflects “social dynamics” that speak to the conditions of culture and of social positions that were challenged by Jesus. Such a broad reading places demands on us for deep awareness on “the historical context” of around 70 CE under the Roman occupation of Jerusalem. It is the very same timeframe that informed the recording processes that shaped the content of the Gospels. In particular, it shaped the parable stories from being handled as symbols of social transformation to the eventual allegorical-theological material.

5.5.2 The macro and micro categories of the social context of the historical Jesus

The macro level that had an influence on the life and work of the historical Jesus was the domination and imperial rule of Rome. It must be appreciated that the historicity of Jesus the Nazarene is about “getting to know people who are so similar to us and understandable in some ways, and so unlike us and hard to understand in other ways” (Diamond 2012:6). Therefore we need to appreciate that the micro paradigm of Roman governance closer to the life situation of Jesus, depended on various

¹¹⁴ These radicals were anti-Roman without compromise. They held religious and political stance that was shaped by the emergence of Jewish nationalism in 4 BCE. Such nationalistic position was inspired by the Jewish leader “Matthias and Judas the Galilean” who were Pharisees. Josephus (*Ant.* 18:4-10) refers to the Fourth movement as comprising of “Zealots, the Sicarii, and the wonder workers”.

¹¹⁵ These radicals took a defiant stance against Rome in 73 CE at Masada under the leadership of Eleazar, the grandson of Judas the Galilean. They opted for mass suicide than to surrender to the Romans.

¹¹⁶ Crossan (1991:198) warns against the laming of all the anti-Roman groups under one banner of the Zealots. He insists that one must distinguish between the “urban Sicarii” and the “rural bandits”.

Jewish representatives both from the temple and civic spheres of Jewish life. The Jewish leadership encompassed the temple aristocracy, which was sustained by the appointment and approval of Rome (Walley 2003:48).

5.5.3 The Roman tax system as a tool of domination and exploitation

Herod the Great pursued aggressive tax compliance in order to finance his infrastructural projects of rebuilding Palestine. These taxes were cumbersome to both the rural and city dwellers, especially the so-called common people. The populace was expected to pay dues when conducting business and trade transactions. There also existed localised taxes such as land tax, house tax, city tax, and taxation on certain food items such as salt, meat and wine. All these taxes contributed in creating attitudes of animosity towards Rome and what it represented. The burden of the tax system was heavy on “those without possession”, such as women and common people (Schottroff *et al.* 2000:27).

The peasants were exposed to three layered tax systems. The Roman tributary systems demanded “the *tributum soli* (land tax and the *tributum capitis* (poll tax)” (Van Eck 2012:106). Following the Roman demands were tax tributaries expected by Herod Antipas and his aristocratic bureaucracy. Thereafter the peasants had to comply with the requirements of the temple aristocracy “in the form of tithes and offerings to support the temple and Roman rule” (Van Eck 2012:106).

It must be kept in mind that the nation of Israel was under foreign rule as far back as the Assyrian domination in (721 BC), Babylonian rule (587 BC), Medio-Persian rule (537 BC), Greek occupation (333 BC) and the Roman occupation (63 BC) (McLaren 2006:12). The situation did not turn for the better when Herod died in 4 BCE. The political uncertainty was kept in check by the breaking up of the land of Israel into three respective provinces or semi-autonomous districts to be governed by three of Herod’s sons; Philip, Antipas and Archelaus. The first born son of Herod, Philip became the ruler of Trachanitus and Iturea, Herod Antipas was put in charge of Galilee and Perea, and Archelaus exercised rulership over Samaria and Judea. This localised Roman occupation was sustained in Judea by a contingency of civic functionaries such as the tax collectors, the temple priests, and scribes, who served as midwives of governance bent on appeasing Rome.

5.5.4 The restructuring of the Galilean economy for the benefit of the elites

Roman Imperialism and religious oppression by the temple elite had far reaching implication in the broader Mediterranean region during first century Palestine. Nonetheless Galilee maintained some semblance of autonomy prior the reign of Antipas.

However, the expansionist programs of Rome necessitated the reconstruction of new commercial centres. Galilee in the first century CE was a contested territory. The contending forces acted out their intentions to reposition Galilean fortunes more on the economic front. Such manoeuvres resulted in radical restructuring of the broader socio-economic fabric of Galilee through violent means¹¹⁷ when necessary. The imposition of Roman and temple taxes inculcated a culture of violence¹¹⁸ and targeted assassination¹¹⁹ of prominent Jewish leaders who held anti-Roman sentiments across the entire Mediterranean region. The nature of Roman oppression in the first century Galilee chiefly “meant that the Jewish people of Palestine suffered under double taxation: temple and other local dues were compounded by Roman taxes” (Arnal 2001:98).

Communities under Rome in Palestine were overtaxed. The economics of over-taxation had a negative impact on daily lives of the common folk. The impact of taxation was deeply felt among rural communities. The rural farm workers (who were

¹¹⁷ We observe the level of violence visited upon the Galileans with the arrest and execution of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is arrested and brought first to be interrogated by the retired High Priest Annas, the father in law of the presiding High Priest Caiaphas (John 18:12-14).

¹¹⁸ In (44-46 CE) Agrippa I die at the hand of an assassin with poison (Unterbrink 2014:33). Furthermore Theudas a prophet of miracles who promised to render apart the Jordan River was arrested and beheaded in the same period. Following this wave of violence it is reported that James and Simon, the two sons of Judas the Galilean were crucified by the hand of Tiberius Alexander in (46-48 CE). James the Just also suffered the fate of stoning to death in 62 CE after the accusation by the High Priest Ananus. As expected the Sicarii abducted the scribe belonging to the governor of the temple, whose name was Eleazar as a revenge attack against the High Priest.

¹¹⁹ The stoning to death of James the Just resulted to an unprecedented revolt, with Ananus becoming a casualty of assassination “as a pro-Roman collaborator”. Thereafter, the effects of the death of James the Just lead to the outbreak of the Jewish War in AD 66, with its culmination to the destruction of the Temple. The final Chapter of the surge of violence by Rome against the Jews was the “fall of Masada in AD 73” (Baigent & Leigh 1991:283-284).

living on subsistence level) were burdened, among other things, with debt payments, rents, tithes, dues and taxes¹²⁰ linked to specific crop production.

There are a number of social and religious practices that were confronted by Jesus in his use of the parables to address social issues. In reading the parables one must take note of the critique of Jesus against deeply established practices of social and religious discrimination. The parables therefore serve as a communication tool by Jesus to empower his audiences with means to respond to the repressive conditions in which they found themselves.

It is clear that Jesus used the parables to challenge the system of religious and political exploitation visited upon his first listeners. In that regard the parables cannot solely be regarded as directed to those who were eager to listen to his teaching. The parables when used by Jesus become tools and vehicles of social transformations. It is in that view that we need to appropriate the parables as intended by Jesus to be perceived as instruments to affirm the dignity of his followers, particularly those who were marginalised by religious discrimination in the villages. Therefore in the parables we see a number of established attitudinal conducts confronted. These issues include the questions of honour, shame, patron-client relationship, reciprocity and purity.

5.6 READING SCENARIOS

5.6.1 Patron-client relationships and reciprocity

Another defined reality in Palestine was the fact that “the exchange of goods” was mediated by reciprocal modalities of social agreements. Palestine developed a tripartite category of reciprocal systems. These reciprocal arrangements were categorised into “generalised, balanced and negative” regimes. Van Eck (2011:6) goes into detail explaining the nature of the reciprocity and its subsequent social implication. General reciprocity occurred between family settings. It was informed by conditions whereby those giving and receiving such benefits were not expecting the

¹²⁰ Van Eck (2011:7) in his analysis of the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b–24, 27) discuss in detail the burden of tax on the peasantry in his reference to “an exploitative tributary system consisting of land tax and poll tax” imposed by the elite and the “client kings”. “These client kings had lavish and consumptious lifestyles and the wealth that was required to support this type of lifestyle came from the peasantry by means of a second level of tribute and taxes; the ruling elite claimed the so-called surplus of the harvest and added tribute and taxes. This left the peasantry in a situation where their level of subsistence functioned in a very narrow margin”.

same favour in return. Balanced reciprocity was about rendering and being a recipient of generosity from one's equals. In this set-up some form of returning the favour was expected. One could agree to be of assistance to another with the intent of advancing his /her "interests".

The third type of reciprocity was negative in its actualisation. It generally took place between individuals who were on two extreme positions in social standing. It usually happened in situations characterised by favours advanced by the elites and aristocratic members of society for or against the peasants. Since the aristocratic classes were socially and economically dominant. Their favours bestowed to the lower classes of society were designed to benefit the rich. Such benevolence was exploitative and manipulative in nature. The aristocrats ensured that the relationships they pursued were arranged in a manner that enabled them "to exercise power over others" (Van Eck 2011:6) for the promotion and maintenance of family privileges and honour at all costs.

5.6.2 Patronage and clientism in social dynamics of interaction

Patronage and clientism in the world the first-century Mediterranean reveals the terms and conditions of its social dynamism as of significance in its formative process (Van Eck 2009:7). "Patron-client" relations became a binding social contract in the first-century Mediterranean world. It was a framework that defined the terms of expectations and mutual obligations between the participants. This system of social interaction was practiced by all social formations. The elites would indulge in the contract as equals. Furthermore the peasant class was roped to solidify the social standing of the elites. The peasants were participants of reluctance. They could only have access to loans and sometimes "economic networks" that might be expedited by the elites.

The elites made a concerted effort to have as many patrons as possible. The number of patrons one had, would elevate the sense of honour and prestige in the society. Among the elites, patronage benefits extended to strategic mutual advantages. The elites would agree to advance each other's interests. Agreements for legal, commercial, medical related and protection contracts were enacted. These social contracts rendered the reality of the "poor" and the "rich" as a "permanent" (Van Eck

2009:7) aspect of political-economic position as depicted in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26).

Therefore the common perception about the notions of the “rich” and the “poor” had reference to issues of dignity and status. Van Eck (2009:7) points out that in the New Testament world, riches and wealth were associated with “avaricious, greedy” pursuits by the elites. Accumulating wealth meant deliberate deprivation of someone else. Being wealthy meant that someone had to be disadvantaged. Wealth creation was structurally juxtaposed with poverty. The existence of the wealthy class was sustained by the sacrifices of the poor. Hence the pursuance of wealth was perceived to be inherently evil. The positions of the “poor” were interpreted as an individual or collective incapacity to preserve family inheritance. Such circumstances were facilitated by socio-structural impediments that could not be un-done by the poor.

5.6.3 Meals as ceremonies of honour and shame

An invitation to participate in a social occasion involving meals carried specific cultural conventions. Van Eck (2013:9) notes that in the context of the Mediterranean worldview, meals served as barometers for maintenance of communal value systems. It is on those occasions that commonly held values were ascertained and confirmed and where social stratification was upheld. The question of honour and status was not compromised. In this regard the social-scientific reading shows that meals in the given context were perceived as “ceremonies”. In such ceremonies existing social arrangements were reinforced. Different social roles and areas of demarcation were strictly adhered to. The obvious implication is that different groups and classes of people were expected to share meals with their respective peers. The poor will eat with the poor. The elite will eat with the elite. Such a conduct enabled the possibility of “reciprocity” to be observed. Those invited to a meal would then be in a position to return the honour by inviting their host to a meal. In this instance, being invited in a meal placed a burden of “indebtedness” to the hosting partner. Availing self to a meal in the 1st century Mediterranean setting carried along “serious business” implications as it is shown in the parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b-23).

It is important to appreciate the role gossip played as a system (Van Eck 2013:9) of verifying the credibility and social acceptance of each occasion. In the parable the

process of validating the occasion ensued when the initial invitation is conveyed to “possible guests”. This invitation served as a notification for the venue and the time of the occasion. Furthermore, the first invite served as a template to assist the host plan the meal based on the number of confirmation received. When the second invite was delivered, the normal social process of verifying the invited guest would have run its course.

The confirmation to attend the meal meant the respondent was duly satisfied about the calibre of the expected social partners who would grace the occasion. It meant that one’s social standing and honour would be enhanced by such public endorsement of the meal by people of same status and reputation. This parable depicts how deliberate attempts to protect one’s honour and status materialised. The excuses by those initially invited, tell a mouthful. The elites could not risk losing respect of fellow class counterparts by being part of an occasion that meant the inclusion of non-elites, the poor and the social outcasts. The need to protect one’s honour is also covered in the parable of the tenants (Mk 12:1-12).

5.6.4 Honour and shame in the parable of the tenants (Mk 12:1-12)

The parable of the tenants reflects the first-century Palestine worldview regarding the question of honour and shame. In the parable, the reader encounters the perceptions of both the landlord and the tenants and how they positioned their honour and shame respectively. Van Eck (2007:927) suggests the Mediterranean worldview on issues of honour and shame was informed by the deeply held notion that honour could either be “ascribed or acquired”. The former was attained by the virtue of inheritance as reflected in the exercise of power in the public office. Whereas acquired honour became a reality depending on the persons worth necessitated by one’s achievements.

This social expression of the status of honour was further expatiated by the dynamics of “interaction of challenge and riposte” (Van Eck 2007:930). Among the issues of challenge that have a bearing on the parable is the perceived actions or inactions of the landlord, responding to the challenges of the tenants. The interpretation of the parable must take into account the landlord’s reaction to the violent position of the tenants. The actions of the tenants directed against the landlord means a deliberate challenge to his honor. Their actions might carry economic consequences. However

in terms of the appreciation of the first hearers the message was loud and clear. Challenge the landowner where it hurt most, his “honor”. The landlord would be forced to respond in a way that will protect his social standing, thus saving his face.

Addressing again the parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b-23), the host gave instructions to his servants to convey invitations to people in good standing in the society to attend the banquet he was preparing for them. The servants followed normal formalities in the given Mediterranean context to the letter. The tradition dictated that two invites must be extended to those whom the host desired that they should grace his table. The practice of issuing a “double invite” (Van Eck 2011:5) tells us more about the wealth status of the host. It was the wealthy class in the society that insisted on issuing dual invitation as way of displaying wealth and courtesy to the intended guests.

After the issuing of the invitation to intended guests, we begin to see how the natural instinct (gossip) of the community kicked in to evaluate the possible acceptance of the invitation. Van Eck (2011:5) makes us aware that the invitations must be read as an evaluation exercise by the host to determine whether his “peers” will reciprocate. If the recipients of the invites respond positively the honour status of the host is automatically enhanced in the eyes of his peers and the broader community.

Having being made aware of the fact that the issuing of the invitation is aimed to “persons with a specific honour rating”. The host waits with anticipation for a “yes” response. If the respondents accept his invite, it would mean to him he is perceived as an equal and a qualified “peer” in the eyes of the invited guests. Thus the community will hold and accord the host the same level of honour, status and respect as bestowed by the guest who will grace the feast with their presence.

5.6.5 Balanced reciprocity as the evaluation system of the conditions of honor and shame

In given the parable Jesus relates how the events unfolded that resulted to the aspiring host receiving a lot of excuses. Van Eck (2011:5) believes that the host issued invitations to persons who were above his class and social standing. It was evident when the targeted guests began to process the invitation within their social

networks (gossips) to verify the status of the host. The host, though a wealthy figure, was perceived a class threat. The acceptance of such an invite would compromise the honour and social standing of the invited guest.

In this regard, those who turned down the invitation could not perceive themselves as having to “reciprocate” the invitation by equally inviting the same person to a meal as dictated by custom. The terms and conditions of “balanced reciprocity” dictated that “an invitation to a meal was to be followed up by the same kind of invitation” (Van Eck 2011:6) to the one who initiated the first invitation.

5.6.6 The excuses accepting the invite as statements against honor and shame

Van Eck (2011:6) forwards the argument that the three excuses directed to the host as evidenced in Luke 14:18-20 are generally unlocked from four interpretive positions. The first positions are depicted as fostering a literary argument. This view suggests that the excuses will make sense to the reader if they are considered “in terms of orality and storytelling”. The emphasis will be on locating their intended meaning within the broader context of the storyline of the parable. Such an approach will further be enhanced by due regard of the structural arrangements of the major themes of the parable, and how they are organised to make an impact to the first hearers.

The second position proposes that the excuses have some elements of validity and seriousness. Firstly the reader is drawn to the arguments that recognise the politeness accompanying the excuses. The issues that are seen as contributory to the failure of the invitees to honour the invitations are serious enough to be dismissed as invalid. The host is expected to appreciate the legitimacy of the excuses, and by implication not doubting and questioning the integrity of those extending excuses. Van Eck (2011:7) understood the third position proposed by Linnemann as representing a “minority” view. Linnemann suggests the invitees were not necessarily being spiteful to the host. Instead they were delayed by legitimate commitments. They will pitch up late at the function. Van Eck is of the opinion that the weakness of this position is premised on the fact that it does not take into consideration the whole “text”, thus giving partial suggestions.

Van Eck (2011:7) states that the forth position sees the excuses as “flimsy and spurious”. Bailey (1983:94), Jeremias (1972:179) and Scott (1989:169) advance this position. Their argument is that the excuses have no merit considering the common practice of verifying financial commitments prior an expression of interest. The weak excuse of intending to appease the feminine gender in a patriarchal social system does not hold water. The obvious conclusion is that those forwarding such excuses are “deliberately insulting” and displaying disregard to the host. The issue is that the invitees could not see themselves inviting back the host to their future events.

5.6.7 “Gossip as an interpretive key” of the question of honor and shame

Van Eck (2011:8) evaluates the given positions by highlighting the presuppositions that informed the excuses. He argues that the significance of the excuses is not determined by their “content” but rather by “what lies behind them”. The attitudes of disapproval directed at the host suggest among other things a dismissive spirit. As such Van Eck (2011:8) uses “gossip as interpretive key” and insists that the excuses were conveying to the host that he was “shunned”. The host followed all the protocol. He observed social norms and “played the game” accordingly. Yet he failed “the contest as a result of gossip”.

The extent and impact of gossip was detrimental to the host to an extent that both the individuals and community did not want to be seen at the feast. The implication is obvious. The social circles of gossip labelled the attendance of the feast as “inappropriate” (Van Eck 2011:8). The social norms and values that subscribe honour and shame dictated that to be seen in that feast would render the invitee as insignificant and not honourable. Hence there were excuses. No one among the elite was willing to lose face and social standing by associating with a less sophisticated member of the community.

5.7 VAN ECK’S SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC READING OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS

5.7.1 Van Eck’s profiling of the parables of the historical Jesus

Van Eck (2011:1) conducts his reading of the parables of the historical Jesus from the standpoint of “a social-scientific and realistic interpretation” methodology. His approach advances an interpretative exercise within the historical context of a given parable’s interpretation. In this regard the focus of the interpretation intends to do

justice to the question of the “integrity and authenticity, and verisimilitude” of the parables under investigation.

5.7.2 Historicity of the parables in the 30 CE contexts

It is in the historical positioning and interpretation of the parables that Van Eck (2011:1) would argue about noticeable aspects that point to the “earliest layer of the historical Jesus-tradition” in the formation of the parables. To bring about a holistic appraisal, due consideration is given to the socio-economic factors prominent in the parables. This is achieved by acknowledging specific value systems and cultural practises definitive of the first-century Mediterranean world in which Jesus presented his parables. The notable prevalent feature within the parable material is a variety of aspects pointing to the reality of the kingdom of God.

The reading of the parables by Van Eck (2011:1) follows the approach that perceives them as materials belonging to the historical Jesus, rather than the literary products preserved in the Synoptic tradition. Hence Van Eck’s readings place much emphasis on the “economic and social registers” embedded in the parables. He duly employs a social-scientific critical reading with a deliberate intent “to avoid the fallacies of anachronism and ethnocentrism”¹²¹. Therefore a careful contextual analysis of the parables within the “social world” of 30 CE Palestine will undoubtedly enable the reader to appropriate them as the actual work pointing to the reality of the kingdom of God.

5.7.3 Q sources as significant contributors of the parable materials

At this stage it is imperative to appreciate the fact that Van Eck (2011:1) traces the bulk of the material of the parables of Jesus back to the Q-source¹²². The Q-source of the parables brings to the forefront a number of issues. It is in the Q-source that we come to terms with the economic conditions of the first hearers of the parables.

¹²¹ Van Eck (2011:1) shares the same sentiments as Elliott when it comes to the “anachronistic and ethnocentric” view of the parables. Hence such readings will forester “into the text information from some present social context and cultural comprehending the text in accord with its contemporary social and cultural scripts (Elliott 1993:11)”.

¹²² Van Eck (2011:1) suggests that the Q-source were used as primary materials in the formation of the parables. It is in those formative stages that we perceive both the realistic version and earliest strata or layers of the parables in the historical Jesus tradition. As such the Q-source brings to our attention the impact of the “historical background, political background and socioeconomic background of the 30 CE Palestine” that shapes the content of the parables.

The nature of the material that stems from the Q-document highlight the exploitative nature of the relationships between the elites and the non-elites, both in the secular Roman structures as well as within the temple aristocracy. The parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b–24, 27) gives testimony to the plight of the peasant workers in their dealings with the elite¹²³. In this parable we come face to face with the magnitude of socio-economic exploitation sanctioned both by Imperialistic Roman and Jewish religions formations.

5.7.4 The formative processes of the parables in the Synoptic Gospels

Since Van Eck (2011:1) has insisted that he is conducting the reading of the parables “within the 30 CE context of Jesus the Galilean (the historical Jesus).” The reader needs to appreciate that Van Eck’s social-scientific interrogation of the parables is premised within the scope of the views articulated by Jülicher (1910:11). The definitive starting point of Jülicher (1910:11) is that the “authenticity of the parable” material cannot simply be taken for granted. Hence we must take note of the fact that the current material of the parables presented to us in the Synoptic Gospels has gone through the processes of translations, re-arrangement and positioning to attain desired “terms of viewpoint”, perspective(s) and interpretation in a given context.

The acknowledgment of the formative processes of the parable material in the Synoptic Gospels assists the reader to appreciate and make sense of the different presentation of a given parable by different Gospel writers. The drafting and interpretive stages of the parable material point to editorial outcomes resulting in the adaptation, delineation and “incorporation” of some material by the Gospel writers. Hence, in some cases, the Synoptic Gospels would present different versions of a given parable event. The differences in versions of the parables tie very well in the presupposition that Q-material represent the first ideas of a parable that would bring us closer to the historical Jesus.¹²⁴

¹²³ See how one of the detail works of Van Eck (2011) “*Do not question my honour: A social-scientific reading of the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b–24, 27)*”, deliberate on the challenges of economic exploitation in 30 CE Palestine.

¹²⁴ See (Carson *et al.* 1992:35) where he argues that the “Q” document refers to fragments of sayings of Jesus that were in circulation prior the compilation of the Synoptic Gospels. The working hypothesis is that these circulating writings are believed to have been integrated by the Gospel writers in drafting the body of the Gospels. These common materials were named “Quelle” at the close of the nineteenth century.

Therefore a responsible reading of the parables demands from the reader a perceptive glance into editorial workmanship and its emerging intentions showing how a specific parable is presented. The reader needs to appreciate the perspectives advance by the text in its construction and deliberate location in the broader storyline. Such an analysis and appreciation will assist the reader in the search for the “original voice” of the historical Jesus, the Galilean in the given parable material.

5.8 READING THE PARABLES

In this Section we will present a social-scientific reading of ten parables by Van Eck. The focus will be on the areas on the parables that will resonate with the question of redress for vulnerable families that will be discussed in detail in the next Chapter. Much emphasis will be on Van Eck’s readings of the given parables as tools for social justice and transformation. The parables for consideration will be: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the Sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:16b-23); the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46), the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom.* 65).

5.8.1 The parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27)¹²⁵ interpreting social relations

The parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27) presents the dynamics of the relationships between the elites and the peasants in a different light. This parable relates the oppressive interaction between the noble man and his servants. We also read how the weak (third servant) critically engage the exploitative nature of the relationship. The noble man undertook a trip to a far destination for his

¹²⁵ See Van Eck (2011:1) in a socio-scientific analysis of this parable in 30 CE environments. Van Eck clarifies the fact that “the parable was delimited to Luke 19:12b–24 and 27. It was argued that this version of the parable (that stems from Q) goes back to the earliest layer of the historical Jesus tradition and is a realistic version of the historical background, political background and socioeconomic background of 30 CE Palestine. In this reading of the parable, attention was given to an aspect much neglected in previous scholarship regarding the interpretation of the parable, namely that the third slave in the parable is not condemned. It was argued that this neglected aspect is important for the strategy of the parable. The reading concluded that the parable has two foci; it shows how, in the time of Jesus, the elite exploited the non-elite and how to protest in a situation where the peasantry (the exploited) had no legitimate way of protesting against the exploitative practices of the elite.”

enthronement. Subsequently he entrusted his servants with minas, with the expectation that he will yield more profits with the investment to be undertaken by his ten servants.

As expected the on the return of the noble man, two servants were praised for diligently multiplying the minas of their master. The third slave hid the mina in “fear” of his master. The third slave reacts to the situation in terms of the “weapons of the weak” (Van Eck 2011:10). He refused to participate in the exploitation project of his master. Even though his justification was supposedly his diligence in safeguarding the wealth of the master. The third servant was condemned and labelled “evil” by his master for failing to turn the mina he was given into a profitable investment. It is at this point that Van Eck (2011:8) engages the “surprising element” of the parable, which was intended by Jesus. In this parable Jesus intended to depict “the exploitative normalcies” that were definitive of the times in the Palestine of 30 CE. In this parable we encounter the normative conduct of the elites who “were looking for more honour, power and privilege, elite using their power to exploit, as well as an example of the way in which the exploited could resist” (Van Eck 2011:8).

5.8.2 Protests against exploitation as “hidden transcripts”¹²⁶

The reading of the parable from the vantage point of the first hearers of the parable gives a thought provoking perspective. Hence Van Eck (2011:10) agrees with Scott that this parable is “a hidden transcript”. The reader is challenged to detect the hidden factor of the parable in the manner in which the noble man and servants responded. The noble man understood the “evil” inaction of the third servant as appropriate given the fact that the servant alluded to be driven by “fear” of his master. Thus he opted to keep the mina in a safe place.

On the other hand the servant knew very well that his inaction was a deliberate “protest” against the exploitative system represented by his master. He is refusing to participate in conducts expressive of exploitative relationships. Van Eck (2011:10) reached the conclusion that the defiant servant was willing somehow “to ‘honour’

¹²⁶ Van Eck (2011:10) shares the same views as Scott (1977:12–16) regarding the form of protest by the weak. He attest that “the peasantry in the time of Jesus, although they had no legitimate way for protest, could and did, resist. The forms of their resistance were called the “hidden transcript” (vis-à-vis the public transcript of events controlled by the rulers). This hidden transcript was a discourse that

those that exploit you, without taking part in their exploitation”. The servant was well acquainted with the knowledge that a direct confrontation of the elites will be counterproductive. Therefore the alternative given the circumstances was to be “as sly as a snake and as simple as a dove” (Mt 10:16b//Gos. *Thom.* 39:3). In this parable¹²⁷ Jesus directly challenges the orientation of the elites towards social status of privilege. Jesus critiqued the elite’s entitlement to “the use of honour to enhance power and privilege, class, status and wealth and the economic exploitation of the peasantry” (Van Eck 2011:10).

5.8.3 The parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8)¹²⁸

Van Eck (2014:1) resumes the reading of the parable of the sower by asserting that it falls into the category of the parables of the historical Jesus. The reading of this

took place “offstage”, it captured “what the oppressed say to each other and distills what they really think about their rulers but are too intimidated to express openly” (Scott 1990:18).

¹²⁷ See (Van Eck 2011:10) when he alludes that the stance of Jesus against the elites is consistent with his view “in some of the other parables that can be traced back to the earliest layer of the historical Jesus (e.g. Lk 12:17–20//Gos. *Thom.* 63:1–3; Lk 16:19–26; Mt 20:1–16). Jesus’ condemnation of the rich, his siding with the poor and critique regarding honour and status are also attested in several sayings of Jesus that passes the criteria of early, multiple and independent attestation (see e.g. Q 6:20//Gos. *Thom.* 54; Q 6:21//Gos. *Thom.* 69:2; Mk 12:38–39//Mt 23:5–7//Lk 11:42//Lk 20:45–46). Several sayings of Jesus that pass the criteria of early, multiple and independent attestation concur with the viewpoint of the third slave, who did not partake in the exploitation of others by loaning money and taking interest (i.e. generalised reciprocity; see e.g. Q 6:30//Gos. *Thom.* 95:1–2; Lk 6:35; Q 6:35b//Gos. *Thom.* 95:1–2).

¹²⁸ See the protest poem, ‘*Sowing and Reaping*’, by the South African Black Consciousness writer Don Mattera (2007:25) in his collection of struggle poetry, ‘*Azania Love Song*’, (African Perspectives Publications, Grant Park, South Africa). This poem provides a framework and a relevant context for meaningful interpretation of this parable in the South Africa confronted with hunger.

‘Sowing and Reaping’

See my dark brothers sowing seed
Which in time will be growing
High on the master’s field
Abundantly the yield
Increases in his barns and nets
Food aplenty for the verminous pets

Yet what of us who sow
And of them who reap
What of the harvest can we show
But the meagreness of our keep

Even in our bruised bowing
Of toil and ploughing
We find a moment to sing of the sunset
And the dawn when we will claim our debt

parable is different on a number of respects. Van Eck suggests that his reading does not focus on the agricultural methods that were practised in the first-century Palestine.

Hence his analytical approach endeavours to unpack the socio-political and economic realities definitive of the context in which this parable was narrated. The crux of the matter is that the parable demands from its first hearer's, deliberate alignment with the kingdom of God. It is in that regard that Van Eck details the nature and implication of the results necessitated by such a decision. The parable seeks to provide options to the listener's on how to lead meaningful lives "in an exploitative world" (Van Eck 2014:1).

5.8.3.1 The political, social and economic context of the parable

Van Eck (2014:1) locates the social world of the parable of the sower in the time of Jesus. It was the period of the entrenchment of the Roman rule in the surrounding areas of Judea, Galilee and areas close of Palestine. The extended governance of Rome dated back from the days of Herod the Great (37-4 BCE). The reign of Herod Antipas (4 BCE-39 CE) fall within the timeframe of the parable, including the newly emergent "retainer classes" of the Herodians (the functionary class) who stepped into the shoes of "the old Hasmoneans".

The common trait of the client kingship was a well-calculated imposition of taxes and tributes to the peasants. The exploitative nature of the tax systems against the village peasantry was commonly referred to as the "surplus of the harvest". This harvest implied to the agricultural and labour output that used to sustain the villages. This taxation was effected during the reign of Herod Antipas. As a resident of Galilee he pushed an urbanisation model that heavily depended on the agricultural supplies from the villages for the sustenance and maintenance of newly established cities.

The villagers were then subjected to tripartite forms of tax regimes. Rome demanded its tributes. Herod as a client head imposed his share of taxes. The temple aristocracy levied tithes and offerings for temple upkeep. However the most burdensome tax demand was the rents paid by the villagers on absentee landlord for leased land. The rents could result to up to 50%-60% of the yield. The Galileans had

to contend with harsh economic and environmental conditions. Social instability was a given. Most of the village farmers had to resort to taking loans from the elites (Roman and temple aristocracy). However failing to pay back the loans, their ancestral lands would be confiscated.

5.8.3.2 A social-scientific reading of the parable

The socio-economic conditions of the first hearers of the parable resembled the real life situations of the peasants in the villages to whom the parable was directed. The typical life scenario is that the elites were the benefactors of the wealth generated by the peasants. This situation is well reflected in the road infrastructure across Galilee and Judea. The roads were meant to transport the wealth of the populace from the villages to the cities. Hence the infrastructure represented the “occupation, economic pressure and the exploitation” of the masses (Van Eck 20014:7).

It is imperative that the interpretation of the parable be conducted with a clear appreciation of the living conditions of the peasants in the 1st century Mediterranean world. Furthermore Van Eck (2014:8) reminds us that the interpretation of the parable must speak to the “mindscape” of the listeners’ who were well aware of sowing seeds in the “landscape” controlled by Rome and its surrogates. The peasants held to the conviction that their land was a gift from God (Ex 6:3, 8; Num 33:53; Lv 1:21; Dt 17:14). The expression of their joy of stewardship of the land through the obligation of tithing was actualised to the letter. However under Rome and temple elites, theirs and God’s land was confiscated. Their produce was heavily taxed. There was a scarcity of land to expand crop production. Even the Roman coins depicted the Caesar as a benefactor of the yield, implying that the land and its produce belong not to God but to Caesar (Van Eck 20014:7-8).

The parable meant that the “seed that falls on the road” referred to the produce that was heavily taxed, including high rates and tributes. The seed falling on rocky grounds implied the difficult conditions of farming in the less productive land. However, the foreigners and the temple elites took the best land. Even the harvest is greedily allocated to the elites. Some seeds fell “among thorns” and were literally choked by the thorns. It is not surprising then that the temple elites were choking,

indeed throttling the peasants with tithes and offerings. Nonetheless the parable speaks of the yield though limited, yet its produce will yield abundantly.

Jesus tells the parable to challenge the peasants to make something out the “leftover” yield. In the kingdom of God there must be sharing. The needs of others must be met with the little in our disposal. The kingdom values of sharing and caring make it possible for God to multiply the meagre harvest for the benefit of everyone in need (Van Eck 20014:9).

5.8.4 The parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33)

5.8.4.1 The social milieu of the parable

In interpreting the parable of unmerciful servant, Van Eck (2009:10) interrogates three perspectives of social-scientific readings espoused by Herzog, Scott and Derrett respectively. Van Eck (2009:10) understands the initial reading of the given parable as conveying the conditions of settling tributes by the elites in the context of “agrarian (aristocratic) societies.” Thus the main issue definitive of the emerging “conflict” in the parable revolves around the king as a ruler and his subordinate. The narrative presents the decision of the king which had decided to punish his subordinate for failing to settle his debts. Nonetheless the king modified that decision by conferring the forgiveness of the debt of the subordinate. However the subordinate being the recipient of kindness from his master, failed to do the same to the servant who owed him far less than what he failed to pay his master. He demanded the full payment of the debt. The king on hearing the actions of his subordinate decided to re-impose his sentence and judgment upon the unmerciful servant.

5.8.4.2 Patron-client relationships and honour in the parable

Scott (1990:273-278) substantiated a realistic reading that identified the king as a Gentile farmer. The king in his dealings with the servant in debt is presented as challenging the Jewish sense of being a chosen race. Thus the judgment of the king represents a repudiation of “Jewish notions of superiority”. Scott reaches a conclusion that depicts the reality of the kingdom of God as setting high “standards” against the social conventions depicted in the parable. Van Eck (2009:11) responds to Scott by firstly noting Scott’s placing of the king as a “secular ruler”. In this episode

the interaction of the king with the servant shows the definitive nature of “a patron-client relationships between two unequals”. The actions of the ruler in pronouncing forgiveness and the cancellation of debt signals the values of the kingdom built upon the expected Messiah. Such impending messianic hopes will restore the sense of dignity of those who are stigmatized by patron-client power relations promoting shame-and honour status.

Conveying similar sentiments to Scott, Derrett (1970: 32-47) analyses the parable on the basis of failed terms of contract between a king and his servant. When the king decided to cancel the debt owed by the servant. He was restoring the expertise of the servant of collecting taxes on his behalf. The king expected his acts of kindness to be emulated by the servant. The servant by not cancelling the debt owed to him, failed to rise up to the challenge of “breaking the cycle of ruthless exploitation and extraction” (Van Eck 2009:12). Hence the king had to maintain his position of honour and to maintain the *status quo* by passing judgment on the servant.

However Van Eck (2009:13) believes the three social-readings make a correct judgment by placing the parable in its social milieu. Such readings display some shortcomings. Van Eck (2009:13) challenges Herzog and Derret to locate their interpretations of the parable in a comparative mode with similar extra canonical documentation when handling issues of debt cancelation.

5.8.4.3 Patron-client and power relations in the parable

Van Eck (2009:19) resumes his analysis by stating that the parable must be perceived “in terms of its social realia”. As such the cancellation of the debt by the king is driven by expected social norms of patron-client relationship based on honour and shame dynamics. The king accords forgiveness to the servant who is duly expected to “reciprocate accordingly”. This reinforces the social normalcy of inequality among social groups. The basis of such social arrangements was not informed by “altruistic motives”.

Debt cancelation represents the imposition and perpetuation of the position of power and privilege by the elites. The actions of the king display a calculated “exercise of power over others” (Van Eck 2009:20). The kindness of the king must be seen as the

assertion of the exploitative values of the agrarian based economy of the haves and the have-nots. Jesus in narrating the parable was challenging and exposing the exploitative value system of the first-century Palestine.

Through this parable the Galilean was unmasking the values espousing patronage, honour, power and privilege that were to be subjected to the kingdom of God. Hence the values of the kingdom of God will bring about a “general reciprocity” instead of a conditional reciprocity with intent to place people in their presumed classes of superior and inferior categories.

5.8.5 The parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19)

5.8.5.1 The parable of the mustard seed as authentically Jesus

The parable of the mustard seed has unique, authentic characteristics that bear the marks of Jesus. The “typical” (Van Eck 2013:245) features definitive of the hand of Jesus are made visible by the embedded critique of social exploitation of the first-century Palestine. This parable is a clear representation of the earliest traditions associated with the historical Jesus.

It categorically articulates the position of Jesus against the oppression of Imperial Rome. Furthermore the complicity of the Temple authorities in pursuing financial interest of Rome and ritual segregation also comes under the attack in the parable.

5.8.5.2 The parable of the mustard seed and the social position of the vulnerable

Our reading of the parable will focus on the how the audiences of the historical Jesus in 27-30 CE understood the meaning of its message. The approach undertaken by the social-scientific reading argues that in this parable Jesus was presenting the reality of the kingdom of God. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God “was a present reality” (Van Eck 2013:233). This interpretive angle perceives the narrative of the parable as containing elements that are categorically challenging and serving as instruments of subversion of the Roman Imperialism and temple corruption.

The subversive categories of the parable are also directed against the temple aristocratic rule and its exclusionist ritual practices. Van Eck (2013:233) comments without any apology that “the mustard seed is a story of how the kingdom of God

subverts the kingdom of Caesar and the kingdom of the Temple”. In our reading we would seek to show how the emergence of the vulnerable groups as a Mustard seed, “subverts” economic and political kingdoms in South Africa today.

5.8.5.3 The social background of the parable of the mustard seed

Van Eck (2013:237) suggests the context of the parable of the mustard seed was shaped by a prosperous agrarian economy in the first-century Palestine. The prominent issue is the social position of the peasants who were farm labourers. Therefore our reading of the parable must take into account that the Galilean peasants had a different take on the parable. As first hearers of the parable their perceptions are further enriched by the social position of relating to implied nuances and historicity not easily accessible to modern readers.

The obvious fact is that the parable carries within its context specific “cultural norms or scripts”. Such normative behaviour and social value systems of the first-century Palestine were part of the frame of reference that was intimated by Jesus in the parable. Hence Van Eck (2013:238) points out that the text of the mustard seed must be regarded as a “product of social systems”, requiring that a responsible interpretative exercise will locate and interrogate the text within the broader context of its “social systems”.

In this regard the value systems and the social dynamics influencing the parable of the mustard seed need to be incorporated in the interpretation process. The reader must attempt to fully understand the nature and generic characteristics of the mustard seed in question as well as the expected agricultural practices undertaken in cultivating the seed.

5.8.5.4 The kingdom of God as represented by the mustard seed

In presenting the role and symbolism of the mustard seed as the actual representation of the kingdom of God, the reader need to consider the “intentions” of Jesus in choosing the plant as a metaphor of God’s reign. Van Eck (2013:242) brings to our attention that the usage of the mustard seed did not mean that it signified “growth or contrast” that could be linked to a future apocalyptic inspired eschatology. Jesus in his teachings about the kingdom of God constantly referred to the actuality

of the kingdom in the here and now. Another aspect deliberately espoused by Jesus in the parable of the mustard is the choice of a plant that grew as a shrub, rather than a powerful tree like the cedar to signify the reality of the kingdom of God.

5.8.5.5 The mustard seed as a representation of subversion of the world systems

Van Eck (2013:243) traces the subversive tendency of mustard seed plant in the situation where its seed has been planted in the garden. He alludes to the fact that the mustard seed plant by its very nature tends to continuously multiply in whatever field it is planted. The mustard plant would dominate and spread where it was planted. It is a kind of plant that has stubborn resilience. On the other hand the first hearers of the parable understood the religious requirements that were to be adhered to when planting the seed. He asserts that the religious laws of purity necessitated that in planting seeds one had to avoid mixing plants.

This gives out a warning that a person who will deliberately plant a mustard seed in the garden would actually be “looking for trouble” (Van Eck 2013:244). Temple ritual laws of purity placed the mustard seed in a category of plants that were corruptive in nature. It could not be planted in a family garden. If planted in the garden it simply corrupts other plants and renders the garden impure.

5.8.5.6 The mustard seed as a disruptive agent

Thus in using the mustard seed as a representation of the kingdom of God, Jesus perceived it as a disruptive agent of the systems of this world. In this parable, Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is dangerous. The danger posed by the kingdom of God threatens the very survival of the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of the Temple. Van Eck (2013:244) asserts that the perceived embedded reality of the kingdom of God in the arena of human history must be seen “taking over” the powers, and systems of political and religious domination. The kingdom of God is subverting Roman imperialism and religious segregation of Temple aristocracy.

The parable of the Mustard Seed presents a dangerous scenario when viewed from the reality of those living under Roman and the temple domination systems. In as much as the mustard seed is perceived as an “invasive and difficult, if not at all

possible, to control” (Van Eck 2013:244). The mustard seed poses the same danger to the stability of oppressive systems. In the parable we see the transformative agenda of the kingdom of God “taking over the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of the temple” (Van Eck 2013:244).

Van Eck (2013:243) makes us aware of the invasive nature of the kingdom of God. We can therefore by implication assert that the kingdom of God “is like a mustard seed that, when it becomes a plant, can be put to good use in terms of its culinary and medicinal properties. But watch out: although it is an annual, it reseeds itself, and keeps on reseeding. It comes up again and again. You cannot stop it, and not really erase it; the mustard plant grows very rapid and aggressive, and spreads like a weed or invasive shrub”. This understanding confirms that the kingdom of God has become a mustard seed. It embodies the disruptive qualities of the mustard. The powers of domination deny such a reality in their own peril.

5.8.6 The parable of the Banquet (Lk 14:16b–23)

5.8.6.1 The parable in its Lukan context

Van Eck (2013:2) resumes the task of interpreting the parable of the Feast by outlining the views of various scholars. The first group of scholars that is given attention focuses on the aspect of invitation as a dominant theme of the parable. These scholars put across the argument that “salvation history” carries more weight in providing the meaning of the parable. As such the direct intent of the invitation paradigm is addressed firstly to the Jewish audience, and subsequently the Gentiles gets the invite after the Jews have turn down the invitation.

Another category of writers who apply their minds in the interpretation of the parable responds to the question of the kingdom of God. This group brings across the view that the message of the kingdom of God is squarely aimed at the position of the poor. The poor are depicted as the beneficiaries of the kingdom of God. The reality of hunger deliberately pushes the poor to be the prime recipients of the benefits of the kingdom of God. The definitive presupposition of the proclamation of the reign of God to the poor is suggested to be “one of Luke’s main theological themes in the parable”. Van Eck (2013:2) take the argument further by asserting that the reading of the parable of the Feast from the perspective of the kingdom call for the poor clearly

articulates the attitudes as well as the position of solidarity with the poor by the “Lukan Jesus”.

The voice of Jesus in the gospel of Luke categorically declares that “the kingdom is for the hungry”. It is Luke’s intention to bring to the attention of his audience and the followers of Jesus an uncompromising directive. The rich within the community of faith are challenged to identify with the poor. The rich are called upon to reach out to the needy out of “their abundance”. They are also encouraged to cross the social divide and open channels of interaction with “the common people and the outcasts of society about whom nobody cares” (Van Eck 2013:2).

The third category of interpreters pay their attention on the question of the grace of God as the primary thrust of the parable. These interpreters ground their perceptual analysis of the parable on the qualities and prevalence of “the mercy, grace and compassion of God”. Such acts of Divine response to humanity are embodied in the conduct of the host (Van Eck 2013:2).

The fourth group of scholars who interrogate the parable of the Feast place their focus on God’s grace, revealing the character of God as a host. The emphasis on the grace of God places upon all who hear the invitation to respond decisively. These interpreters insist that the kingdom of God is a “present reality” (Van Eck 2013:2). The implication thereof is that the people, who will respond to the invitation to attend the feast, will take part in the kingdom of God. The broader implication of the meaning of the parable of the feast is that God’s invitation has universal dimensions of “a gift” to humanity. Though the gift is availed to all, a person’s decision to respond affirmatively rests with an individual. This is contrary to the demands of the kingdom of the Temple. The kingdom of God is inclusive. It is upon the hearers of the parable to engage and interpret “the signs of the time” and duly respond with required repentance.

The fifth group of analyst hold the opinion that the gist of the parable of the Feast revolves around the symbolic portrayal of the anticipated “eschatological or messianic banquet” (Van Eck 2013: 2). The predominant view of the futuristic feast is that God in the Messiah invites all people to the dinner of salvation. The respondents

will secure themselves full salvation. Those who turn down the invitation of the host (God) will face judgment.

Lastly the parable is subjected to a reading that places the meaning as direct confrontation with the Pharisees. Such a position critiques the moral and ritual stance of the Pharisees against those they regard as ritual non-compliant with expected moral conduct and purity of religious establishment. In this understanding of the challenge to the Pharisees, the readers as well as the Pharisees are called upon to abandon their comfort zones. The challenge is to encounter the “other” on the terms of common human solidarity. In reading the parable, one is impelled to venture “into a mission to the impure and the Gentile”. We are challenged to cross socio-cultural boundaries to affirm each other’s humanity.

5.8.6.2 A social-scientific interpretation of Luke 14:16b–23

5.8.6.2.1 Interpretations of the parable employing aspects of a social-scientific reading

Van Eck (2013:14) presents a social-scientific interpretation of the parable of the Feast by acknowledging that it is a minority of scholars who interrogated the parable from the given scientific model. In a summation of attempts to engage the parable from the perspective of the social-scientific reading, attention is given to the view that “focused on the social function of meals”. This approach intends to bring out the link between questions of honour and shame, alongside the terms of “reciprocity” and accepted norms of socio-religious purity. Another interpretive angle within the scope of social-scientific, aims at highlighting the role of the settings of meals as a conduit of fostering social arrangements, influenced by perceptions of “honour and shame” .

In the same vein the matter of “purity and pollution” stands out as a banner that set the lines of demarcation between differing classes of people. Hence the parable is regarded as representing hopes that dismantle the dividing walls of social stratification.

5.8.6.3 The social world of the parable

Van Eck (2013:7) points to the reader that a deeper understanding of the meaning of the parable of the Feast depends on how one appreciate how societies were

arranged in “pre-industrial” urban areas. He highlights the fact that the pre-industrial metropolitan arrangements placed human settlements in accordance with the social status of the people concerned. The cities were designed in such a way that the elites were literally insulated from the lower classes of society. City walls were used to keep the impure and the poor outside of the city precinct. Interaction between the elites and the non-elites was forbidden. Within the city walls specific areas were allocated to families of significance. Those who had power and privileged connections were at the centre of the city.

The non-elites were further driven away into the periphery of social margins beyond the boundaries of the city walls. The group that was driven to the outskirts of the city consisted of “prostitutes, beggars, tanners and other social outcasts like lepers” (Van Eck 2013:7). This group could enter the city walls on conditions that they could sell their labour as daily workers. Hence the significance of the parable makes an impact to the reader in considering that the host in the parable gives an instruction for an inclusive invitation. Those on the streets, outskirts of the city and from the rural villages are also invited, as attested in Luke 14:21 and 23.

5.8.6.4 Meals as ceremonies of honor and purity in the parable

An invitation to participate in a social occasion involving meals carried specific cultural conventions. Van Eck (2013:9) notes that in the context of the Mediterranean worldview meals served as barometers for maintenance of communal value systems. It is on those meal occasions that commonly held values were ascertained and confirmed. Social stratification was upheld. The question of honour and status was not compromised. In this regard the social-scientific reading brings into our attention the fact that meals in the given context were perceived as “ceremonies”. In such ceremonies existing social arrangements were reinforced. Different social roles and areas of demarcation were strictly adhered to.

The obvious implication is that different groups and classes of people were expected to share meals with their respective peers. The poor will eat with the poor. The elite will eat with the elite. Such a conduct enabled the possibility of “reciprocity” to be observed. Those invited to a meal would then be in a position to return the honour by inviting their host in a meal. In this instance being invited in a meal placed a burden

of “indebtedness” to the hosting partner. Availing self to a meal in the 1st century Mediterranean setting carried along “serious business” implications.

It is important to appreciate the role of gossip as a system (Van Eck 2013:9) of verifying the credibility and social acceptance of each occasion. In the parable the process of validating the occasion ensued when the initial invitation is conveyed to “possible guests”. This invitation served as a notification for the venue and the time of the function. Furthermore the first invite served as a template to assist the host plan the meal based on the number of confirmation received. When the second invite was delivered, the normal social process of verifying the invited guest would have run its course.

As such the confirmation to attend the meal meant that the respondent was duly satisfied about the calibre of the expected social partners who would grace the occasion. It meant that one’s social standing and honour would be enhanced by such public endorsement of the meal by people of same status and reputation. This parable depicts how deliberate attempts to protect one’s honour and status materialised. The excuses forwarded by those initially invited tell a mouthful. The elites could not risk losing respect of fellow class counterparts by being part of an occasion that meant the inclusion of non-elites, the poor and the social out-casts

5.8.6.5 The excuses to accept the invite as a negative evaluation of the host

Van Eck (2011:6) forwards the argument that the three excuses directed to the host as evidenced in Luke 14:18-20 are generally unlocked from four interpretive positions. The first positions are depicted as fostering a literary argument. This view suggests that the excuses will make sense to the reader if they are considered “in terms of orality and storytelling”. The emphasis will be on locating their intended meaning within the broader context of the storyline of the parable. Such an approach will further be enhanced by a due regard of the structural arrangements of the major themes of the parable, and how such themes are organised to make an impact to the first hearers and readers.

The second position proposes that the excuses have some elements of validity and seriousness. Firstly the reader is drawn to the arguments that recognise the

politeness accompanying the excuses. The issues that are seen as contributory to the failure of the invitees to honour the invitations are serious enough to be dismissed as invalid. The host is expected to appreciate the legitimacy of the excuses. In the process of not doubting and questioning the integrity of those extending excuses. Van Eck (2011:7) understood the third position proposed by Linnemann as representing a “minority” view. Linnemann suggests the invitees were not necessarily being spiteful to the host. Instead they were delayed by legitimate commitments. They will pitch up late at the function. Van Eck is of the opinion that the weakness of this position is premised on the fact that it does not take into consideration the whole “text”, thus giving partial suggestions.

Van Eck (2011:7) states that the fourth position sees the excuses as “flimsy and spurious”. Bailey (1983:94), Jeremias (1972:179) and Scott (1989:169) advance this position. Their argument is that the excuses have no merit considering the common practice of verifying financial commitments prior an expression of interest. The weak excuse of intending to appease the feminine gender in a patriarchal social system does not hold water. The obvious conclusion is that those forwarding such excuses are “deliberately insulting” and displaying disregard to the host.

5.8.6.6 “Gossip as an interpretive key” of the invitation to the Feast

Van Eck (2011:8) evaluates the given positions by highlighting the presuppositions that informed the excuses. He argues that the significance of the excuses is not determined by their “content” but rather by “what lies behind them”. The attitudes of disapproval directed at the host suggest among other things a dismissive spirit. As such Van Eck (2011:8) sees “gossip as interpretive key” and insists that the excuses were conveying to the host that he was “shunned”. The host followed all the protocol. He observed social norms and “played the game” accordingly. Yet he failed “the contest as a result of gossip”.

The extent and impact of gossip was detrimental to the host, to an extent that both the individuals and community did not want to be seen at the feast. The implication is obvious. The social circles of gossip labelled the attendance of the feast as “inappropriate” (Van Eck 2011:8). The social norms and values that subscribe honour and shame dictated that to be seen in that feast would render the invitee as

insignificant and not honourable. Hence there were excuses. No one among the elite was willing to lose face and social standing by associating with a less sophisticated member of the community.

5.8.7 The parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6)

5.8.7.1 A social-scientific and realistic interpretation of Luke 15:4-6

Reading the parable within the time frame of the first-century Palestine tells the story of “an advanced agrarian society” (Van Eck 2011:7). It was a society that defined its functionality within the dual governance of Roman imperialism and the temple ruler-ship of religious purity. The direct rule of Rome in the Mediterranean environment was made evident by the crippling tax systems.

Whereas it’s indirect rule through the temple system contributed to the creation and maintenance of the social division. All of societies under Roman ruler-ship were characterised by “the *haves* (rulers) and the *have-nots* (the ruled)”. The premise of the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of the Temple sustained social inequity. The elites (2%) in this parable comprising mostly of the ruling class is said to have been in charge of 65% in the entire region’s economy. Be that as it may the Temple ruler-ship was not significantly different from Imperial Rome. They further imposed over and above the Roman taxes, offering systems that cushioned them against the deductions of the tributary contributions demanded by Rome (Van Eck 2011:8).

These economical arrangements between Rome and the temple aristocratic governance drove the common peasants to the margins of society. The peasants became vulnerable by the intent of Rome and Jerusalem despotic rule. It is in view of such socio-economic conditions that Jesus relates the story of the kingdom of God as an alternative reality. Jesus in the parable of the lost sheep conveys the message that in the kingdom of God “everyone has enough” (Van Eck 2011:8). The position of the message of the kingdom of God stands as a contrast to the destitute experienced by the peasants. The story of a shepherd who was in charge of a relatively average flock of sheep helps to better understand this situation. This flock belongs to possible two owners or more. The shepherd and the owner(s) of the flock would normally sign a contract to seal the terms of reference for their relationship. Another significant aspect of the parable is the deliberate use of a shepherd as the ideal character.

Shepherds in the time frame of the ministry of the Galilean Jesus, in an advanced agrarian society were not granted any form of social respect.

The work conditions of an average shepherd meant that he could spend a lot of time away from his home and family. Shepherds had to look for land for the grazing of the flock. They were generally perceived as aggressive, untrustworthy and dishonest. As such, shepherds were known for having an attitude of doing whatever it takes to protect and to feed the flock under their care. Shepherding was not accorded due respect as decent labour. Furthermore the daily wages and salaries of the shepherds were far below the average worker doing manual labour. With such meagre salaries the shepherds could not provide for the basic needs of their families. They could not provide decent food, clothing and shelter to their families.

Thus as custodians of the flock under their care, they were financially responsible for any harm or danger that could befall the flock. In a situation of loss of a sheep, the shepherd had no option but to embark on a search, bearing in mind that the cost value of a female sheep was double the price of the male. The male sheep could cost almost a month's salary, whilst the female could cost more than a monthly salary. Therefore when even a single sheep will be lost, the shepherd had no choice "but to go and look for it". His family survival depended on the lost sheep found. In the context of the parable, the shepherd took a huge "risk" by leaving the entire flock to look for a singular sheep that was lost.

5.8.7.2 The social standing of the shepherd in parable

Van Eck (2011:9) in aligning the parable with the kingdom of God addresses a number of issues. Firstly he points out that the parable conveys the fact that the kingdom of God is also inclusive of those individuals and class of people who were "rendered unclean by the kingdom of the temple". The radical implication for such an assertion is that Jesus by using the shepherds in reference to the kingdom of God painted God's kingdom as "unclean", in the process challenging the religious stereotypes of purity.

The second verdict of the parable means that the kingdom of God emerges in ordinary circumstances. The "unexpected" (Van Eck 2011:9) character of the parable follows the same disruptive route of similar episodes in other parables cited by

Jesus. The owner of the vineyard paid equal wages to the labourers who worked incomparable hours. A gentile Samaritan displayed human decency by providing needed assistance to the wounded in a desolate road. An emotionally wounded father decided to welcome back in his arms a son who turned his back against his family, in the process wasting all his riches.

As such the shepherd could have devised other means to replace the lost sheep. He could have stolen someone else's sheep. He possibly could have been aggressive in defending his innocence when confronted by the owners. Instead "the shepherd takes the risk to go and look for the one that is lost" (Van Eck 2011:9). In this regard the shepherd becomes a tangible symbol of non-violence consistent with the values of the kingdom of God. The resounding message of the parable of the lost sheep is an assertion that "the kingdom is also present there where everybody has enough".

Therefore, in this parable we become witnesses to the "risky" conduct of shepherds. Though they are socially marginalised and ritually impure, the symbol of the shepherd talks of the kingdom of God as a contrast "against the social and religious grain of the day; stories that challenge the 'normalcies' of society; stories that are in direct opposition to the way 'we do things here'; stories that shock and question the *status quo*, power and privilege; and stories that characteristically call for a reversal of roles and frustrate common expectations" (Van Eck 2011:9).

The story of the shepherd risking his well-being and comfort tells of a "re-envision" social intervention against structural systems of discrimination. It is such a conscientious shepherding that presents to us an "alternative world to the world created" by the privileges of power, social traditions and customary/religious practices tolerant of systemic discrimination.

5.8.8 The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26)

5.8.8.1 The backdrop of the parable (Lk 16:19-26): An advanced agrarian (aristocratic) society

It is important that we fully appreciate how Van Eck reads the social background of the parable. The reading of the society that informed the formative aspects of the

parable is characterised by first-century Palestine. It was a society whose agriculture economy had attained a level of sophistication and advancement. Social stratification necessitated that people were either belonging to the aristocratic class of the “haves”, or that of the peasants, the “have-nots” (Van Eck 2009:7). The ruling class were better placed to accumulate more wealth and violently entrench their ill-gained privileged status.

In the cities, the aristocratic class comprised of less than two percent. The rest of the population, the peasants were rural based. In the first-century Palestine, middle class as a modern economic arrangement was non-existent. The ruling aristocratic class though in numbers were a minority of less than two percent. They had total ownership of “the wealth (from one half up to two thirds) by controlling the land” (Van Eck 2009:7). The cheap labour force and the variety of agricultural produce compounded the wealth capital of the elite. Their wealth was further expatiated by the tax regime that was unfairly skewed to benefit the rich.

The peasants had to comply with civil and religious tax demands. The subsequent outcome is that the peasants had to rely on the landowners for loans. When failing to repay the advanced loans with compound interest. Their lands and farms, which were in family holdings, were usurped by the elites to settle the debts. The social position of the peasants was cascading to levels of structural and systemic retrogression. Structural “indebtedness” of the peasants became a permanent feature that has reference in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Since the peasants were located at the margins of economic activity. They were subjected to systemic vulnerability. Their marginalisation resulted to “a loss of subsistence, being displaced from smallholder to tenant, then from tenant to dependent day labourer and eventually ending up as part of the expendables of society (such as beggars)” (Van Eck 2009:7). Lazarus typically portrays the generic conditions of the poor in the parable.

5.8.8.2 Patronage and clientism in the parable

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus also brings to our attention the prevalence of “patron-client relationships” (Van Eck 2009:7). “Patron-client” relations became a binding social contract in the first-century Mediterranean world. It was a framework

that defined the terms of expectations and mutual obligations between the participants. This system of social interaction was practiced by all social formations. The elites would indulge in the contract as equals. Furthermore, the peasant class were roped to solidify the social standing of the elites. The peasants were participants of reluctance. They could only have access to loans and sometimes “economic networks” that might be expedited by the elites.

The elites made a concerted effort to have as many patrons as possible. The number of patrons one had elevated the sense of honour and prestige in the society. This was more common among the elites, hence their patronage benefits extended to strategic mutual advantages. The elites would agree to advance each other’s interests. Agreements for legal, commercial, medical related and protection contracts were enacted. These social contracts rendered the reality of the “poor” and the “rich” as a “permanent” (Van Eck: 2009:7) aspect of political-economic position as depicted in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Therefore the common perception about the notions of the “rich” and the “poor” had reference to issues of dignity and status. Van Eck (2009:7) points out that in the New Testament world, riches and wealth were associated with “avaricious, greedy” pursuits by the elites. Accumulating wealth meant deliberate deprivation of someone else. Being wealthy meant that someone had to be disadvantaged. Wealth creation was structurally juxtaposed with poverty. The existence of the wealthy class was sustained by the sacrifices of the class of the poor. Hence the pursuance of wealth was perceived to be inherently evil. The positions of the “poor” were interpreted as acts or inaction of an individual or collective incapacity to preserve family inheritance. Such circumstances were facilitated by socio-structural impediments that could not be un-done by the poor.

5.8.8.3 The transformative motif of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Van Eck (2009:9) surmised the heart of this parable when he mentions that “the main focus” of the ministry of the Galilean was about a transformed social order, instead of spiritual concerns. The historical mission of the Galilean according to the readings of Van Eck (2009:9) in agreement with Oakman (2008:296) is that “Jesus’ historical activity was essentially about politics and the restructuring of society, and not about

religion or theology.” Therefore when we appropriate the core message of this parable, we will deduce that it serves as a critique of socio-economic arrangements that justify and tolerate inequality.

Through this parable the historical Jesus challenges the *status quo* of the opulence displayed by the elites in the face of destitution. The rich man and his patron associates indulge in “parties”, while the poor represented by Lazarus are facing starvation right at the doorstep of the rich. In this parable we witness the loss of moral sensitivity by the rich by refusing to “see” the face of poverty in the person of Lazarus. The rich man would only engage those at his gate if they bring prestige and honour. He is not willing even to pass at his own gate “simply because there is nothing in it for him to do so. He could only lose some honour” (Van Eck 2009:9). Lazarus at the gate of the rich man was a symbol of “the expendables and the socially impure during his day”. What the parable does not fail to present to the reader is the fact that the social condition of Lazarus and those he represented was the creation of the elites.

Van Eck (2009:8) elaborates in detail the opposing social identities of the rich man and Lazarus. Firstly we need to register in our attention the reality of “great class disparity” that characterised the first hearers of the parable by the historical Jesus in first-century Palestine. This structural social divide benefitted the urban elites against the peasants in rural settings. The elites had controlled over all systems of wealth creation. The peasants were cast into suffocating poverty at the margins of economic activity. The rich in this parable is of Jewish descent just like Lazarus due to his connection to the line of Abraham. The glaring difference is that he “wears purple”. The colour purple in clothes represented the aristocratic class. It was a statement symbol for wealth and status.

On the other hand Lazarus at the gate of the rich man’s mansion signifies the widening gap that existed between various social classes. Lazarus as the creation of the exploitative decision of the elites was probably the victim “of rising indebtedness and eventual foreclosure on his mortgage by one of the exploiting urban elite”. Van Eck (2009:8) argues that one could end up at the gates of the rich by being driven to one direction leading to a complete cycle of social marginalisation. The finality of the

poverty cycle at the gates of the rich could be traced from the stages of being “first tenant; then day labourer; eventually, drifting to the city where work is scarce, he did not find work and became a beggar”. Lazarus loses his national identity by being declared to be religiously impure, hence the dogs were feasting on his wounds.

The implication of this parable in the situation of the widening gap between the rich and the poor is that the gap is not closing. The very systems of honour and patronage confronted by the Galilean were entrenching the economic divide in the times of the historical Jesus. The Roman and the temple elites were bent on maintaining their patronage and economic interests. Just like Lazarus, the poor among the first hearers of the parable found themselves at the margins of economy and had a growing sense of despondency and envy of the material possession of the rich.

5.8.9 The parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46)

The main focus of the parable of the merchant as Jesus presents it directs our attention to the main character being the merchant. More precisely Jesus intends us to read the personality of the merchant. Van Eck (2015:12) argues that the given parable presents the merchant as the primary point of reference. He expounds his argument by suggesting that the kingdom is framed around the conduct of the merchant. In the parable Jesus draws the focus of his audience to the person of the merchant. Hence he could assert that “the kingdom is likened to the actions of a merchant”.

In reading the parable with the merchant as the point of focus, we are persuaded to place the pearl discovered by the merchant as carrying “a secondary role” in subscribing “meaning”. This social-scientific reading poses a direct challenge to the reader and the first audience of the parable. The Galilean compares “the kingdom” with the conduct of the merchant (Van Eck 2015:12). Such a deliberate positioning of the merchant becomes an affront to the audience of Jesus.

The peasants who heard the parable were familiar with negative attitudes directed against those in pursuance of mercantile commercial route during the times of the historical Jesus. The radical call by Jesus of aligning the person of the merchant with

what the kingdom represented confronted the followers of Jesus on a number of levels. On a communal level the peasants held strong opinions about the “limited good” of livelihood. The peasant’s social reality defined by advanced agricultural economy dictated a perception that regarded the use of means of economic production. The presuppositions of the peasants discouraging profit making and “usury” (Van Eck 2015:12) were prevalent among the audience of Jesus. Hence their stance against the merchants could not be dismissed. They held the opinions that the merchants were driven by ulterior motives in their business dealings that were accompanied by thievery.

This deeply held stereotype against the merchants was compounded by the fact that the merchants’ business dealings required shipping merchandise across the Mediterranean. A further complicating issue was the question of foreign ownership of the shipment fleet employed by the merchants. Apart from the fact those merchants were mostly owners of large tracts of land. They were deeply embedded in aristocratic levers of power that advanced the Imperial interests of the first-century Rome. The audience of Jesus was well aware of the fact that the merchants were active participants in decision-making processes that sanctioned the forceful “extraction of goods, cash crops and commercial farming” , thus rendering the peasants to merely forge a living on subsistence level (Van Eck 2015:12).

5.8.9.1 The social position of the merchant in the parable

Van Eck (2015:6) brings to the attention of the reader that most of the readings of the parable of the merchant do not focus on the central character in the parable. In this case the merchant himself. The emphasis has been placed on the kind of business the merchant is associated with. Further presentation of the merchant highlights the “upper-class” status conferred to the merchant. This social position was above the possible hearers of the parable. The suggested social location of the merchants in the period of the historical Jesus when perceived from the social-scientific reading assist the reader to determine what was going on in the minds of those who listened to Jesus relating the parable.

It is important at this stage to appreciate the fact that the first audience of the parable held negative views against the merchants in general. The social environment of first-century Roman Imperialism shaped how peasants responded to positions of

power as represented by the merchants. Hence merchants were associated with the exploitative governance system of Rome. They were seen to be aiding Rome. The cultural and social values of the peasants dictated that merchants were to be placed on the side of the Imperial power systems. Such strongly held perceptions against the merchants by the peasants were informed by “their common experience” (Van Eck 2015:6) of exploitative relations with the powers that be, including the merchants.

The commonly held notions of exploitative relations between the merchants and the peasants is evident in the manner of in which Jesus related the parable. Jesus presumed that his audience understood the nuances, imagery and dynamics conveyed by the parable to his listeners. This understanding of Jesus is evident in the manner in which he does not go in detail in providing background information that could have easily facilitated the gist of the story (Van Eck 2015:7). He took it for granted that his audience was well acquainted with presumed intent of the parable. Jesus deliberately planted the parable within the socio-cultural milieu that was a daily experience of the peasants.

5.8.9.2 The reversal of exploitative conduct by the merchant and of the reality of the kingdom

The conduct of the merchant as a point of entry in the parable pushed for transforming values of the kingdom. Though the reader and the audiences of the historical Jesus could not be spared from the “shock in the parable” (Van Eck 2015:12). The deeds of the merchant are categorically equated with the kingdom. The one who was perceived as an “outsider” has radically taken the position of one who belongs to the kingdom. In this instance Jesus has opted to position the merchant as a “positive symbol for the kingdom”. The actions speaking of change on the part of the merchant qualifies him of the kingdom status.

The merchant discovers a most valuable and “expensive” pearl in one of his trips. In recognizing the price of the pearl, the merchant decides to auction all his property in raising funds to purchase the pearl. The obvious implication is that the merchant has abandoned his trade. The one who was an “outsider” had to “sell all he had”. He was no longer in the business. Thus those who heard the parable could not justify any

criticism and condemnation of the repentant merchant. The one once despised has attained the right of being an “insider”.

He has acted with integrity by choosing the side of the kingdom. Once he was perceived as pursuing business endeavors that were “destructive and a threat to community” life and its systems of survival. He is no longer the functionary of an exploitative economic system of usury and commercial farming practice that marginalized communities. The merchant is rising to the standards and “principles” of the kingdom. For the reader and the first hearers of the parable, the Galilean has undoubtedly “criticized the exploitative political economy of his day” (Van Eck 2015:14). The former merchant now stands as a symbol of change. He is no longer exploiting the peasants.

The parable as it stands has a duality of implications for those who are already part of the kingdom. The implicit challenge of the parable firstly addresses the question of “discipleship”. Van Eck (2015:15) points out that to those who have embraced the kingdom, a deeper understanding of following the Galilean is expected from them. Being part of the kingdom places another call on one’s life. It is a call “to give up everything”. As much as the merchant abandoned the trade and its benefits, the follower of the historical Jesus is called to respond likewise.

The second demand emanating from the parable calls for a renewed sense of commitment. The kingdom is premised on a totally radical platform. It is founded on relationships of mutual recognition of belonging. The former circles of interaction were informed by values of privilege, status and honour. The question of protecting and advancing one’s social standing through patriarchal networking, “status” and associated “honour”, no longer applies in this new kingdom. Hence the misuse of positions of power against the poor is a thing of the past.

The challenge of the parable is also directed to the first hearers. Even though the merchant is moved by the values of the kingdom to abandon privileged status. The listeners are expected and urged by the values of the kingdom to open themselves to be transformed by the values and vision of the kingdom of God. The values of the kingdom demands from them to review the terms and conditions they place on

relationships. They have to accept in their fold the transformed merchant. They have to suspend their biases.

Their judgment of the “other” must be informed by the invasive vision and values of the kingdom. Both the merchant and the first hearers of the parable cannot avoid the moral demands of the kingdom of God. The new vision embedded in the moral and ethical demands of the kingdom of God have a bearing on the characters in the parable and hearers of its message.

5.8.10 The parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8)

5.8.10.1 The background of the parable: The first-century Galilean village

The meaning of the parable of the friend at midnight can best be understood when read in view of its historical background. In this case Van Eck (2011:6) provides a detail analysis of the parable by taking into cognisance the village setting from which this parable emanates. The parable presents relevant information that talk about the first-century Galilean village background. In the parable we are invited to appreciate how the originality of the rural context has assisted the audience to relate to its meaning and message. The milieu of the parable suggest of a social environment that was shaped by “nucleated villages”. These village communities were deeply situated in the farms in which the peasants were employed. On another level some of these communities were located in the joint smallholding farms that belonged to the villagers. In some instances these village communities were part and parcel of the greater farming estates that were prevalent in the Galilee of the historical Jesus.

A further analysis of the parable tells a story of how the villagers organise their travelling plans. Van Eck (2011:7) notes that it was common for the villagers to undertake journeys during the course of the day. Thus it was quite irregular for one to opt to travel at night because the arrival of a visitor at night brought along some challenges. It must be borne in mind that the midnight traveller would have disturbed the family expected to be hosts. In such close-knit communities hospitality was expected for close family, neighbours, friends and strangers alike. It would have been regarded as inhospitable if one failed to extend help to the late traveller. In such closely bonded families and neighbourhood it would have been shameful not to assist anyone calling for help. In the break of the day the news would have spread by

word and gossip that a traveller was denied assistance. As a consequence the offending family would be ostracised by the greater community.

5.8.10.2 An emic reading of the parable

Our understanding of the parable in view of the social-scientific reading clarifies social dynamics definitive of the interaction among the main characters in the story. Firstly Van Eck (2011:4) brings before the reader the rural context of the parable. He further notes that a proper appreciation of the parable requires the one doing reading to appreciate “the cultural codes of honour and shame, and hospitality and friendship” dominant in the first-century Palestine. Nonetheless it is important to have a good handle on the facts of the whole story.

Van Eck (2011:4) proposes that an emic reading of the parable points down to the fact that the main character in the parable is woken up at midnight by a persistent neighbour. The said neighbour himself just received an unexpected visitor. He did not have any food to put before the traveller. The only option he had was to seek help from his neighbour. The neighbour was reluctant to open the door and respond to the demands of bread. He eventually relents. His change of mind was driven by unrelenting appeals of the one hosting a late visitor.

5.8.10.3 Honour and shame in the parable

Van Eck (2011:4) opens the parable to the reader by embarking on “an ethical perspective” of its context. He brings the reader to understand the significant role that the question of honour and shame carried within the Mediterranean context. The preservation of one’s honour was definitive of the collective identity of Middle-eastern cultures. All aspects of social interactions were perceived through the prism of honour and shame. A person's standing and a sense of significance in the community demanded honour is upheld and shame be avoided. Honour determined an individual sense of personal worth and its social dimension.

The recognition of “positive” self-regard and its endorsement by one’s class in particular was highly sought. Such perceptions of significance were also expressed in how a person would extend kindness and courtesy to a visitor. In cases where an individual or family were in a position to meet the needs of a guest, the society would

in turn affirm their sense of significance, and grant them due honour. Such status of honour will make it possible for an individual or the family hosting a visitor to maintain a level of respectability and respect in the community at large.

On the contrary if one or the given family due to the lack of resources fail to be responsive to the visitor. Shame and the inability to “saving face” will be unavoidable. Hence such failure will be internalised and used as a tool for self-critique and evaluation.

5.8.10.4 Hospitality and friendship in the parable

The Mediterranean environment though it had a growing agrarian economy, it did not have the infrastructure to accommodate travellers as in modern cities. In that regard the issue of being hospitable to strangers was highly regarded. Van Eck (2011:5) details how people who were by definition strangers were made to feel accepted and became important guest in the given family and community. This attitude of extending hospitality was also accorded to friends.

In an event that a stranger was stranded, the whole community was duty bound to provide accommodation facilities. This was done to meet the needs of the visitor. Most importantly the stranger was helped to protect the honour of the whole community. When the community or a specific family were in a position to meet all the needs of the visitor concerned. On leaving the household, the visitor will convey positive news of hospitality accorded him/her on arrival at his destination. Thus the community will in turn receive honour and an elevated status in the eyes of adjacent communities.

In the same vein friendship was built on accepting other persons as members of one’s family. Friendship was based on common acceptance of others. Friends were expected to provide mutual support for each other. A friend was a person on which one would unreservedly rely. Friendship had an element of “true commitment” and a sense of a social accountability. Friends had a moral and tangible obligation to each other. This view also extended to the rest of the community. Neighbours on another level would treat each other as friends. In this instance the social formation of friendship had an ecological dimension. The whole community would be interconnected in a “network” friendship by virtue of belonging to a given community. One was a friend to the members of that community.

5.8.10.5 Reciprocity and patron-client relationships in the parable

Another defined reality in Palestine was the fact that “the exchange of goods” was mediated by reciprocal modalities of social agreements. Palestine developed a tripartite category of reciprocal systems. These reciprocal arrangements were categorised into “generalised, balanced and negative” regimes. Van Eck (2011:6) then goes in detail in explaining the nature of reciprocity and its subsequent social implication. General reciprocity affected family settings. It was informed by conditions whereby those giving and receiving such benefits were not expecting the same favour in return. Balanced reciprocity were about rendering and being a recipient of generosity from one’s equals. In this set-up some form of returning the favour was expected. One could agree to be of assistance to another with the intent of advancing his/her “interests”.

The third type of reciprocity was negative in its actualisation. It generally took place between individuals who were on two extreme positions in social standing. It usually happened in situations characterised by favours advanced by the elites and aristocratic members of society for or against the peasants. Since the aristocratic classes were socially and economically dominant. Their favours bestowed to the lower classes of society were designed to benefit the rich. Such benevolence was exploitative and manipulative in nature. The aristocrats ensured that the relationships that they pursued were arranged in such a manner that enabled them “to exercise power over others” (Van Eck 2011:6) for the promotion and maintenance of family privileges and honour at all costs.

5.8.10.6 Limited good in the parable

The social situation of living on a subsistence level by the peasants meant the entrenchment of the notions of limited good. Peasants were locked in margins of powerlessness. As such they held the perceptions that the means for social upliftment and the attainment of riches were the results of evil pursuits. In the agrarian economy that implied that to acquire the means of production such as land, workforce and markets for one’s goods was driven by greed and exploitation. The peasants literally lived from hand to mouth.

They held the views that those persons and families who sought opulent lifestyle were “thieves” who thrive “at the expense of others” (Van Eck 2011:6). Such successes were a threat to the well-being of communities. Therefore any socio-economic advancement that would take place at the detriment of families and communities was discouraged.

5.8.10.7 A social-scientific interpretation of Luke 11:5–8

The parable of the Friend at Midnight attempts to address the present issues of social inequalities that were factored into the world of the historical Jesus. The society of the Galilean was under the siege of Roman Imperialism. It was a society of the “haves” and the “have-nots” (Van Eck 2011:9). The former largely belonging to the class of the elites who were city dwellers. The latter were mostly based in rural settings, and earned their living as farm workers.

The peasants were further burdened by civic and religious tax systems alongside expected rents from the landlords who hired them to work their farms. The elite class had total control of all economic and political power. As a class, they comprised roughly not more than 2% of the entire population. They had overall control of 65% of the regions wealth. They owned vast tracts of land. The agricultural products were amassed through the exploited cheap labour force of the peasants. Roman Imperialism opened up greater markets for the goods in the greater Mediterranean region.

In this context, the peasants subsidised the elites. Social stability was premised on fear and domination visited upon the poor. The poor had to depend on each other for survival. They created social network against hunger as social support systems of caring for the vulnerable. Thus reciprocal systems of the poor meant giving support where needed without expecting the same in return. Such is the context of the parable of the Friend at Midnight. In this parable we are witnesses to the goodness extended to the unexpected visitor.

On the other hand we become aware of the social pressures experienced by the neighbour woken up at night by the persistent counterpart demanding bread. The neighbour behind locked doors (with limited resources) is expected to provide bread as though he was giving as friend. The sense of honour that was at risk on the part of

his neighbour, also meant that he will suffer the same shame and humiliation if he could not step in to provide bread for his neighbour. In a broader sense the whole village faced humiliation in case of failure to feed the visitor. The whole village was hosting the traveller. The shame of the host will be the shame of all.

It is in this instance the ‘friend’ behind closed doors escalates the dialogue with his neighbour to a level of a balanced reciprocity. He begins to negotiate the transaction of “goods” (bread) on the bases of terms that will benefit him. He does not see himself as family to his neighbour. He adopts the dominant terms of social interactions definitive of civic and temple practice. He is willing to offer bread to the desperate neighbour as long as it yields some tangible benefits.

These new terms of reference are negotiated in patterns that send the same message to the entire “listening” village (Van Eck 2011:11). All villagers must register the contractual obligations that they would be expected to comply with if they happen to face similar situations in the future.

5.8.11 The parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65/Mk 12:1-12*)

5.8.11.1 Socio-political background and context of the parable

Van Eck (2007:909) engages this parable by noting that the work of Kloppenborg provides a deepened reading and interpretation of the parable. The depth of the analysis of the parable is based on the deliberate use of comparative literature that also addressed the practice of “viticulture from 300 BCE-300 CE”. The predominant feature of the parable emanates in its critique of the first-century values that were held in high regard. Furthermore the social-scientific reading of the parable brings to the fore the definitive issues of “patronage and clientism” that were the focus of attention to the historical Jesus was.

When reading the parable in the context of the first-century Mediterranean, we observe that the elites were confronted by social realities that questioned the validity and the claim of their social positioning. In this regard the parable is read alongside the version of the same parable in *Gospel of Thomas 65*. Van Eck (2007:909) is challenging the reader to consider accessing the analytical critical models of “patronage and clientism and honor and shame”.

5.8.11.2 Social-scientific reading of the parable

The reading of *Gospel of Thomas* 65 from the paradigmatic models of patronage and clientism further elucidate the terms and conditions definitive of the relationships between the landowners and their tenants. The given interactive conditions were comprehensive. There was a mutual give and take of specific “resources” as dictated by the recurring needs of both parties. Hence respective parties forged a bond of accountability followed by a long-term commitment to each other. This symbiotic relationship could not nullify existing elements of “inequality and difference in status” (Van Eck 2007:924) as framed by imperial demands.

Social stratification made it possible for the landowners to occupy a functionary class. They served as entrepreneurs and merchants. On other levels they performed the civic and political duties for the benefit of Rome and temple aristocracy. With regard to the pursuance of viticulture enterprise, substantial capital investment was a requirement for sustainable farming. The normal duration for successful crop yield could take almost sixty months (Van Eck 2007:924). In the interim the landowner had to maintain the farm and pay the seasonal workers, since the landowners were absentee owners. They were not directly involved with the day to day running of the vineyard. They sought the services of local tenants who could have been the original benefactors of the land. The local tenants were familiar with environmental conditions of the area and their livelihood depended on productive yields. They were poor. They were landless and they were living on the “subsistence level” (Van Eck 2007:924). They were attached to the land in the same manner they depended on the absentee landowners. It is a given that the tenants livelihood also depended on networking, protection and influence of the landlord.

The question of patron-client relationships exacerbated the conditions of inequality. Though the landowner had no direct handling of production in the vineyard, he could benefit “as much as one-half to two thirds of the crop” (Van Eck 2007:925). The landowner having leased the land was guaranteed of rent payments. He was also entitled to sharecrop payment. Thus when the tenants fail to meet their financial obligations, the landowner could render their “indebtedness” a tool to impose terms and conditions that “advantage” him. It is in this web of entitlement and structural inequity

that the violence is fermented. The social status of the landlord afforded them the means to impose “establishment violence” (Van Eck 2012:104).

The retaliatory violence meted out by the tenants against the representatives of the landlord (including the murder of his son) is not justifiable. The application of violence as a bargaining tool does not render one honourable. The use of violence as a weapon to settle disputes and to restore status, power and honor, “leads to nothing” (Van Eck 2007:934). Violence falls below the bar of the vision of the kingdom of God. The tenants are challenged by the historical Jesus to align their intentions with non-violence stance embraced by the landlord. They ought to employ the “weapons of the weak” (Van Eck 2012:102) by maintaining “a critical distance” (Van Eck 2012:131) from value systems attached to honour and status that begets violence.

5.8.11.3 Patronage and clientism in the *Gospel of Thomas 65*

Van Eck (2007:924) applies a deeper analysis of the parable of the tenants by bringing a comparative reading of the same parable in *Gospel of Thomas 65* with the aim of letting each reading of given parables to enhance the interpretation exercise. The significance of aligning the reading of Mark 12:1-12 with *Gospel of Thomas 65* is to investigate the dynamics of patronage and clientism. When we engage the features of patronage and clientism in *Gospel of Thomas 65*, Van Eck contends that quadrilateral elements emerge. He presents the evolving aspects definitive of the patron-client interaction in *Gospel of Thomas 65* as the following:

- the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources;
- a strong element of solidarity linked to obligations;
- a binding and long-range relationship; and
- a strong element of inequality and difference in status (see Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984:48-49).

Van Eck (2007:924) asserts that the emerging features between the elites and the underprivileged are manifested in the *Gospel of Thomas 65* “in terms of *a strong element of inequality and difference in power and status*” (italics in the original). Such status brings the fact that the landowner in the parable occupied a class that is a notch above those working as a day labourers. His social and financial positions of

belonging to those who have ownership of the mass production farms came along with benefits. The landowner was enabled by the socio-political systems to invest in agriculture ventures whilst providing loans to his day labourers.

The type of productive farming chosen confirms financial muscle of the landowner is confirmed. Viticulture by its very nature demanded a lot of capital. The landowner had an obligation to provide adequate infrastructure such as boundary lanes of the vine, durable fencing, water systems, storage and processing facilities. The landowner carried all the running cost.

Van Eck (2007:924) further highlights that the capital investment needed to run a successful vine production included bulging operational running costs. The farming implements, animals for logistical support and the traditional tower for storage and accommodation for seasonal workers had to be provided by the landowner. Another aspect that enabled the wealthy to dominate the viticulture industry was the long timeframe of between 48 to 60 months for the farm to materialise productively.

In the period prior the full-scale harvest, the farmer had to account for the remuneration of the tenants. Viticulture business demanded a lot of manpower compared to other agricultural productions. It is estimated that the actual percentage of labourers needed during full production season were trice or four times the expected number needed for olive and cereal farming. This was apart from the general maintenance before harvest such as weeding. More manpower was needed in harvest time. The daily management of the vine farm included meeting tax obligation. The number of slaves that complemented the strength of the labour force influenced the cost for taxation as well.

The element of inequality is manifested by the prevailing socio-economic conditions of less capital capability by the subsistence farmers. These farmers were mostly pursuing small-scale grapes, grain, vegetables and olives farming. A common characteristic of the small-scale farmers was their indebtedness to the landowners. They were mostly residing in the farming precinct. A reasonable number lost their patrimonial land due to failure to pay back loans. Small-scale farmers lost social status and identity because of the economic marginalisation.

Be that as it may, the small-scale farmers adapted their conditions of destitution to the terms and conditions of tenancy. As tenants the farmers provided the social-economic systems that served as a buffer to the farmer. When the farmer needed access to credit and better deals in acquiring materials. The tenancy status made it possible for the farmer to link to the existing relations and “network contacts” of his landlord, thus further solidifying the “patron-client” relations (Van Eck 2007:925).

The fundamental challenge posed by the parable is the question of “establishment violence” (Van Eck 2012:104) acted upon by the landlord in his demands for profit gains against the tenants. On the other hand the tenants are challenged by the parable for their violent kneejerk reaction against the representatives of the landlord. The situation demands that the tenants ought to respond with the “weapons of the weak” as Scott has suggested (Van Eck 2012:102). The kingdom values affirm the sanctity of life. Both interactions are not spared from the critique of the kingdom world-view embedded in the parable. The values of the kingdom of God affirms the dignity and due rights of the tenants as well as the worth and dignity of the landlord. The ethics of the parable dictates to the tenants to respond to their situation as Jesus would have, by maintaining “a critical distance” (Van Eck 2012:131) against the powers that be as a meaningful way of actualising the kingdom of God in the here and now.

5.9 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, focus was given to Van Eck’s thesis of interpreting the parables. We gave a succinct synopsis of the history of interpretation of the parables. We have provided an in-depth discussion of the twelve theses by Van Eck as interpretative frameworks for the parables. Van Eck’s theses were presented as different readings that open up different perspective in the appreciation of the parables of the historical Jesus.

The interpretive methodology was followed by the description of various reading scenarios of the parables. The given scenarios enable the reader to identify issues of exploitation in first-century Palestine which have relevance to our empirical study. As such the entire scope of reading scenarios included aspects such as the background,

patronage and clientism, ceremonies, limited good, purity, hospitality and friendship and pollution.

A descriptive reading of the parables was undertaken. Hence ten reading of the parables by Van Eck was attempted. The focus on the readings of the ten parables dwelt on the aspects of the parables that will help the reader in the analysis of the question of vulnerability in the next Chapter.

The ten parables covered were the following: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65*).

In the next Chapter we will give attention of the reading of parables of Jesus as critical tools against the vulnerability of food shortage. The forthcoming reading will be conducted within the confines of Van Eck's interpretive approach embedded in his 12 theses.

CHAPTER 6

THE PARABLES AND FOOD VULNERABILITY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the results reported in Chapter 5 will be interpreted. We will reflect on the socio-economic context of the 1st century Palestine and its influence on the formation and application of the parables by Jesus and the writers of the Gospels. The focussed discussion on the application of the parables as interpretive tools for food vulnerability will be limited to eight selected parables analysed by Van Eck.

The first part of the Chapter will be directed on interpreting four major aspects of the empirical study, focusing on the following aspects: the impact of food shortage on self-respect, one's dignity, openness to others, and good relations with others. To achieve the desired end we will use the following parables: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26).

The remaining data of the empirical study will be interpreted by eight parables, namely: the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65*).

Van Eck advances a relevant paradigm of interpreting the parables. His reading of the parables assists the reader to identify issues of exploitation that were prevalent in first-century Mediterranean Palestine. This methodology is articulated within the broader premise of Van Eck's 12 theses interpretation of the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels. We are eager to subject the results of our study to the rigours of the parables critique as practised by Van Eck.

6.2 THE PERSPECTIVE OF VAN ECK'S READING OF THE PARABLES IN INTERPRETING FOUR MAJOR ASPECTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

6.2.1 A summation of the social context in the interpretation position of the parables

In our critical assessment of the major outcomes of the study we need to appreciate the gist and a concise meaning of each parable. Van Eck has advanced interpretive meaning for each parable. The parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27) addresses the question of exploitation and how to wage protest against such conditions (Van Eck 2011:1). The parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8) shows the reader how to align self with the vision and values of the kingdom in the context of exploitation (Van Eck 2014:1).

The parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33) brings to our attention the critic of the privilege and honor by the kingdom values. The values of the kingdom promote “generalised reciprocity” and human interaction based on mutual respect without strings attached (Van Eck 2014:8). The parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19) confronts presumed “respectability” of religious functionaries. It speaks of the invasion of the transforming power of the kingdom of God against the interest of Rome and temple aristocracy (Van Eck 2013:1).

The world of first-century Palestine was turned “upside down” (Van Eck 2013:12) in the parable of the Feast (Lk 14:16b-23). The host of the feast being rejected by the “gossip network” of his class does what was unexpected in his society. He invites those who are socially marginalised to be his honoured guests. His actions broke down the wall of discrimination. In the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6) we learn how those who are locked in social, religious and economic margins resemble the reality of the kingdom of God. This parable affirms and enjoins us to acknowledge that in the kingdom of God “everyone has enough” (Van Eck 2011:8). Van Eck (2009:1) has categorically stated that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26) is a kingdom statement against the widening gap of inequality between the rich and poor. The parable declares that if no measures are taken to eradicate social inequalities, the kingdom will never become a reality. The parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46) symbolises the radical values of the kingdom of inclusion. The parable regards one that once was “an outsider”, but through his actions has embraced the kingdom principles (Van Eck 2014:1).

Van Eck (2011:1) has brought to our attention that the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) narrates the creation of “general reciprocity”. This conduct is displayed when neighbours begin to respond to each other’s needs on the basis of the recognition of the one deserving assistance without expecting anything in return. The parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom.* 65), challenges the reader to be aligned with the values of the kingdom. The values that question social systems of patronage, clientism, honor and shame in the context of violence, are contrary to the practice of violence from both the victims and the perpetrators (Van Eck 2007:909).

6.3 THE PARABLE OF THE MINAS (LK 19:12b-24, 27) INTERPRETING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE ON SELF-RESPECT

6.3.1 The impact of food shortage on self-respect

When participants were asked whether food shortage puts them in a situation that makes them to lose respect, 67% responded affirmatively, with 32% giving a negative response. It is alarming that such a huge number of individuals, and families by implication, have a deficit of respect from the people that know¹²⁹ them very closely.

The damage caused by food shortage on the sense of self-respect of affected communities requires deliberate interventions to nip it in the bud. As we reflect on the raw outcomes and experiences of the study as presented by the participants we come to the realisation that food shortage embodies multi-faceted¹³⁰ aspects. We get the impression that the loss of respect is an occurrence that has broader social implications. Its restoration will have to be effected on the societal sphere¹³¹ as well

¹²⁹ See (Brown *et al.* 1971:562) the characterisation of loss of respect in “sociological” categories which refers to the connotation of “shame” that “exposes one to the ridicule of society”. The shame or the sense of losing respect in the study does not primarily focus on the “theological” or Scriptural dimension of shame which generally carries the idea of the “objective ruin of the evil doer or the whole nation (Ps 69:4-7, 19)”. Would it be stretching the argument to far if one can conclude that those facing hunger are bound to regard their situation as punishment for being evildoers?

¹³⁰ The multiplicity of experiences of hunger resemble “the multi-layered experiences of the South Africa story” recorded in the testimonies of victims of human rights violation before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The given testimonies in accordance with the TRC models were categorised as “objective truth”, “personal and narrative truth”, “social or dialogical truth”, “healing and restorative truth”. Thus we can assert that the testimonies about food shortage bear the marks of the TRC’S four notions of truth (see *Concepts and Principles, TRC Report*, 1998, para, 36).

¹³¹ See the minority judgment by Justice Albie Sachs in *The Dikoko Case* before the Constitutional Court where Sachs calls for inclusion of apology as a legal instrument “to settle damages in

for it to have lasting impact. As things stand, the reported loss of respect could also refer to “the maintaining, defending or restoring of the *status quo*”¹³² of food shortage if it is not intentionally eradicated (Van Eck 2012:119). The objective fact of the study is that the inability to provide enough food for families leads to a deep loss of respect for affected families. We need to appreciate that the sense of loss for respect in this regard moves beyond the scope of an individual. When this diminished respect is located within the broader community. It points to the emergence of new conditions that have fostered “a culture of shame and of guilt” (Krog 1998:262). It speaks of shame for not being worthy enough to deserve a decent life. On the other hand the wound points to the guilt of parental failure to provide for one’s family. The wound of shame and guilt has generational dimensions as well. This inflicted wound of shame and guilt ravages communities on a number of levels¹³³.

Therefore interpretation of the wounded sense of self-respect requires the reader to be close to the immediate situation of vulnerability. The reading of the deficit of self-respect is a multi-sided reality when viewed as a gross violation of human rights¹³⁴.

defamation (libel) cases”. Justice Sachs argues for public recognition and acknowledgment for express loss of respect by the offended party. In his argument, seeking justice within the paradigm of Ubuntu-botho ought to aim “to restore a person’s public honour while assuaging interpersonal trauma and healing social wounds” (Sachs 2009:102). It be could argued that the loss of personal respect due to food shortage has inflicted personalised trauma and wounded the social standing of affected individuals and families.

¹³² See an in-depth discussion of the maintenance of social systems against ordinary people by Van Eck (2012).

¹³³ See the *Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Extract Four, 1998* para, 73-74 for accurate reporting on the pressures that ordinary families must contend with. The compromised conditions of families under apartheid have not changed much. The Report alludes to the impact of a number of apartheid legislation such as Group Areas, Forced Removals and the Migrant Labour systems. These laws entrenched experiences of “poverty and the degradation of living conditions in the townships, rural areas and informal settlements. Malnutrition was rife”. The apartheid legislation facilitated absent fatherhood. Men had to spend eleven months away from families as mine labourers. Children were raised in empty homes since mothers were consigned to domestic work in the “kitchens”. In the new democratic dispensation we have not seen a comprehensive restorative system to undo the systemic damage of Apartheid policies against black family structure, except the giving of state grants and food parcels in an uncoordinated policy approach (See the Constitutional Court judgment on the matter of “*AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd and Others v Chief Executive Officer of the South African Social Security Agency and Others (No 2)* [2014] ZACC 12”, viewed on the 11th June 2015 at [www.Constitutional Court/AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings \(Pty\) Ltd v Chief Financial Officer of South African Social Security Agency case&cpf=903](http://www.Constitutional Court/AllPay Consolidated Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd v Chief Financial Officer of South African Social Security Agency case&cpf=903)).

¹³⁴ The loss of respect due to food shortage needs to be perceived as a concrete reality. In the minds of those living with hunger, their destitution is not academic. It is real and tangible. It is similar to the scars that serve as reminders of pain and dehumanisation to those who survived political torture under apartheid. The fact of shame is attested by TRC testimonials regarding physical consequences resulting to injuries sustained from torture and severe beatings by security functionaries. The injuries sustained were internalised and referred to by one survivor as “a symbol that in many cases brings

The parable of the minas suggests that those who have, must share with those who do not have.

6.3.2 The surprise element in the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27) as a restoration of the loss of self-respect

The parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27) highlights the nature of the relationships between the elites and the non-elites. It relates an occurrence between the noble man and his subjects. We also encounter how the weak (third servant) in taking a defiant stance affirmed his sense of respect in the face of the exploitative labour system. The noble man embarked on a trip to a far distant country to claim his birth right of ruler-ship. Therefore he gave his servants a sum of minas, instructing them to invest his wealth. He was sure of the fact that his money will result to reasonable profits on his return.

On his return he summoned his subjects to account about the monies given to them to invest. Two servants outperformed their investments. They multiplied monies given to them. Then the surprise element of the parable unfolds in the response of the third servant. He chose to hide the mina in “fear” of his master and was duly condemned by his master. He had to contend with a label of being “evil” for failing to make profitable investment for the monies entrusted to him.

Van Eck (2011:8) suggests the reader to reconsider the “surprising element” of the parable as intended by Jesus. In the given parable Jesus sought to depict “the exploitative normalcies” that were characteristic of the era in the Palestine of 30 CE. In this parable we come face to face with the normal behaviour of the elites who “were looking for more honour, power and privilege, elite using their power to exploit, as well as an example of the way in which the exploited could resist (Van Eck 201: 8).

6.3.3 The parable as a “hidden transcripts”¹³⁵ against the loss of respect

Reading of the parable in the context of its first hearers provides a refreshing perspective. As such Van Eck (2011: 10) is in agreement with Scott that this parable

shame”. This perception also conjures similar connotations to that facing food shortage. Their poverty and hunger is a symbol of shame. It is a form of torture to face hunger on daily basis in a democratic South Africa. (see the *Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1988, Extract Four, para, 56*).

is “a hidden transcript”. Implying that the peasants in the times of Jesus devised a way to register their protest against their masters without putting their lives at risk. The reader must encounter the “hidden” aspect of protest registered by the servant. The servant took a stand against the exploitative values of his master. The noble man was not pleased with the “evil” inaction of his servant. Even though the servant had alluded to be driven by “fear” of his master. He chose to hide the mina in a safe.

The servant knew very well what he was doing. His inaction was a calculated act of “protest” against the exploitative system that robbed him of his sense of respect. He thus decided to take a stand against the system by refusing to take part and endorse the disempowering values of exploitation. Hence Van Eck (2011:10) concludes that the defiance of the servant was declaring “to ‘honour’ those that exploit you, without taking part in their exploitation”. The servant was aware of the fact that an explicitly declared confrontation against the system will not achieve intended objectives, and that it could possibly leads to violent death.

Therefore the only option available to those aggrieved by the powers that be, considering the prevailing constrains was to be “as sly as a snake and as simple as a dove” (Mt 10:16b//*GThom* 39:3). In this parable Jesus confronts the elite’s tendency towards social status of privilege. On the other hand Jesus is endorsing the protest actions of the servant in affirming his God given sense of respect. It is our view that the parable of the minas empowers those facing food shortages not to give in to the circumstances.

Their weapons of weakness are to declare that they have the potential to address their plight in ways and means that does not make them powerless or victims without options (Van Eck 2011:10). Powerlessness does not mean that the victims of oppression and abuse are bankrupt of creativity to correct their plight. This parable encourages those on the receiving end of injustice to resolve to undone such outcomes with peaceful means. The parable teaches that the loss of self-respect is regained when victims refuse to participate in systems that endorse their oppression.

¹³⁵ Van Eck (2011:10) subscribes to Scott’s (1977:12–16) notion of peasants protests as the “weapons of the weak”.

6.4 THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (MK 4:3b-8) INTERPRETING THE IMPACT OF FOOD IN SHORTAGE ON ONE'S DIGNITY

6.4.1 Impact of food shortage on one's dignity¹³⁶

An overwhelming number of 64% participants stated that food shortage undermines their sense of personal dignity, against 35% who did not share the same sentiments. These figures show that food shortage inflicts deep wounds and pain in the space of personal identity¹³⁷ of those living with hunger. Our point of entry in dealing with the pain of losing one's dignity is well articulated by the framework of the "healing and restorative truth"¹³⁸ of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Similar perceptual perspective about the centrality of human dignity in social relations is attested by the Constitutional Court judgment in the *Hoffman Case*¹³⁹. The affirmation of the dignity

¹³⁶ See (Sachs 2009:40) in his deliberation of the verdict by the Constitutional Court in the question of the role of the State to promote and protect the right to life and dignity all its citizens and visitors alike. The Constitutional Court in *The Mohamed Case* gave a critical judgment against the state in the mishandling of the deportation of the person of Mohamed, a non-South African, to the United States. Mr Mahomed was linked to the bombing of the US embassy in Tanzania. He was subsequently arrested by South Africa's immigration authorities and handed over to the FBI to face prosecution in the States. The contention of the Constitutional Court in its judgment is that the South African government handed over the suspect without securing a commitment from the USA that if Mohamed found guilty he will not be subjected to death penalty. The US had already considered such a request from the German government in handing over one suspect, Mr. Mahoud Mahmud Salim. However the South African representatives failed to protect the rights of the suspect. They failed to effect the arrest and handing over of the suspect in accordance with our nation legal framework. They merely apprehended and handed over Mr. Mahomed to the US without any terms and conditions. The judgment of the Court is premised on the appreciation that by committing ourselves to a society founded on the recognition of human rights we are required to give practical value to the rights of life and dignity, and that "this must be demonstrated by the State in everything it does". The reference to the assailment of the dignity of those facing food shortage must be located within this Constitutional Court's verdict urging for the respect of life and dignity of all citizens.

¹³⁷ Kung (1990:1) in his work, *Global Responsibility: In Search of New World Ethic* makes reference to the need of placing the essence of being human in the centre of policy formulations with an expressed purpose of affirming human dignity. In the same vein we can argue that the impact of food shortage when tied to the question of dignity of those experiencing hunger. It becomes a facilitating reality that "hinders men and women in their identity, sense of meaning and sense of dignity, and thus does not allow them to attain to a meaningful and fruitful existence". The violation of the dignity of hungry families and communities vandalises their inherent ability to relate to fellow citizens as persons with worth and significance.

¹³⁸ See *Concepts and Principles, TRC Report, 1998*, para, 43-45 which points to the question that "factual or objective" truth is not good enough to facilitate meaning "within the context of human relationship" (para, 43). The Report purports that the restoration of the human dignity of the sufferers of gross violation of human rights can be actualised through the "healing" of acknowledging inflicted wrongs. Thus article 45 categorically asserts that "acknowledgment is an affirmation that a person's pain is real and worthy of attention. It is central to the restoration of the dignity of victims". It is in view of the perspectives of the healing and restorative truth that the prevailing sense of loss of dignity due to food shortage can be adequately addressed. The mere giving of social grants and food parcels reduces the deep suffering of the loss of dignity into an exercise of exchanging commodities.

¹³⁹ The Hoffman Case came before the Constitutional Court as a result of the refusal by the South African Airways (SAA) to grant permission to Mr Hoffman to work as a steward due to his HIV status. The judgment by Justice Sandile Ngcobo conveying the majority opinion of the Court argued against the SAA and made a ruling for the full granting of the rights of the employee. In his argument Justice

of Mr. Hoffman could not have been a reality if the conceptual framework¹⁴⁰ of the social and economic rights was not aimed at actualising human dignity as a given right¹⁴¹. The parable of the Sower presents a critical evaluation of the conditions of the indignity of hunger. Such criticism is premised on the contemptuous attitudes of the elite against the vulnerable.

6.4.2 The political, social and economic context of the parable

The indignity of living under the oppressive system of Roman Imperialism was a reflection of how Rome dominated every facet of the lives of the peasants. Rome controlled the land and sea and its products. Rome also had total control of the lives of its subjects through the imposition of a double tribute system of the land and poll tax. Failing to comply with the Roman tax demands was taken as a treasonous act

Ngcobo touched on the question of human dignity as a fundamental aspect of our Constitutional democracy. He categorically stated that our Constitution demands the granting of “equal dignity” to all citizenry. Furthermore he noted that “the inherent dignity” of all is a prerequisite for the greater good of society. Thus due recognition and protection of human dignity serves as a precautionary measure against “all forms of discrimination”. The judgment addressed the prevalence of “systematic disadvantage and discrimination” as constituting the impairment of dignity of Mr Hoffman. Notwithstanding the fact that as a person living with HIV/AIDS, he belongs to the “most vulnerable groups in our society” (Sachs 2009:195-197). This case has a bearing on the issues of food shortage and its subsequent impact on the loss of personal dignity of the affected. The study impresses in our minds that the impairment of both the “inherent” and “equal” dignity of the hungry by systemic vulnerability cannot be dismissed lightly. We need to appreciate the fact that the highest court of law in the land has opened itself to perceive the reality of belonging to the “most vulnerable groups in our society”. However the judgment failed to recognise that social vulnerability is not merely a “group dynamic” reality. It is a social and a class construct. The cluster of those commonly referred to as the “vulnerable” have become a distinct class and have a claim of a respective social identity in their own right. The social vulnerable are a significant social class with given specificity of social dislocation. The given class of the vulnerable is unique in the sense that it is placed within the traditional class categories of modern social constructions. However the definitive variable of this class is explicitly notable in its intentional and deliberate misplacement from social systems definitive of autonomous consciousness.

¹⁴⁰ Sachs (2009:213) holds the views that South Africa’s Constitution is premised on principles of human dignity, freedom and equality before the law. He argues that the role of the judiciary is not to be biased against any section of the citizens. Rather the courts in according the privileges of the Bill of Rights must ensure that the “respect for human dignity” becomes the centrifugal point of reference in our jurisprudence. Particularly in conditions “where human dignity is most at risk”.

¹⁴¹ Similar sentiments characterised the recent third United Nations Financing for Development summit which was held in Ethiopia in July 2015. The summit on reviewing the Africa’s performance on meeting the Millennium Development Goals-2000-2015 (MDGs), pointed to the new direction of attaining the soon to be launched 17 point Sustainable Development Goals-2015-2030 (SDGs). In the analysis of the United Nations Secretary General, the indicators of the new SDGs must motivate the world to focus on issues of transformation by not “leaving no one behind and ensuring lives of dignity for all”. Notwithstanding the fact that most of the African countries “failed to reach the targets they have set for themselves in reaching the MDGs”. The first three indicators of SDGs seek to achieve the total eradication of poverty, hunger, to achieve food security and better nutrition as well as to “promote the well-being for all at all ages” We need to factor in the fact that the outgoing indicators of MDGs only aimed achieving eight objectives. The question of human dignity in Africa hinges on the provision of adequate budgetary systems and targeted policy intervention informed by the new agenda for social development (Kabukuru 2015:10-16).

deserving brutal punishment. The religious elites were co-opted by Rome to enforce its tax demands upon the peasants.

Hence they did not relent on their demands for religious duties from the peasants.

The tax demands pushed the masses to hunger and malnutrition to the point where “food and debt were a constant problem. Rising indebtedness led to the loss of land (which had been the base of the peasant’s subsistence) as well as the loss of the peasant’s place in the traditional social structure” (Van Eck 2009:4).

The village peasantry had to contend with taxation of their products through the “surplus of the harvest”. On the other hand when failing to pay back loans their lands would be taken by force. The infrastructural development through roads construction was designed to transport goods from the villages to the Roman urban areas.

The new infrastructure symbolised domination. It represented the “occupation, economic pressure and the exploitation” of the masses (Van Eck 20014:7).

Having considered the social, political and economic conditions of the peasants in the 1st century Mediterranean world. Van Eck (2014:8) insists that the interpretation of the parable needs to connect with the “mindscape” of the listeners’ where it was directed. The first hearers of the parable were quite familiar with the correct procedure of sowing seeds in the “landscape” claimed by Rome and its temple representatives. The peasants were raised to the belief system and a deep conviction that their allocated land was a gift from God (Ex 6:3, 8; Num 33:53; Lv 1:21; Dt 17:14). Therefore their commitment to comply with the temple demands for due tithes, offerings and other taxes was a demonstration of their thanksgiving to God for the gift of the land ownership.

The peasants were fully aware that under the rulership of Rome and temple elites, their land of which they were due stewards was forcibly confiscated by the said powers. Furthermore their hard-earned land produce was heavily taxed. The land grab by the Romans and religious elites resulted to the scarcity of land for large-scale farm production. A crude reminder was the Roman coinage depicting Caesar as a designated benefactor of the land produce, implying that the land, its produce and all its mineral resources do not belong to God but to Caesar (Van Eck 20014:7-8).

The imagery emanating from the parable meant that the “seed that falls on the road” was heavily taxed. Taxing land produce was accompanied by high rates and tributes. The seed that fell on rocky grounds signified the difficulties of farming in the less viable land. Knowing fully well that the best land was forcibly taken by the imperialist and by the temple elites. The seed that fell “among thorns” was literally choked by the thorns. The temple demands for tithes and offerings by the elites were choking life away from the peasants. The demands for tithes and offerings by the temple in the times of the Jesus of the Gospel, was not meant for religious observance, rather it was a civic duty that sustained Roman Imperialism and temple staff and its network of benefactors. The message of the parable is clear. Even though the harvest from the land is not satisfactory, nonetheless the peasants must hold true to the conviction that an abundant yield is almost a guarantee.

Jesus presents the parable to his listeners as a direct challenge. The peasants have an obligation to account about the “leftover” yield. The visible quality of the kingdom of God is sharing. Our dignity is affirmed in sharing. The kingdom demands that the needs of others must be attended to. Those living with food shortage have an obligation to confer dignity to each other, and more so to those destitute in their midst.

It does not matter how “little” we have in our position. The kingdom values expressed in sharing and in taking care of those in need, opens the possibilities for God’s intervention. God will multiply the meagre harvest for the benefit of everyone in need (Van Eck 20014:9). The restoration of the dignity of the vulnerable takes place in their willingness to be transformed by the values of the kingdom that points to reaching out to others.

6.5 THE PARABLE OF THE MERCHANT (MT 13:45-46) INTERPRETING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE ON OPENNESS TO OTHERS

With a sense of respect and dignity severely compromised, it is not surprising that 62% of the participants felt that their desperate condition affects their abilities to openly associate with other community members. It is only 37% who reported that they were not affected. It is without doubt to observe that the damage done by food shortage is not only directed to the stomach. Rather the whole personal demeanour of individuals and families is under assault. It is no wonder that our society is

characterised by growing cases of domestic violence, violence against foreign nationals, women, children and the abuse of the elderly.

When families are under severe social strains, genuine human and social relationships become impossible to attain. We need to bear in mind that openness to others is set up by mutual acknowledgment of the “other”. The “other” might imply someone of a different race, social class, religion or culture. Genuine openness to others in settings of the vulnerability of food shortage impinges on communities’ notions of Ubuntu-botho¹⁴² value systems. We need to remind ourselves that the parable of the merchant is about the radical transformation of an individual who was “an outsider”. Yet he chose to align himself with the values of the kingdom by embracing the vulnerable in his day and age.

6.5.1 The merchant (Mt 13:45-46) as a symbol of the kingdom of God

The main character of the parable is the person of a merchant. In the mindset of the audience of the historical Jesus, merchants were known to be self-driven and self-absorbed individuals. Merchants were driven by the desire to make profits in the ventures they were involved in. If the situation demanded that mountains must be moved. Nothing would stop the merchant from achieving his goals. Such drives were impelled by greed and wanting to have more. The merchants as aggressive entrepreneurs would undertake any financial or trade commitment as long as it would yield the expected results and more profits.

¹⁴² The difficulty of opening up as attested by the results of the study finds credence in the Soombramoney Case (Sachs 2009:189). Mr Soombramoney approached the Constitutional Court to seek redress for access to medical treatment with dialysis. The ruling of the Court was delivered by then President of the Court, Justice P. Chaskalson. However in a concurring judgment Justice Sachs located Mr Soombramoney’s issues within the sphere of communal interaction. His reading of Soombramoney’s contentions highlighted the challenges of maintaining open and accountable social relationships, notwithstanding the issues of poverty in affected communities. We must take note of financial challenges faced by vulnerable families. Social and economic impediments to openness to others are the core definitive of the nature of relations compromised by food shortage. It is in that mind-set that Justice Sachs (2009:189) alluded to the logic of “a new analytical framework” of social relations expressed in “human interdependence”. This human encounter assumes that interpersonal engagements have an explicitly “social interdependence” quality. The former dimension of “dependence” demands a conscious reliance of persons to each other for human fulfilment and meaningful co-existence. Thus “human interdependence” finds its full expression in the “quality of one’s caring relationships” in family bonds and social formations. On the other hand “social interdependence” speaks of the quality of social systems that enable society to quantify how human needs are met in a given environment. We therefore need to determine the nature and quality of “human interdependence” and “social interdependence” affected by food shortage as the study has suggested.

It does not come as surprise when Jesus presents the merchant as a personality that resembles what the kingdom of God stands for. Jesus comes to such a conclusion to the dismay and disbelief of his audience. They could not imagine in their wildest dreams those self-centered individuals who were driven by profits in all they do could be likened to the kingdom of God. Jesus wants to us to zoom into the character of the merchant due to the fact that his impending radical transformation calls into question our moral and perceptual posture to self and others (Van Eck 2015:12).

Jesus compares “the kingdom” with the conduct of the merchant (Van Eck 2015:12). Such a calculated positioning of the merchant becomes disdainful to the first hearers of the parable. The merchants apart from being commercial vultures were hand-in-glove with the powers that be in exploiting the peasants. We need to be aware of the fact if the situation demanded, the merchant could muster all devious means and social connections to forceful “extraction of goods, cash crops and commercial farming” (Van Eck 2015:12). Hence the scorn and ridicule from the audience of Jesus.

6.5.2 The reversal of exploitative conduct by the merchant and of the reality of the kingdom

The transformed conduct of the merchant brings home the message of the kingdom of God as a transforming reality. Both the reader and the audiences of Jesus are plunged into the “shock in the parable” (Van Eck 2015:12) of the kingdom represented by the one they despised. The conduct of the merchant is equivalent to the reality of the kingdom. The one who was castigated as an “outsider” is radically embedded into the realm of the kingdom of God.

The merchant in discovering an “expensive” and rare pearl in one of his trips decides to do the unthinkable. He decides to auction all his property as a beading to raise funds to purchase the pearl. The implication is clear for all to see. The merchant has turned his back to the tools of his trade. He who was self-driven, greedy and seeking for more is now a changed person. The one who was an “outsider” , sold his lot. He is out of business. Thus those who heard the parable could not justify any criticism and condemnation of the repentant merchant. The one once despised has attained the right of being an “insider”. The listener’s in their appropriation of the kingdom message cannot muster any criticism whatsoever against the transformed merchant.

He has conducted himself with deeds of integrity by aligning himself with the kingdom. Previously he was in pursuit of business activities that were self-aggrandizing and profit driven. However his opting for the kingdom values against the value system of exploitation reoriented his being. In bringing the parable to such a summit, Jesus was undoubtedly shredding to pieces the values of profit making (Van Eck 2015:14).

In the very same manner that the merchant has made an impossible turn in as far as human conduct is concerned, the audiences of the parable are challenged to respond in the same measure of trust and courage. The kingdom values that called the merchant to a radical reorientation of self and personal outlook on life, set the same terms and conditions to hearers of the parable. The listeners are summoned to kingdom driven commitment in personal relationships and accountability to each other. The new kingdom reality has redefined the terms of human relationships. Encountering others on the basis of mutual respect will foster responsiveness to the needs of others. The privileged are challenged to respond to the plight of the vulnerable. They are called to employ their acquired resources for the benefit of others rather than self-interests.

The kingdom values raised the bar for the vulnerable as well. In responding to the transformed conduct of the merchant they are reminded of the inherent capacity to embrace the merchant. The values of the kingdom of God have undone the stigma attached to the relationship between the merchant and his clients in his business dealings. Thus the stigmatized relationship between those who have “more than enough” food amidst hunger is bound to change when subjected to the kingdom principles. Those experiencing hunger must view their conditions in the light of the transforming values of the kingdom. They must not lock themselves in colonies of isolation and disempowerment. Both the haves and the have not’s can equally respond to the values of the kingdom. They both have a claim to the same transforming vision of the kingdom of God. If they can see the possibility of opening up and relating to each other on the basis of the values of the kingdom. Then the kingdom has become a reality in the here and now.

6.6 THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS INTERPRETING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE ON GOOD RELATIONS¹⁴³ WITH OTHERS

A staggering 61% reported that food shortage interferes with them having meaningful relationships with others, against 38% who felt that they were not affected. These figures are an astounding indictment against a people whose ontological framework is premised on the philosophy of Ubuntu-botho.

Thus the given figures tell of a story of deep loss of self-identity and collective purpose of being an African in a country with a constitution that celebrate racial and cultural diversity¹⁴⁴. Yet such a staggering number of community members lack the capacity to relate to fellow human beings on a human-to-human level.

6.6.1 The transformative motif of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

The critical reading of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) brings to the fore the dynamics of social relationships of individuals in totally divergent

¹⁴³ The thesis that food shortage has negative impact in social relations cannot be seen in isolation of our past that saw transformation just twenty-two years ago. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) narrates how families were broken by unjust arrest of parents and children alike. Brokenness of family life meant broken relationships from the fundamental structure of social formation. If people could not sustain healthy relations within family circles. How meaningful relationships could be built and nurtured in the broader communities, let alone across racial lines. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) name the disfunctionality of family brokenness as “inter-generational”. It is a brokenness which continues to carry negative consequences for township residence. Its negative outcomes were consciously and in some cases, by share negligence allowed to infuse mistrust and disrespect of children against parents. The main reason being the perception held by the activist youths that their parents were not putting their wait in the struggle against the dismantling of apartheid machinery. On the other hand the parents projected their sense of impotence against the oppressive systems by resenting the guts of the children because of genuine fear for the lives of the offspring. The ripple effects of family brokenness resulted further to disjointed “social networks” reflective of financial constraints, unemployment and dropping out of school by most of the affected youths. The reality of food shortage we are confronting in the study is further creating a schism in black families and communities. Close family and societal relationships are now defined by the ability or the failure of each family to provide adequate food for its members (See the *Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1988, Extract Four, para, 90-91*).

¹⁴⁴In view of our study food shortage has given birth to a diversity of vulnerability. The diversity of brokenness defined by food shortage is well capsulated in Baumeister’s notion of the “magnitude gap”. Baumeister’s concept of differentiation points to “discrepancy between two quiet different and irreconcilable positions”. In the case of the study we deduce that it is expecting too much from the vulnerable to “normally” interact with others without any difficulty. Food shortage creates an impediment, a “discrepancy” for affected families and individuals to have healthy relations with self and the community at large. We could argue then that the expressed inability to relate to others as a result of food shortage implies that the vulnerable are relegated to positions that defines them on the basis of their lack, rather than their potentiality. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) contextualises Baumeister’s philosophy as the “perspective gap”. These two points of entry into the reality of social vulnerability can be surmised as the positional and perceptual differences of the given reality of destitution. Food shortage has redefined social relations in our country. The divergent appreciation of locality of vulnerability and its subjective experiences dictate broadening schism of hunger in view of contested interests of privilege. (See the *Consequences of the Violations of Human Rights of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, 1988, Extract Four, para, 47-50*).

stations in life. Van Eck (2009: 9) insists that the parable under discussion points to the centre of gravity of the ministry of Jesus. Jesus' main focus was about the radical transformation of all social reality. The consciousness of the historical Jesus of the Gospels about his ministry was to open up all aspects of social life to be transformed by the reality of the kingdom of God in the "here and now". Jesus was not obsessed with heaven. He was occupied about the possibilities and actuality of making kingdom values tangible in the present. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we need to appreciate that it stands as a critic of social stratification that endorses inequality.

In the presentation of the parable we see Jesus taking a stand against the system of wealth and social status that negates the poor sections of community. In the historical setting of the parable, the elites constantly entertained each other. Subsequently the culture and social practice of opulence dictated that return parties would be organised as a way of impressing one's guests and in the process enhancing one's social status and honor in the face of the guests who honoured the invite.

Nonetheless in the parable we witness a rich man who repeatedly organises "parties", yet he fails to be responsive to the needs of an individual "placed" at his gate by the circumstances of life. The rich man could not allow his social status, honor and networks of privilege to be compromised by his association with one "begging at his gate" (Van Eck 2009: 9). Lazarus was positioned by life circumstances right at "his gate". Yet he chose to ignore the one "eating the crumbs" that fell from his table. He could have made a difference. Lazarus represented the social outcast and religiously impure. The rich man was in a position to bring about change in the life of the beggar. He was in a position to close the yawning gap of social disparity between himself and Lazarus who was representing the poor. Instead he ignored Lazarus and those facing the same predicament.

Van Eck's (2009:8) reading of the social conditions of Lazarus tells of downwards spiral of a life with potential of ending up as a beggar at the gate¹⁴⁵ of the rich. Lazarus was trapped in the cycle of destitution. He was excommunicated from taking part in religious services due to his sickness. Hence the dogs were licking his wounds. The parable directly exposes and confronts the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor in Lazarus' time to the present age. The conclusion of the parable without Abraham managing to facilitate reconciliation between the rich man and Lazarus in the hereafter points to what is already taking place in the here and now. In

¹⁴⁵ (See M. Mashinini, 2015), in his reflection on the personal and social-relational dynamics on the implication of this periscope, as a result of social and economic inequality in our country, in his article "Who is sitting at your gate and why?, (Luke 16:19-31)", *South African Soldier, Vol 22, no 7, page 46, Department of Defence, Pretoria*, "When Jesus told the story of the rich man and Lazarus. His listeners were familiar with the possible location and conditions from which the episode emerged. As modern readers we need to stretch our imagination and try to understand how the world of Jesus functioned. Jesus was born and raised under the domination of the Roman Empire. He lived his whole life as one of the oppressed. When reading the gospels we discover that Jesus was a rural resident. He grew up in a typical rural family. His was not a rich family and the people who listened to his parable were themselves rural folks. Therefore they were quite interested to hear his point of view regarding the challenges of inequality reflected in the given parable. Jesus as a good story teller captures the attention of his listeners by describing in details the identities of the two main characters of the story. The first one was rich. Whilst the other was poor. The rich man could easily be identified by the quality of his wardrobe. He wore 'fine linen' and a special kind of purple possibly imported from Egypt. The colour purple was a status symbol of nobility, honour and success.

On the other hand, we find Lazarus 'placed' at the rich man's gate. Remember that even that 'gate' did not belong to him. He owned nothing except a rank of wounds. He was 'placed' or rightfully pushed by circumstances to the gate of the rich man. The living conditions of Lazarus gave him only one option - to sit (his potential and dreams) at the gate of his fellow brother. Lazarus was wearing a blanket of festering wounds right at the stoop of the rich man. Jesus tells us that no one cared enough to clean his wounds. By the way, the religious rules from the temple dictated that one who touches an open sore is ritually unclean. Hence no one was prepared to be declared unholy by associating with Lazarus. No wonder the dogs were feasting on his wounds. Lazarus was a social, professional and a religious outcast by the virtue of his wasted gifts and talents.

Jesus tells this story to remind us that we all have a Lazarus in our lives. There is a person whom life has literally dumped in your path. There is someone out there who is less fortunate than you on many respects. There is a Lazarus who might be your unemployed relative, domestic worker, a subordinate, a colleague or a foreigner. There is someone who looks up to you to make a difference in his/her life. You and I have a Lazarus who is calling on us to clean his wounds. The choice we have is either we care or let to the dogs continue to feast on the wounds of the one stuck at our 'gate'. Lazarus, how dare you dream on another man's stoop?

Jesus tells us that the rich man chose to use to the back door of his mansion rather than to face the pain of Lazarus. By the virtue of his position in life the rich man had the means to change the life of Lazarus. Yet he played ignorance in the face of indignity. Maybe he was not told of how Lazarus got his wounds. But did he bother to ask? Do we bother to find out why others seem not to be kind to us? Do we care about our colleagues and about the kinds of wounds they carry everyday they come to work? Perhaps they incurred those wounds while serving and on a call of duty? Or do we think they are not clever enough, or they simply lack ambition? Is it our wounds that prevent us to recognize the wounds of others? Jesus concludes the parable by telling us that we must not expect heaven to come down on earth to solve our challenges. Abraham, representing the possibilities of heaven was not mandated by God to impose heaven's solution in areas of our competency and level of responsibility. We cannot blame others in our failure to do what is just and right. Remember, the fact of life is that roles do swap! Ask the rich man, from where did he plead to make things right?"

the parable Jesus was engaging the systems of marginalisation, opulence and inequality. Jesus shows that the failure by those in a position to make a difference in the life of others will result to total breakdown of genuine reconciliation. In the case of our study the poor are struggling to make ends meet. Communities do not have enough food. It is encumbered upon the privilege and those connected to power to make a difference in the lives of the families struggling with food shortage. Changes must be made while the poor are still in a position to be responsive to assistance, than when they decide to loot and take by violence what is due to them.

Van Eck (2011:9) in aligning the parable with the kingdom of God addresses a number of issues. Firstly he points out that the parable conveys the fact that the kingdom of God is also inclusive of those individuals and class of people who were “rendered unclean by the kingdom of the temple”. The radical implication for such an assertion is that Jesus by using the shepherds in reference to the kingdom of God painted God’s kingdom as “unclean”, in turn challenging the religious stereotypes of purity.

The second verdict of the parable means that the kingdom of God emerges in ordinary circumstances. The “unexpected” (Van Eck 2011:9) character of the parable follows the same disruptive route to similar episodes. The owner of the vineyard paid equal wages to the labourers who worked incomparable hours. A gentile Samaritan displayed human decency by providing needed assistance to the wounded in a desolate road. An emotionally wounded father decided to welcome back in his arms a son who turned his back against his family, in the process wasting all his riches. As such the shepherd could have devised other means to replace the lost sheep. He could have stolen someone else sheep. He possibly could have been aggressive in defending his innocence when confronted by the owners. Instead “the shepherd takes the risk to go and look for the one that is lost” (Van Eck 2011:9). In this regard the shepherd becomes a tangible symbol of non-violence consistent with the values of the kingdom of God. The resounding message of the parable of the lost sheep is an assertion that “the kingdom is also present there where everybody has enough”.

Therefore in the situation of vulnerability we become witnesses to the “risky” conduct of pensioners as primary caregivers. The symbol of the pensioners as providers talks

of the kingdom of God as a contrast “against the social and religious grain of the day; stories that challenge the “normalcies” of society; stories that are in direct opposition to the way “we do things here”; stories that shock and question the *status quo*, power and privilege; and stories that characteristically call for a reversal of roles and frustrate common expectations” (Van Eck 2011:9). The story of the pensioners who, like the shepherds, are risking their well-being, comfort and health by sharing their incomes with their unemployed adult children, and their grand- children. This tells of a “re-envision” of social intervention against hunger and poverty. It is such a conscientious shepherding that presents to us an “alternative world to the world created by privilege and power, tradition and custom, religious authorities”, tolerant of systemic vulnerability.

6.7 THE PARABLE OF UNMERCIFUL SERVANT (MT 18:23-33):

INTERPRETING RENTING OBLIGATION OF THE VULNERABLE

The figures of those renting, detail the number of participants who have to dig deep from their meagre resources in settling rent fees on a monthly basis. The picture that emerges show that a total number of 50 participants have rent obligations, with 29 females renting accommodation, followed by 21 males. A further 36 participants are renting backyard rooms, followed by 13 who are renting flats, and only 1 participant is renting a house.

6.7.1 The social milieu of the parable

Interpreting the renting obligations of the vulnerable by using the parable of unmerciful servant will bring about a deeper understanding the challenges faced by hungry communities. In this regard Van Eck (2009:10) interrogates three perspectives of social-scientific readings espoused by Herzog, Scott and Derrett respectively. Van Eck (2009:10) understands the initial reading of the given parable as conveying the conditions of settling tributes by the elites in the context of “agrarian (aristocratic) societies.” Thus the main issue definitive of the emerging “conflict” in the parable revolves around the king as s retailer and his subordinate.

The narrative presents the decision of the king who decided to punish his subordinate for failing to settle his debts. Nonetheless the king modified that decision by conferring the forgiveness of the debt of the subordinate. However the

subordinate being the recipient of kindness from his master, failed to do the same to the servant who owed him far less than what he failed to pay his master. He demanded the full payment of the debt. The king on hearing the actions of his subordinate decided to re-impose his sentence and judgment upon the unmerciful servant.

6.7.2 Patron-client relationship and honour as terms for debt cancellation

Scott and Derrett (1970:32-47) analyses the parable on the basis of failed terms of contract between a king and his servant. Thus when the king decided to cancel the debt owed by the servant, he was restoring the expertise of the servant of collecting taxes on his behalf. The king expected that his acts of kindness to be emulated by the servant. The servant by not cancelling the debt owed to him, failed to rise up to the challenge of “breaking the cycle of ruthless exploitation and extraction” (Van Eck 2009:12). Hence the king had to maintain his position of honour and to maintain the *status quo* by passing judgment on the servant. However Van Eck (2009:13) believes the three social-readings make a correct judgment by placing the parable in its social milieu. Such readings display some shortcomings. Van Eck (2009:13) challenges Herzog and Derret to locate their interpretations of the parable in a comparative mode with similar documentation when handling issues of debt cancelation.

6.7.3 Patron-client relationship and power relations in debt relief

Van Eck (2009:19) resumes his analysis by stating that the parable must be perceived “in terms of its social realia”. As such the cancellation of the debt by the king is driven by expected social norms of patron-client relationship based on honour and shame dynamics. The king accords forgiveness to the servant who is duly expected to “reciprocate accordingly”. This reinforces the social normalcy of unequal social groups. The basis of such social arrangements was not informed by “altruistic motives”.

Debt cancelation represents the imposition and perpetuation of the position of power and privilege by the elites. The actions of the king display a calculated “exercise of power over others” (Van Eck 2009:20). The kindness of the king must be seen as the assertion of the exploitative values of the agrarian based economy of the haves and the have-nots. Therefore the Jesus in narrating the parable was challenging and

exposing the exploitative value system of the first century Palestine. Through this parable the Galilean was unmasking the values espousing patronage, honour, power and privilege that were to be subjected to kingdom of God. Hence the values of the kingdom of God will bring about a “general reciprocity” instead of a conditional reciprocity with intent to place people in their presumed classes of superior and inferior categories.

6.7.4 Kingdom values as subversion of power systems that maintains vulnerability of hunger

If we interpret the conditions of the vulnerable, driven by the demand to pay rent, we can deduce the persistent normalisation of unequals. The reader still gets the impression of the perpetuation of patron-client relations that continues to entrench “reciprocal” interactions. In this instance the value system and the interest of patronage, honour and privilege of the recipient of rent from the hungry are protected. Given the conditions of hunger in the townships, the demand for rent represents deliberate “exercise of power over others” (Van Eck 2009:20).

The demands for rent payments from the vulnerable themselves as a class of the disempowered creates deepened levels of vulnerability. On another level the demands by corporate and public institution for the poor to pay for service such as water and electricity (per profit terms and not affordability) further entrenches their vulnerability. The rich and the systems of opulence continue to protect “their privileged positions and power”. Thus the parable confronts systems of domination sustained by notions of “honour, power and privilege” (Van Eck 2009:20).

The kingdom of God ushers in a new kind of a “general reciprocity” that demands the cancelation of debt against the vulnerable (Van Eck 2009:20). On the other hand, the vulnerable can relate to the voice of Jesus encouraging them to advance reciprocity of mutual recognition that affirms their dignity and well-being in fulfilling social obligations. The values of the kingdom do not promote unaccountable civic citizenship. Social vulnerability does not necessary mean those individuals are by the very nature of existence trapped in poverty. The reading of the given parable and its positioning by Jesus implies the capacity to respond to situations of oppression by the affected individuals.

Jesus is telling his audiences they have a God-given ability to challenge the values that place credence on social status. Jesus is conveying the message that those in positions of power, be they from the ranks of the elites or the poor, have a moral obligation to cancel debt if it is in their power to do so. The maintenance of debt relationships does not reflect the values of the kingdom. Exploitation and the exercise of unequal power in social relations is not an “option” of the kingdom values (Van Eck 2009:20).

6.8 THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS IN THE VINEYARD (*GOS THOM. 65/MK 12:1-12*) INTERPRETING EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME STATUS OF THE VULNERABLE

The employment status of the participants shows the desperate situation the people are experiencing. The study showed only 35% of the participants is in the formal employment. Further 12% reported that they were self- employed, while 8% stated that they were engaged in some form of temporal employment, which is a seasonal type of employment that is driven by demand for extra labour by the employers, with 7% stating that they were unemployed. The statistics also show that 25% of the participants are scholars, and 10% are pensioners.

The figures show clearly that it is only the 35% who are employed that carry the burden of providing support to their dependants. The worrying factor of the figures is that the pensioners carry a huge burden of supporting their dependants (adult children and grand- children) through their pension grants. The challenge has been exacerbated by the fact that a number of pensioners have to step in the position of their deceased children who demised as a result of HIV/AIDS related illnesses.

The reading of the parable of the tenants in the vineyard must expose the conditions of social entrapment in which the pensioners are subjected. We need to show that the pensioners are first and foremost a disadvantaged group. Pensioners do not have socio-economic bargaining power. The social support they provide is in fact stealing from the resources that were meant to sustain them.

6.8.1 Table: 15 Income status of the participants

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Grant	31	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Other	92	29.7	29.7	39.7
	Pension	35	11.3	11.3	51.0
	Salary	151	48.7	48.7	99.7
	Salary and grant	1	0.3	0.3	100.0
	Total	310	100.0	100.0	

The income figures show that less than 50% of the participants receive a salary income, followed by 29% who receive financial support mostly through assistance. Again 11% stated that they make a living through state pension, with 10% depending on state grants. Only 3% reported that they receive both salary and state grants, mostly adults who have dependants under their care.

6.8.2 The parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65/Mk 12:1-12*) interpreting the income status of the participants

The issues that emanate in the parable of the tenants in the vineyard bear a realistic resemblance with the economic challenges faced by the participants in the study. We can argue that the social, economic and political condition of those dealing with food shortage is similar to hearers of the parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard. Van Eck (2007:915) presents a social-scientific reading of *Gospel of Thomas 65* as a comparative narrative that reflects the realistic social conditions of agrarian enterprise in first century Palestine. However we need to appreciate the analysis of the parable from the vantage point of a couple of scholars who presents a social-scientific reading of the parable.

6.8.3 Honour and shame in *Gospel of Thomas 65*

The parable of the tenants reflects the first-century Palestine worldview regarding the question of honour and shame. In the parable the reader encounters the perceptions of both the landlord and the tenants and how they positioned their honour and shame respectively. Van Eck (2007:927) suggests that the Mediterranean worldview of issues of honour and shame were informed by the deeply held notion that honour could either be “ascribed or acquired”. The former was attained by the virtue of

inheritance as reflected in the exercise of power in the public office. Whereas acquired honour became a reality depending on the persons worth necessitated by one's achievements.

This social expression of the status of honour was further expatiated by the dynamics of "interaction of challenge and riposte" (Van Eck 2007:930). Among the issues of challenge that have a bearing on the parable is the perceived actions or inactions of the landlord, responding to the challenges of the tenants. The interpretation of the parable must take into account the landlord's reaction to the violent position of the tenants. His response seeks to protect his social position as a way to save face. He could not take decisions that could be interpreted by his subjects as giving-in to the demands of the tenants even though their demands were legitimate.

Whereas the tenants perceived their actions as way of up-holding their honour in the face of the landlord's failure to honour his commitments to them as his subjects. The fundamental challenge posed by the parable is the question of systemic violence acted upon by the landlord in his demands for profit gains against the tenants. On the other hand the tenants are challenged by the parable for their violent kneejerk reaction against the representatives of the landlord.

The kingdom values affirm the sanctity of life. Both interactions are not spared from the critique assured by the kingdom message of the parable. The values of the kingdom of God affirms the dignity and due rights of the tenants as well as the worth and dignity of the landlord. The inherent dignity of both parties is upheld by the kingdom values for meaningful interaction in the here and now

6.9 VULNERABLE GROUPS AS THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (LK 13:18-19) INTERPRETING THE NEWLY EMERGING VULNERABLE GROUPS

6.9.1 In-depth analysis of focus groups

The reader will attempt to reflect on the actual experiences, precisely the "material situation" (Arnal 2001:10) giving birth to the emergence of such groups. In our understanding of the comprehensive views of the participants it is imperative to note the significance of special vulnerability among the youth and middle age groups, and

highlight how the question of food shortage directly impinges on the quality of life of the affected groups. Similar experiences of despondency among the youth resemble the issues raised by youth revolt in 1976 under the leadership of Tsietsi Mashinini.

As a country we make an effort that every year the youth celebrate the Youth Day events on the 16th of June. On this day the youth are encouraged to reflect on the sacrifices and contributions of the 76 generation in the liberation of our country. Thus the views of the participants in the study give concerning perceptions. The youth in the (22-35) age group (53%) attest to vulnerability in transitional expectations and social demands. This group is confronted by unemployment and stagnation in social mobility. The precarious social conditions experienced by the youth, especially African youth leave much to be desired. The study brings to our attention the fact that African youth is “structurally trapped” (Terreblanche 2014: xiv) in conditions of despondency and left to depend on pension and child-support grants. The recent report of Statistics SA, in its twenty-year review of the levels of skills and employability among the youth depicts African youth as highly disadvantaged compared to other races. (Maswanganyi 2014:7).

6.9.2 Vulnerable socio-economic among adults (40-55 age group)

We have noted the prevalence of vulnerability experienced by the (40-55) age group (25%), mostly women. These women are caregivers, with the meagre resources at their disposal. Their experiences are attested by the urban study that confirmed that 46% of the women in metropolitan areas “are bread-winners and contribute to the largest share to household finances”. Further 44% of women are raising at least two children (Maswanganyi 2014:7). The vulnerability particularly of African women is significant in the sense that their vulnerability is defined on the bases of race, gender and class.

6.9.3 The parable of the mustard seed and emerging vulnerable groups (Lk 13:18-19)

The parable of the mustard seed is selected to interpret the situation of the vulnerable groups due to the fact that it is revolutionary in nature. The reader is persuaded that one cannot read the parable of the mustard seed and still hold a non-confrontational approach to issues of social injustice. This parable by its very

construction and metaphors evoke a desire to disrupt power arrangements that justifies and perpetuates exploitation. The parable of the mustard seed represents a pamphlet for socio-economic disruption of economic systems that encourage the recruitment and the enrichment of the few black elites, while the majority (with empty stomachs) are expected to praise such as role models.

6.9.4 The parable of the mustard seed and the social position of the vulnerable

Our reading of the parable will focus on the how the audiences of the historical Jesus in 72-30 CE understood the meaning of its message. The approach undertaken by the social-scientific reading argues for that Jesus in this parable was presenting the reality of the kingdom of God. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God “was a present reality” (Van Eck 2013:233). This interpretive angle perceives the narrative of the parable as containing elements that are categorically challenging and serving as instruments of subversion of the Roman Imperialism. The subversive categories of the parable are also directed against the temple aristocratic rule and its exclusionist ritual practices. Van Eck (2013:233) comments without any apology that “the mustard seed is a story of how the kingdom of God subverts the kingdom of Caesar and the kingdom of the Temple”. In our reading we would seek to show how the emergence of the vulnerable as mustard seed “subverts” economic and political kingdoms state capture and patronage in South Africa today.

6.9.5 The vulnerable as the mustard seed

The reader is convinced that the emergence of the two socio-economic vulnerable groups can only be understood as a mustard seed. The status of the vulnerable as it is reflected in the study tells us that they are a dangerous reality in a post-apartheid South Africa. In as much as the mustard seed has the potential to re-seed itself perpetually. The vulnerable groups of youth and middle age adults are a treat to the stability and prosperity of our country. It is the socio-economic conditions that have birthed the prevailing vulnerability. Social systems of vulnerability cannot be wished away by empty political promises. South Africa’s state of the nation has brought into reality the possibility of not only “what”, but the “when” of our nations disintegration as we have witness again the sporadic eruption of the so-called “xenophobic attacks” in Soweto and other townships across the Republic.

The parable of the mustard seed presents a dangerous scenario when viewed from the reality of the vulnerable groups. In as much as the mustard seed is perceived as an “invasive and difficult, if not at all possible, to control” (Van Eck 2013:244), the vulnerable groups poses the same danger to the stability of our country. The reader holds the view that the current conditions of vulnerability and the state’s failure to arrest the situation are setting up the country to be usurped by the demands of the vulnerable. In the parable we have seen the mustard seed “taking over the kingdom of Rome” (Van Eck 2013:244). What makes us think that the issues of hunger cannot overrun the emerging democratic dispensation? Thus plunging the whole nation in a state of “chaos and pollution” of vulnerability.

Read from the view of the mustard seed, vulnerable groups brings into question the “respectability” of a state that prefers social grants, instead of transformative economic empowerment of the affected groups. The vulnerable groups of youth and middle age adults “spreads effortlessly, takes over and pollutes, bringing along its unwelcome inhabitants that subverts” (Van Eck 2013:244) the interests of the state and the socio-economic elites.

As Van Eck (2013:243) has made us aware of the invasive nature of the kingdom of God. We can therefore by implication assert that the vulnerable socio-economic group “is like a mustard seed that, when it becomes a plant, can be put to good use in terms of its culinary and medicinal properties, but watch out: although it is an annual, it reseeds itself, and keeps on reseeding. It comes up again and again. You cannot stop it, and not really erase it, the mustard plant grows very rapid and aggressive, and spreads like a weed or invasive shrub”. This understanding confirms that this special vulnerable group has become a mustard seed. They embody the disruptive qualities of the mustard. South Africa denies such a reality in its own peril.

As a nation we have reached a threshold. Our country is at the crossroads. It could be argued if “the powers that be” turn a blind eye to the reality of structural discrimination of the new dispensation; the country is likely to experience its own Arab Spring. The youth in a number of university campuses are demanding radical transformation. They want their demands attended to with urgency. Those in academic leadership positions must respond to the urgency of the crisis at hand.

Vulnerable groups have become a real threat, and their demands cannot be wished away.

6.10 THE PARABLE OF THE BANQUET (LUKE 14:16b–23) INTERPRETING CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

The child-headed households presents a picture of young people, while being faced with the challenges of food shortage, who have to deal with the fact that in some cases they are parents themselves, and at times are the primary guardians to their siblings. The figures show that 16 female youths are either parents themselves or have dependants, with only 1 sixteen-year-old male teenager who is looking after 3 dependants.

The figures also show that three female teenagers are responsible for not less than two dependants. All in all, a total number of 16 youths are raising and taking care of 28 children and 44 dependants.

6.10.1 A social-scientific interpretation of Luke 14:16b–23: Interpretations of the parable employing aspects of a social-scientific reading

Van Eck (2013:14) presents a social-scientific interpretation of the parable of the Feast by acknowledging that it is a minority of scholars who interrogated the parable from the given scientific model. In a summation of attempts to engage the parable from the perspective of the social-scientific reading, attention is given to the view that “focused on the social function of meals”. This approach intends to bring out the link between questions of honour and shame, alongside the terms of “reciprocity” and accepted norms of socio-religious purity.

Another interpretive angle within the scope of social-scientific aims at highlighting the role of the settings of meals as a conduit of fostering social arrangements influenced by perceptions of “honour and shame” definitive of the social context of Jesus the Galilean. In the same vein the matter of “purity and pollution” stands out as a banner that set the lines of demarcation between differing classes of people. Hence the parable is regarded as representing hopes that dismantle the dividing walls of social stratification.

6.10.2 The social world of the parable

Van Eck (2013:7) points to the reader that a deeper understanding of the meaning of the parable of the Feast depends on how one appreciates how societies were arranged in “pre-industrial” urban areas. He highlights the fact that the pre-industrial metropolitan arrangements placed human settlements in accordance with the social status of the people concerned. The cities were designed in such a way that the elites were literally insulated from the lower classes of society. City walls were used to keep the impure and the poor outside of the city precinct. Interaction between the elites and the non-elites was forbidden. Within the city walls specific areas were allocated to families of significance. Those who had power and privileged connections were at the centre of the city.

The non-elites were further driven away into the periphery of social margins beyond the boundaries of the city walls. The group that was driven to the outskirts of the city consisted of “prostitutes, beggars, tanners and other social outcasts like lepers” (Van Eck 2013:7). This group could enter the city walls on conditions that they could sell their labour as daily workers. Hence the significance of the parable makes an impact to the reader in considering that the host in the parable gives an instruction for an inclusive invitation. Those on the streets, outskirts of the city and from the rural villages are also invited, as attested in Lk 14:21, 23.

6.10.3 Meals as ceremonies: Honour and shame, patronage, reciprocity and purity

An invitation to participate in a social occasion involving meals carried specific cultural conventions. Van Eck (2013:9) notes that in the context of the Mediterranean worldview meals served as barometers for maintenance of communal value systems. It is on those meal occasions that commonly held values were ascertained and confirmed. Social stratification was upheld. The question of honour and status was not compromised. In this regard the social-scientific reading brings into our attention the fact that meals in the given context were perceived as “ceremonies”. In such ceremonies existing social arrangements were reinforced. Different social roles and areas of demarcation were strictly adhered to.

The obvious implication is that different groups and classes of people were expected to share meals with their respective peers. The poor will eat with the poor. The elite will eat with the elite. Such a conduct enabled the possibility of “reciprocity” to be observed. Those invited to a meal would then be in a position to return the honour by inviting their host to a meal. In this instance being invited in a meal placed a burden of “indebtedness” to the hosting partner. Availing self to a meal in the 1st century Mediterranean setting carried along “serious business” implications.

It is important to appreciate the role of gossip as a system (Van Eck 2013:9) of verifying the credibility and social acceptance of each occasion, plays in this situation. In the parable the process of validating the occasion ensued when the initial invitation is conveyed to “possible guests”. This invitation served as a notification for the venue and the time of the occasion. Furthermore the first invite served as a template to assist the host in planning the meal based on the number of confirmation received. When the second invite was delivered, the normal social process of verifying the invited guest would have run its course.

As such, the confirmation to attend the meal meant that the respondent was duly satisfied about the calibre of the expected social partners who would grace the occasion. It meant that one’s social standing and honour would be enhanced by such public endorsement of the meal by people of same status and reputation. This parable depicts how deliberate attempts to protect one’s honour and status materialised. The excuses forwarded by those initially invited tell a mouthful. The elites could not risk losing respect of fellow class counterparts by being part of an occasion that meant the inclusion of non-elites, the poor and the social outcasts.

6.11 THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP (LUKE 15:4-6) INTERPRETING PENSIONERS AS A VULNERABLE GROUP

The figures that must register great concern deal with forced role of pensioners as primary care givers to their families. The figures show that 67% of the pensioners are solely responsible for at least 5 dependants with the stretch of their pension grants, and only 8% of pensioners look after more than 6 dependants, with 23% reporting

that they have no dependants under their care. It becomes clear that it is only 23% of pensioners who have the privilege to enjoy their pension and spend it as they wish.

6.11.1 The social standing of the shepherd in parable as a representation of the pensioners

Van Eck (2011:9) in aligning the parable with the kingdom of God addresses a number of issues. Firstly he points out that the parable conveys the fact that the kingdom of God is also inclusive of those individuals and class of people who were “rendered unclean by the kingdom of the temple”. The radical implication for such an assertion is that Jesus by using the shepherds in reference to the kingdom of God painted God’s kingdom as “unclean”. This position taken by Jesus challenges the religious stereotypes of purity.

The second verdict of the parable means that the kingdom of God emerges in ordinary circumstances. The “unexpected” (Van Eck 2011:9) character of the parable follows the same disruptive route of similar episodes. The owner of the vineyard paid equal wages to the labourers who worked incomparable hours. A gentile Samaritan displayed human decency by providing needed assistance to the wounded in a desolate road. An emotionally wounded father decided to welcome back in his arms a son who turned his back against his family, in the process wasting all his riches. As such the shepherd could have devised other means to replace the lost sheep.

He could have stolen someone else sheep. He possibly could have been aggressive in defending his innocence when confronted by the owners. Instead “the shepherd takes the risk to go and look for the one that is lost” (Van Eck 2011:9). In this regard the shepherd becomes a tangible symbol of non-violence consistent with the values of the kingdom of God. The resounding message of the parable of the lost sheep is an assertion that “the kingdom is also present there where everybody has enough”.

Therefore in the situation of vulnerability, we become witnesses to the “risky” conduct of pensioners as primary caregivers. The symbol of the pensioners as providers talks of the kingdom of God as a contrast “against the social and religious grain of the day; stories that challenge the normalcies’ of society; stories that are in direct opposition to the way we do things here; stories that shock and question the *status quo*, power

and privilege; and stories that characteristically call for a reversal of roles and frustrate common expectations” (Van Eck 2011:9).

The story of the pensioners as shepherds risking their well-being, comfort and health by sharing their incomes, tells of a reorientation of social intervention against hunger and poverty by the values of the kingdom. It is such a conscientious shepherding that presents to us an “alternative world to the world created” by the privileges of power, social traditions and customary/religious practices tolerant of systemic vulnerability.

6.12 THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS INTERPRETING THE WIDENING WEALTH GAP BETWEEN DIFFERENT CLASSES IN SOUTH AFRICA (LK 16:19-26)

6.12.1 The backdrop of the parable (LK 16:19-26): An advanced agrarian (aristocratic) society

The widening gap between the rich and poor in our country poses a serious threat to social stability. We therefore need to consciously engage with the redemptive meaning and application of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus for our situation of vulnerability. It is important that we fully appreciate how Van Eck reads the social background of the parable. The reading of the society that informed the formative aspects of the parable is characterised by first-century Palestine. It was a society whose agriculture economy had attained a level of sophistication and advancement. Social stratification necessitated that people were either belonging to the aristocratic class of the “haves”, or that of the peasants, the “have-nots” (Van Eck 2009:7). The ruling class were better placed to accumulate more wealth and violently entrench their ill-gained privileged status.

The economic landscape placed in the cities the aristocratic class comprising less than two percent. The rest of the population, the peasants were rural based. In the first-century Palestine, middle class as a modern economic arrangement was non-existent. The ruling aristocratic class though in numbers were a minority of less than two percent. They had total ownership of “the wealth (from one half up to two thirds) by controlling the land” (Van Eck 2009:7). The cheap labour force and the variety of agricultural produce compounded the wealth capital of the elite. The wealth of the

elites was further expatiated by the tax regime that was unfairly skewed to benefit the rich.

The peasants had to comply with civil and religious tax demands. The subsequent outcome is that the peasants had to rely on the landowners for loans. When failing to repay the advanced loans with compound interest. Their lands and farms, which were in family holdings, were usurped by the elites to settle the debts. The social position of the peasants was cascading to levels of structural and systemic retrogression. Structural “indebtedness” of the peasants became a permanent feature that has reference in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Since the peasants were located at the margins of economic activity. They were subjected to systemic vulnerability. Their marginalisation resulted to “a loss of subsistence, being displaced from smallholder to tenant, then from tenant to dependent day labourer and eventually ending up as part of the expendables of society (such as beggars)” (Van Eck 2009:7). Lazarus typically portrays the generic conditions of the poor in the parable.

6.12.2 The transformative motif of the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus

Van Eck (2009:9) surmised the heart of this parable when he mentions that “the main focus” of the ministry of the Galilean was about a transformed social order, instead of spiritual concerns. The historical mission of the Galilean according to the readings of Van Eck (2009:9) in agreement with Oakman (2008:296) is that: “Jesus’ historical activity was essentially about politics and the restructuring of society, and not about religion or theology.” Therefore when we appropriate the core message of this parable, we deduce that it serves as a critique of socio-economic arrangements that justify and tolerate inequality.

Through this parable the historical Jesus challenges the *status quo* of the opulence displayed by the elites in the face of destitution. The rich man and his patron associates indulge in “parties”, while the poor represented by Lazarus are facing starvation right at the doorstep of the rich. In this parable we witness the loss of moral sensitivity by the rich by refusing to “see” the face of poverty in the person of Lazarus. The rich man would only engage those at his gate if they bring prestige and

honour. He is not willing even to pass at his own gate “simply because there is nothing in it for him to do so. He could only lose some honour” (Van Eck 2009:9).

Lazarus at the gate of the rich man was a symbol of “the expendables and the socially impure during his day”. What the parable does not fail to present to the reader is the fact that the social condition of Lazarus and those he represented was the creation of the elites.

Van Eck (2009:8) elaborates in detail the opposing social identities of the rich man and Lazarus. Firstly we need to register in our attention the reality of “great class disparity” that characterised the first hearers of the parable by the historical Jesus in first-century Palestine. This structural social divide benefitted the urban elites against the peasants in rural settings. The elites had controlled all systems of wealth creation. The peasants were cast into suffocating poverty at the margins of economic activity. The rich in this parable is of Jewish descent just like Lazarus due to his connection to the line of Abraham. The glaring difference is that he “wears purple”. The colour purple in clothes represented the aristocratic class. It was a statement symbol for wealth and status.

On the other hand, Lazarus at the gate of the rich man mansion signifies the widening gap that existed between various social classes. Lazarus as the creation of the exploitative decision of the elites was probably the victim “of rising indebtedness and eventual foreclosure on his mortgage by one of the exploiting urban elite”. Van Eck (2009:8) argues that one could end up at the gates of the rich by being driven to one direction leading to a complete cycle of social marginalisation.

The finality of the poverty cycle at the gates of the rich could be traced from the stages of being “first tenant; then day labourer; eventually, drifting to the city where work is scarce, he did not find work and became a beggar”. Lazarus loses his national identity by being declared to be religiously impure, hence the dogs were feasting on his wounds.

The implication of this parable in the situation of the widening gap between the rich and the poor is that the gap is not closing. The very system of honour and patronage confronted by the Galilean are entrenching the economic divide in South Africa. The

white “capital” elites and the emerging black “empowered” beneficiaries of economic restructuring are bent on maintain their patronage and economic interests. Just like Lazarus, the poor who find themselves at the margins of economy have a growing sense of despondency and envy of the materialism of the rich.

6.13 THE PARABLE OF THE MERCHANT (MT 13:45-46) INTERPRETING ISSUES OF CONCERN

This section has to do with the participants’ perceptions of the misuse of power by all in leadership positions both in the public and the private sector. In an in-depth analysis of this question, the views of 251 (70%) participants from different ages between 18-21, 22-35 and 40-55 respectively, were compared and analysed.

The dominant view within this focus group, accentuate the fact that the current leadership in our country is prone to exploit the public. In that 92 (77%) from 118 pool of the youth between 22-35 assent to that view, followed by 71(75%) of the middle age adults, with the only exception of 14 (14%) 18-21 youth who hold the least assertive view. In the middle age adults group 19 (20%) disagreed whilst 4 (4%) held a neutral position.

6.13.1 A social-scientific and realistic reading of the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46) as a critique of the perceptions of misuse of power

The main focus of the parable of the merchant as Jesus presents it directs our attention to the main character being the merchant. More precisely Jesus intends us to read the personality of the merchant. Van Eck (2015:12) argues that the given parable presents the merchant as the primary point of reference. He expounds his argument by suggesting that the kingdom is framed around the conduct of the merchant. In the parable Jesus draws the attention of his audience to the person of merchant. Hence he could assert that “the kingdom is likened to the actions of a merchant”.

In reading the parable with the merchant as the point of focus, we are persuaded to place the pearl discovered by the merchant as carrying “a secondary role” in subscribing “meaning”. This social-scientific reading poses a direct challenge to the

reader and the first audience of the parable. The Galilean compares “the kingdom” with the conduct of the merchant (Van Eck 2015:12). Such a deliberate positioning of the merchant becomes an affront to the audience of Jesus.

This deeply held stereotype against the merchants was compounded by the fact that the merchants’ business dealings required shipping merchandise across the Mediterranean. A further complicating issue was the question of foreign ownership of the shipment fleet employed by the merchants. Apart from the fact those merchants were mostly owners of large tracts of land. They were deeply embedded in aristocratic levers of power that advanced the Imperial interests the first-century Rome. The audience of Jesus was well aware of the fact that the merchants were active participants in decision-making processes that sanctioned the forceful “extraction of goods, cash crops and commercial farming” (Van Eck 2015:12), then by implication rendering the peasants to merely forge a living on subsistence level.

6.13.2 The reversal of exploitative conduct by the merchant and of the reality of the kingdom

The conduct of the merchant as a point of entry in the parable pushed for transforming values of the kingdom. The reader and the first hearers of the parable are forced to deal with the “shock in the parable” (Van Eck 2015:12). The deeds of the merchant are categorically equated with the kingdom. The one who was perceived as an “outsider” has radically taken the position of one who belongs to the kingdom. In this instance Jesus has opted to position the merchant as a “positive symbol for the kingdom”. The actions speaking of change on the part of the merchant qualifies him of the kingdom status.

The merchant discovers a most valuable and “expensive” pearl in one of his trips. In recognizing the price of the pearl, the merchant decides to auction` all his property in raising funds to purchase the pearl. The obvious implication is that the merchant has abandoned his trade. The one who was an “outsider” had to “sell all he had”. He was no longer in the business. Thus those who heard the parable could not justify any criticism and condemnation of the repentant merchant. The one once despised has attained the right of being an “insider”.

He has acted with integrity by choosing the side of the kingdom. Once he was perceived as pursuing business endeavors that were “destructive and a threat to community”. He is no longer the functionary of an exploitative economic system of usury and commercial farming practice that marginalized communities. The merchant is rising to the standards and “principles” of the kingdom. For the reader and the first hearers of the parable, the Galilean has undoubtedly “criticized the exploitative political economy of his day” (Van Eck 2015:14). The former merchant now stands as a symbol of change. He is no longer exploiting the peasants.

As much as the merchant abandoned the trade and its benefits, the follower of the historical Jesus is called to respond likewise. The second demand emanating from the parable calls for a renewed sense of commitment. The kingdom is premised on a totally radical platform. It is founded on relationships of mutual recognition of belonging. The former circles of interaction were informed by values of privilege, status and honour. The question of protecting and advancing one’s social standing through patriarchal networking, “status” and associated “honour” no longer applies in this new kingdom. Hence the misuse of positions of power against the vulnerable is a thing of the past.

The challenge of the parable is also directed to the vulnerable, though the merchant is moved by the values of the kingdom to abandon privilege status. The vulnerable are expected and urged by the values of the kingdom to open themselves to accept in their fold the transformed merchant. They have to suspend their biases. Their judgment of the other must be informed by the invasive vision and values of the kingdom. Both the merchant and first hearers of the parable cannot avoid the moral demands of the kingdom of God.

6.14 THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT (LUKE 11:5-8):

INTERPRETING THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE

In attempting to ascertain whether participants feel that they are in a position to meet their wants, almost 50% felt that they can get the things they wish to have. On the other hand almost 30% gave a negative answer, with 10% being neutral. In this case it is roughly 10% differences that separate the two groups. These results still presents the painful fact that the vulnerability under discussion has pushed a sizable

number of individuals to a position where they hesitate to register their position. Instead they settle in the fence.

This would suggest that food shortage does put pressure on participants in fulfilling their wants. These figures when compared with the responses of specific age groups respondents, brings outcomes that are contrary to the current sentiments.

6.14.1 Food shortage makes you not to get the things you need

Table 16: Impact of food shortage on meeting basic needs

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Strongly disagree	37	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Disagree	81	22.8	22.8	33.1
	Neutral	45	12.6	12.6	45.8
	Agree	122	34.3	34.3	80.1
	Strongly agree	71	19.9	19.9	100.0
	Total	356	100.0	100.0	

When a questioned was posed about the contribution of food shortage in placing obstacles for the participants to meet their basic needs. A joint 53% stated they couldn't meet their needs. This was against 32%, whose needs were provided, with 12% being neutral.

6.14.2 Impact of food shortage on wants

With regards to the possibility of being able to provide what their dependants want, 37%% gave a negative answer, only 26% were positive, whereas a worrying 26% were neutral. It is important appreciate that the crisis of food shortage has affected people's ability even to take a position about their circumstances of desperation.

6.14.3 The background of the parable: The first-century Galilean village

The meaning of the parable of the friend at midnight can best be understood when read in view of its historical background. In this case Van Eck (2011:6) provides a detail analysis of the parable by taking into cognisance the village setting from which this parable emanates. The parable presents relevant information that talk about the

first-century Galilean village background. In the parable we are invited to appreciate how the originality of the rural context has assisted the audience to relate to its meaning and message. The milieu of the parable suggest of a social environment that was shaped by “nucleated villages”. These village communities were deeply situated in the farms in which the peasants were employed. On another level some of these communities were located in the joint smallholding farms that belonged to the villagers. In some instances these village communities were part and parcel of the greater farming estates that were present in the Galilee of the historical Jesus.

A further analysis of the parable tells a story of how the villagers organise their travelling plans. Van Eck (2011:7) notes that it was common for the villagers to undertake journeys during the course of the day. Thus it was quite irregular for one to opt to travel at night because the arrival of a visitor at night brought along some challenges. It must be borne in mind that the midnight traveller would have disturbed the family expected to be hosts. In such close-knit communities hospitality was expected for close family, neighbours, friends and strangers alike. It would have been regarded as inhospitable if one failed to extend help to the late traveller. In such closely bonded families and neighbourhood it would have been shameful not to assist anyone calling for help. In the break of the day the news would have spread by word of gossip that a traveller was not assisted. The entire community will isolate the family that has failed to honour communal obligation.

6.14.4 A social-scientific interpretation of Luke 11:5-8

The parable of the friend at midnight attempts to address the prevent issues of social inequalities that were factored into the world of the historical Jesus. The society of the Galilean was under the siege of Roman Imperialism. It was a society of the “haves” and the “have-nots” (Van Eck 2011:9). The former largely belonging to the class of the elites, and were city dwellers. The latter were mostly based in rural settings, and earned their living as farm workers.

The peasants were further burdened by civic and religious tax systems alongside expected rents from the landlords who hired them to work their farms. The elite class had total control of all economic and political power. As a class, they comprised roughly not more than 2% of the entire population. They had overall control of 65% of the regions wealth. They owned vast tracts of land. The agricultural products were

amassed through the exploited cheap labour force of the peasants. Roman Imperialism opened up greater markets for the goods in the greater Mediterranean region.

In this context, the peasants subsidised the elites. Social stability was premised on fear and domination visited upon the poor. The poor had to depend on each other for survival. They created social network against hunger as social support systems of caring for the vulnerable. Thus reciprocal systems of the poor meant giving support where needed without expecting the same in return. Such is the context of the parable of the friend at midnight. In this parable we are witnesses to the goodness extended to the unexpected visitor.

On the other hand we become aware of the social pressures experienced by the neighbour woken up at night by the persistent counterpart demanding bread. The neighbour behind locked doors (with limited resources) is expected to provide bread for as though he was giving as friend. The sense of honour that was at risk on the part of his neighbour also meant that he will suffer the same shame and humiliation if he could not step in by all means to provide bread for his neighbour. In a broader sense the whole village faced humiliation in case of failure to feed the visitor. The whole village was hosting the traveller. The shame of the host will be the shame of all.

It is in this instance the “friend” behind closed doors escalates the dialogue with his neighbour to a level of a balanced reciprocity. He begins to negotiate the transaction of “goods” (bread) on the bases of terms that will benefit him. He not does see himself as family to his neighbour. He adopts the dominant terms of social interactions definitive of civic and temple practice. He is willing to offer bread to the desperate neighbour as along as it yields some tangible benefits. These new terms of reference are negotiated in patterns that send the same message to the entire “listening” village (Van Eck 201:11). The villagers by the virtue of their immediate proximity to the negotiation table are indirect participants. Whatever agreements and terms of reference agreed to at the door step, have a bearing on them as well. The villagers as listeners are also active participants. All villagers must register the

contractual obligations that they would be expected to comply with if they happen to face similar situations in the future.

6.15 THE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM AND THE POSITION OF THE POWERFUL

The intention of the Galilean in relating the parable was to bring forward the values of the kingdom that he represented. He was advocating “general reciprocity”. Such a position directly challenges the dominant “balanced reciprocity” that promotes honour and the advancement of mutual interests. The parable exposes the conduct of a neighbour who had embraced the value systems of exploitation. The neighbour opted to exploit the desperations of his “friend”. In this scenario, we perceive a friend who has opted to relate to his community on the basis of the terms of Roman and temple governance of corruption and negative reciprocity. Jesus is saying in this parable that being part of the kingdom demands turning against the systems and practices that foster powerlessness.

The implication of this parable to those at the mercy of the powerful offers one clear message, namely that an individual who wields power when embracing the values of the kingdom will relate with others in terms of the dictates of the kingdom. The formation of a relationship of mutuality with the vulnerable becomes a reality. Jesus is declaring that the powerful can function outside the corrupt moral platform of Roman and temple functionaries. The kingdom of God proposes “a kingship economy” (Van Eck 2011:12) that affirms the dignity of the vulnerable and the hungry.

6.16 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter focus was given on interpreting the results of the empirical study discussed in Chapter 5. We therefore presented a summation of ten parables in view of the 30 CE Mediterranean socio-economies. The summation provided the background information for deeper analysis of the empirical data.

Furthermore eight parables were employed in analysing and interpreting the core aspects of the study. The selected parables were cast as the framework of interrogating both the historicity of the parables and the prevailing context of vulnerability of food shortage in South Africa today. The intention was to come to

terms with the specialist social-scientific reading by Van Eck fostering transformative imperatives of the kingdom of God as attested by the parables.

We have therefore used the parable of the unmerciful servant as a critique of the renting obligation expected from the vulnerable. Employment and income status of those facing food shortages was read through the parable of the Tenants in the vineyard, with a broader perspective provided by the *Gospel of Thomas 65*. The parable of the mustard seed (LK 13:18-19) confronted the reality of the emerging vulnerable groups. We sought to determine how the given parable positioned and entrenched the emerging groups as disruptive as the mustard itself. The challenges faced by child-headed households were viewed from the vantage point of the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:16b–23).

Further analysis and critical evaluations of the pensioners as a specific vulnerable group were interpreted by the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4–6). At the same time, the parable of rich man and Lazarus confronted the widening gap between the rich and the poor in the era of the historical Jesus. The inequality divide prevalent in the lifetime of the Galilean is also faced by the vulnerability of hunger in the present South Africa.

The issue of concern articulated by 75 per cent of the participants in the study were subjected to the evaluation of the Parable of the Merchant. The dehumanizing impact of food shortage was brought to the attention of the reader by the dialogue of reciprocal contract coming from the Parable of the Friend at Mid-night. The parables used by Jesus were kingdom constructs that deliberately sought to transform the exploitative values of Rome and temple aristocracy. We strongly hold the view that the transformative and confrontational nature of the parables is still relevant in addressing the systems of vulnerability currently taking place in a post-apartheid South Africa. In the following Chapter which is the last, we seek to consolidate our critical readings of the patterns of systemic vulnerability. We will show how the parables of the historical Jesus of the Gospels empower the reader to transform social settings that brings about poverty and social marginalization of the vulnerable.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The realities of poverty, social marginalisation and the indignity of living with hunger in urban townships is a fact that cannot be wished away by the 22th celebrations of democratic order in South Africa. Our political transformation of 1994, “continues to carry a burden” of the past (Bediako 1995:4). South Africa’s economic system has an embedded trajectory of exploitation and systemic discrimination and marginalisation of certain sections of the populace. This systemic discrimination, resulting to systemic vulnerabilities, has its roots in Colonial and apartheid social engineering of our past. Our past colonial arrangement has deeply engrained patterns of systemic vulnerability that have become a stronghold against social justice.

Nonetheless the democratic transformation of 1994 did not radically reorient the deeply entrenched systems of domination and inequality. Rather it has co-opted Black and African aspirants to participate in the table of exploitation. Whereas the majority of the Africans are consigned in locations of unemployment and reduced to live on state grants, and food parcels. The structural systemic vulnerability reflected in the study is a grim reminder that true reconciliation is still an ideal that has no concrete relevance in the current social stratification of the South African social and political landscape.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In our exploration of the conditions of social vulnerability we have observed that poverty and hunger has deeply affected the sense of well-being and the dignity of the township communities in which the study was conducted. The study has shown the depth of compromised relationships in how individuals within family settings poorly interact with self, others, and broader environment. It has reflected back to us the extent of the loss of self-pride and ability to relate to others as equals. The collective character of African communities’ experience and expression of Ubuntu-botho has been severely compromised.

Therefore the collective conduct and decision making capacity of families and the communities in threshing out possible solutions against food shortage is rendered impotent by the government hand-outs of social grants and the buying of votes with food parcels by the African National Congress administration. The study is an attestation to the fact that “those who have the ability to help do not help” (Van Eck 2009:1). Rather they opt to maintain the *status quo*. As such systemic vulnerability has brought about “a chasm so great between the rich and the poor that it cannot be crossed” (Van Eck 2009:9).

The study has also place on record how the complexity of socio-structural systems continues to shape and negatively engineer the formation of people’s perceptions of self, in comparison to those who are well off. The nature of race relation in our country has been informed and influenced by the dominance of one racial group in the economy particularly in the mining industry since its inception in the past 162 years. The exploitation of the mineral resources of South Africa from the first commercial mining venture in the Northern Cape in 1852 leading to the diamonds and gold mining in 1860 and 1870 respectively, has laid a foundation for a social system that has divided our nation between the haves and the have not (Davenport 2013:2). The parables of Jesus challenge the reader to facilitate “the main focus of the historical Jesus” which was political transformation rather than obsession with “religion or theology” (Van Eck 2009:9). It is assumed that the “main focus” of Jesus regarding food shortage will be a radical transformation of economic, political and the patterns of systemic vulnerability that perpetuate and sustain hunger.

The study has been positioned to reflect and appropriate Van Eck’s reading of the parables as the signposts of social transformation. In that regard we have focused on twelve theses’ advance by Van Eck as critical tools of analysis and interpreting the parables of Jesus. The study also provided a thorough deliberation of the positioning of the parables in the Synoptic gospels and how they were applied by the early followers of Jesus in responding to prevalent discrimination reflected in socio-economic and religious structural arrangements in the life of Jesus. In this regard the parables of Jesus assist us to avoid reading issues of vulnerability with “uncritical lenses”, in the process advancing “both anachronistic and ethnocentric” reading that promotes biasness against those living with hunger (Van Eck 2012:7).

The study reflected on the socio-economic context of the first-century Mediterranean and its formative influences in shaping the processing and the application of the genre of the parables by Jesus and the writers of the gospels. Hence our discussion focused on the social milieu of the parables. Therefore ten parables by Van Eck were selected as presuppositional points of entry and analysis of the demands of the kingdom of God for social transformation. Furthermore four parables were applied in interpreting four major outcomes of the empirical study. The issues engaged were the following: the impact of food shortage on self-respect, dignity, openness to others, and good relations with others. To attain the intended objective we used the following parables: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26).

The parables of Jesus present against food shortage “an alternative world” (Van Eck 2010:1) of neighbourliness, hospitality and friendship informed by the kingdom of God. As such eight parables were employed to analyse and interpret specific in-depth aspects of the empirical study of food shortage in urban townships. The parables selected to engage the issues of hunger give us a paradigmatic “shift of emphasis” (Van Eck 1995:25) and the courage to side with the hungry. “After all, the lines had been drawn” (Van Eck 2012:9) and we are compelled by the vision of the kingdom of God to side with the vulnerable.

The chosen parables served as an evaluative frame of reference of socio-economic conditions definitive of the times of the historical Jesus. We attempted to apply the parables as critical tools to read our context of food shortage. We have shown how Van Eck’s theses’ as critical tools, when read with selected parables have addressed the cause and effects of food insecurity in the townships. In our analysis of the conditions of hunger, emphasis was placed on Van Eck’s (2009:1) 12 theses reading of the parables and its critic of the patterns of systemic vulnerability. As a consequence we have applied Van Eck’s reading of the parables as tools for mediating transformation of structural systems that perpetuate food shortage in urban townships. Our expressed intention was to show how the 12 theses reading of the parables by Van Eck indicate that the parables are the catalyst for social transformative imperatives of the kingdom of God. On another level the parables of

Jesus become the indices for social justice and economic empowerment of those experiencing hunger.

We began our readings of the parables by investigating the broader social environment of the historical Jesus. We noted that the Roman Imperialism in the first-century Mediterranean deeply influenced the person and public ministry of Jesus. We further took note of the role and influence of localised social and religious grouping with vested interests and how they interacted with Jesus. It is significant to reflect how the social and political world between 4 CE and the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 CE provided an informed background of the parables chosen to interpret our empirical study.

The study has served as a point of reference in the central issue that on a certain “level” of moral and collective sense, food shortage has rendered affected communities impotent of the capacity to hope for the betterment of their conditions. In this regard, communities have become “objects” of public policy experimentation, rather than autonomous “subjects” determining their destinies. In this study, we have observed the extent to which the power of capital and political connections. In particular how such net-woks functioning as “state capture”¹⁴⁶ have determined the

¹⁴⁶(See Madonsela 2016), viewed on 02 November 2016, “*State of Capture*”, at <http://www.scibe.com/mobile/document/3>

“(iii) The Public Protector received three complaints in connection with the alleged improper and unethical conduct relating to the appointments of Cabinet Ministers, Directors and award of state contracts and other benefits to the Gupta linked companies

(vii) The complaints followed media reports alleging that the Deputy Minister of Finance, Hon. Mr. Mcebisi Jonas, was allegedly offered the post of Minister of Finance by the Gupta family long before his then colleague Mr. Nhlanhla Nene was abruptly removed by President Zuma on December 09, 2015. The post was allegedly offered to him by the Gupta family, which alleged has a long standing friendship with President Zuma’s family and a business partnership with his son Mr. Duduzane Zuma. The offer allegedly took place at the Gupta residence in Saxonwold, City of Johannesburg Gauteng. The allegation was that Ajay Gupta, the oldest of three Gupta brothers who are business partners of President Zuma’s son, Mr. Duduzane Zuma, in a company called *Oakbay*, among others, offered the position of Minister of Finance to Deputy Minister Jonas and must have influenced the subsequent removal of Minister Nene and his replacement with Mr. Des Van Rooyen on 09 December 2015, who was also abruptly shifted to the Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs portfolio 4 days later, following a public outcry.

(viii) The media reports also alleged that Ms. Vytjie Mentor was offered the post of Minister for Public Enterprises in exchange for cancelling the South African Airways (SAA) route to India and that President Zuma was at the Gupta residence when the offer was made and immediately advised about the same by Ms. Mentor. The media reports alleged that the relationship between the President and the Gupta family had evolved into “state capture” underpinned by the Gupta family having power to influence the appointment of Cabinet Ministers and Directors in Boards of SOEs and leveraging those relationships to get preferential treatment in state contracts, access to state provided business finance and in the award of business licenses.

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- (ix) Specific allegations were made and these are detailed below.
- (x) The First Complainant, relying on media reports, requested an investigation into:
- (a) The veracity of allegations that the Deputy Minister of Finance Mr Jonas and Ms Mentor (presumably as chairpersons of the Portfolio Committee of Public Enterprises) were offered Cabinet positions by the Gupta family;
- (b) Whether the appointment of Mr Van Rooyen to Minister of Finance was known by the Gupta family beforehand;
- (c) Media allegation that two Gupta aligned senior advisors were appointed to the National Treasury, alongside Mr Van Rooyen, without proper procedure; and
- (d) All business dealings of the Gupta family with government departments and SOEs to determine whether there were **irregularities, undue enrichment, corruption and undue influence in the awarding of contracts, mining licenses, government advertising in the New Age newspaper**, and any other governmental services.
- (xi) The second Complainant also relying on the same media reports, requested an investigation into the President's role in the alleged offer of Cabinet positions to Deputy Minister Jonas and MP, Ms. Mentor, and that the investigation should look into the President's conduct in relation to the alleged corrupt offers and Gupta family involvement in the appointment of Cabinet Ministers and Directors of SOE Boards.
- (xii) In his complaint, Mr. Maimane stated amongst other things that:
"Section 2.3 of the Code of Ethics states that Members of the Executive may not:
(a) Willfully mislead the legislature to which they are accountable... (c) act in a way that is inconsistent with their position; (d) use their position or any information entrusted to them, **to enrich themselves or improperly benefit any other person...**" (my emphasis)
(b) **It is our contention that President Jacob Zuma may have breached the Executive Ethics Code by (i) exposing himself to any situation involving the risk of a conflict between their official responsibilities and their private interests; (ii) acted in a way that is inconsistent with his position and (iii) use their position or any information entrusted to them, to enrich themselves or improperly benefit any other person"**, he further stated. (my emphasis).
- (xiii) The third complaint was also based on media reports but only those alleging that the Cabinet had decided to get involved in holding banks accountable for withdrawing banking facilities to Gupta owned companies. The Complainant wanted to know if it was appropriate for the Cabinet to assist a private business and on what grounds was that happening. He asked if corruption was not involved and specifically asked if such matters should not be dealt with by the National Consumer Commission or the Banking Ombudsman.
- (xiv) While the investigation was conducted in terms of section 182 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution), which confers the Public Protector power to investigate, report and take appropriate remedial action in response to alleged improper or prejudicial conduct in state affairs, the alleged improper conduct of President Zuma involving potential violation of the Executive Ethics Code, was principally investigated under section 3(1) of the Executive Ethics Code read with section 6 of the Public Protector Act. The provisions of the Prevention and Combatting of Corrupt Activities Act were invoked with regard to allegations regarding the alleged offer of a Ministerial position by the Gupta family to Ms. Mentor in return for cancelling the India route of the SAA, in the vicinity of President Zuma, and related allegations. Deputy Minister Jonas also alleged that the position offered was on condition that he works with the Gupta family and that too is in contravention of the Prevention and Combatting of Corrupt Activities Act 12 of 2004 (PRECCA). The provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act, 26 of 2000 were also taken into account.
- c) Whether President Zuma improperly and in violation of the Executive Ethics Code, allowed members of the Gupta family and his son, to be involved in the process of appointing members of Boards of Directors of SOEs;
- d) Whether President Zuma has enabled or turned a blind eye, in violation of the Executive Ethics Code, to alleged corrupt practices by the Gupta family and his son in relation to allegedly linking appointments to *quid pro quo* conditions;
- e) Whether President Zuma and other Cabinet members improperly interfered in the relationship between banks and Gupta owned companies thus giving preferential treatment to such companies on a matter that should have been handled by independent regulatory bodies;
- g) Whether anyone was prejudiced by the conduct of President Zuma."
- We need to appreciate that the Public Protector used as a point of entry into the current report the Constitutional Court judgement (which has divided our democratic history into the pre and post Nkandla judgment) in the matter of the *"Economic Freedom Fighters v Speaker of the National*

Assembly and Others; Democratic Alliance v Speaker of the National Assembly and Others”, in framing her observations and remedial actions [2016] ZACC 11. In the given judgment Chief Justice Mogoeng reminded the nation about “accountability, the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution as values of our constitutional democracy” (Madonsela 2016:3).

Chief Justice Mogoeng in his deliberations also suggested that all citizens must be impelled by a deep sense of “moral obligation” to ensure the preservation of our new democracy for posterity. Therefore on the basis of the observations of the Public Protector about the allegations against Mr Jacob Zuma, Mr Des van Rooyen, Mr Mosebenzi Zwane, the Gupta family and the implicated individuals in the State Owned Enterprises and state functionaries. We can assert that all those implicated have failed to live up to the “moral obligation” of our constitutionalism, with its accounting demands. We also need to be reminded of the call of the TRC to the effect that “a milieu needs to emerge...that all South Africans accept moral and political responsibility” aiming at “nurturing a culture of human rights and democracy”, designed “for the sake of our shared presence and our children’s future” (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, Extract 5, Recommendations & Reconciliation*, 1998:12, para 143-152). The seriousness of the allegations levelled against the President and the complicity of the Cabinet in the issues raised, (Madonsela 2016:346) must challenge the nation to reimagine its future and begin anew to graft the soul of the nation to a frame of a moral vision, values, principles, transformation obligations, a human rights culture and the rule of law that will not tolerate the fooling of the majority by the few, however powerful they might consider themselves to be. The state capture that is gaining ground and deeply rooted in all state institutions and systems of governance is a declaration (and actualization) of coup intents under the watch of Mr Jacob Zuma. Mr Jacob Zuma must not be allowed to plead ignorance in this regard.

Our critic and analysis of the “State of Capture” Report (Madonsela 2016) as the catalyst for systemic vulnerability must be premised on seven presuppositional theses of Van Eck’s reading of the parables of Jesus. However the given theses must reflect the Nkandla case verdict of the Constitutional Court as a reference point. We need to consider the main entry points of the theses and how they can be utilised as investigative tools of “opening up” (Van Eck 2013:7) the report. In that regard thesis 2 points to the “social world” of capture (Van Eck 2009:4), thesis 3 exposes “elites exploitation” dynamics (Van Eck 2009:4), thesis 6 investigates “transformative eschatology” of day to day results of capture (Van Eck 2009:6), thesis 8, 9 and 11 brings home ethical positions that “subverts” the interests of the elite (Van Eck 2009:8), and thesis 12 refers to the existence of “indeterminacy” in the reading the context of capture with multiple interpretive outcomes (Van Eck 2009:10).

Our nation needs to actualize in the here and now, the ethical demands of the kingdom of God (as remedy of our social ills) articulated by the historical Jesus in his parables, bringing into reality a “kingdom in which there is no place for exploitation and systemic injustice” (Van Eck 2010:13). Our nation’s “State of Capture” must be exposed to the critique of the Parable of the Sower (Mk 4:3b-8), demanding the uprooting of the “thorns” (Mk 4:7) of corruption that “choke” our wealth and economic potential for growth (Van Eck 2014:8). The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:22-33) would analyse our “State of Capture” by pointing to “Jesus critique of privilege, status and honour”, since his stance represents and demands “breaking the cycle of ruthless exploitation and extraction” (Van Eck 2015:12), resulting to a transgenerational “class disparity” (Van Eck 2009:8) attested by the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, also pointing to “a great chasm” (Lk 16:26) between the “haves” and “the have not’s” that is worsening. The Parable of the Mustard seed would inculcate “the grain” (Lk 13:19) of Constitutional prescripts in the “code of ethics” (Madonsela 2016:284) as subversion, “taking over” the interests of the elites endorsing state capture (Van Eck 2013:244).

In this regard “indigenous epistemological” critique will insist to actualise “spirituality as a category of analysis”, that ought to open up public discourse about how Western materialistic orientation has dislocated individuals from their communities, to an extent that they would pursue the accumulation of wealth and power for the benefit of the individual (*Spirituality and the Secular State: A Preliminary perspective*, The Freedom Park Trust, pg 5, not dated). The communal world-view of African indigenous moral and spiritual systems needs to transform our democratic practice predicated on Western models that negates one’s accountability to the community and the village that raised one to various levels of leadership. The “State of Capture” Report points to us how far as a nation we have abandoned African moral and spiritual world-view that speaks to shared successes and failures within the ambit of the collective. This report must inspire us to create communal and village accounting systems, that will require those in leadership positions to link their work performance with the collective appraisal of the communities and villages that raised and sent them to lead and serve under their collective mandate.

allocation of public resources to benefit the few. As a result a number of communities are pushed in a position where their worth and significance is determined by access to financial resources and the appeasement of public representatives. Thus the ethics of the parables ought to inculcate in the mind of those living with hunger legitimate ways and means of “how to protest” (Van Eck 2011:1) against the situations of deprivation.

The study has also put in record the fact that the elite, both black and white are driven by self-serving interests. They have by act and intent, consciously decided to marginalise the majority from participating in the economy of the country as equals. Therefore the vulnerability of food shortage has brought to our attention the fact that the suffering of individuals and families is located within communal settings. Food shortage then must not be seen as isolated misfortunes of unskilled persons, rather it is a reflection of extreme individualistic drive of capital accumulation that is profit driven.

The study is showing us that we need to be conscious of the fact that destitute families hold the perception that they have been relegated to social cracks that locks them in structures depriving them the right to be human in a country of their birth. The responses given by the participants convey to the reader the idea that their self-consciousness and awareness of the conditions and systems that shape their ability to act as free moral agents is unattainable. Thus driving communities to adapt and conform to outside help instead of taking personal responsibility for their well-being.

The responses given further tell us that those in our country who have access to political patronage and financial resources conduct themselves as the untouchables. They conduct personal and public life as if they are above the law. They treat others as “means” to attain their goals. Hence they can accumulate obscene wealth in the face of extreme poverty and a worst form of inequality in the whole world.

The elites in our country have placed success at all cost in all their dealings. This situation is supported by the current global economic systems that build and crash economies by the click of a button. The selfish competition dictates the functioning of

modern economies that only relates to the question of human worth on quantifiable terms. In this context, a person's sense of worth and dignity has been reduced to the quantity of material possession that one has accumulated. This gives credence to the slogan of the "survival of the fittest". It is no wonder that both the old guards and emerging elites push to attain wealth with "whatever means necessary" as a justifying dogma. In this social context what counts is the level of profit and power one has attained. It does not matter how one accumulates such benefits and who is left behind in the process.

This study is a reflection of the crisis of "systemic failure" expressive of our democratic governance in being a living and self-critical institution (Madonsela 2014:34). The study points to the fundamental crisis of governance failure of the state reflected in its disposition against its very definitive principles of its existence as articulated in the Constitutional Principles VI. Our democratic government is failing to live up to its existential principles of "responsiveness, accountability and openness" to those whom the Apex Court has referred as "the poor, the voiceless and the least remembered" (Mogoeng 2016:14).

If the State is failing to uphold the essence of its existence in responding to the plight of the most vulnerable. Then on what strength can it express and maintain a "principle position" for the benefit of the vulnerable? We can assert that this study speaks about a nation whose instruments and institutions of governance are failing to live up to its aspirations. This study serves as an indictment against the powers that be (in public and private domains) for being willing participants in the perpetuation of the "culture of impunity" (Mogoeng 2016:28) and the tolerance of the actualization of intentions for "state capture" by the elites and their extended net-works in the political and business circles whereby "land, real estate, and financial wealth remain largely in the hands of the white elite" (Piketty 2016:169). This study seeks "to open up the social world" (Van Eck 2013:6) of systemic vulnerability and the reality of being black in a supposedly democratic South Africa, to the transformation motif of the kingdom of God expressed in the parables of the historical Jesus.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has brought to our attention the reality of social and economic vulnerability experienced by some section of individuals and families. The study therefore

positioned itself as a witness to the humiliation of going through hunger in the land of the plenty. It narrates the “painful shared experiences” (Van Onselen 1996:vi) of township communities confronted with the display of wealth by the privileged few. The narrative of vulnerability emanating from the study echoes the sentiments of the African Renaissance Conference held in 1998 whereby Mbulelo Mzamane noted the prevalent presence of the spirit of dispossession that has attached itself anew in our ways of “talking about the present” that justifies persistent inequality with the hope of gradual upliftment of the poor (Magkoba 1998:173).

The narrative of the study is framed as a postulate that seeks to promote the trajectory of human wholeness and the wellbeing of the participants. On the other hand the “narrative” itself places the reader in a position of being part of the “story”, as such engendering the “solidarity of listening” the pain of hunger in the face of wealth and power accumulation that has no conscience (Kotze & Kotze 2001:3). The study also gives due regard to the inherent impetus to our collective identity and willingness to see “new ways of authoring” the story of being a transformed society from apartheid domination to a Constitutional democracy. This study has become a narrative, calling us to locate our places within the layers of discourses against corruption and inequality. By so doing opening public spaces for all South Africans to experience meaningful relationships and new “ecological ways of being” (Kotze & Kotze 2001:viii) both locally and to all platforms of human interaction wherever the struggles for human solidarity are prevailing.

Given such a perspective we can concur with the testimony and the demands of the participants that they reminds us that the richness of being South African in the world today must also celebrate peoples industriousness as well as their “spiritual and moral achievements” in social contracts of justice and equality that seek to expose systemic patterns of vulnerability and eradicate hunger and poverty in our country (Heisenburg 1958:200).

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted deliberately with a specific group of township residents and the findings of the study are shaped by the context concerned. However that does not necessary mean that its implication is area bound due to the fact that many

communities (mostly rural) in South Africa feel the harsh experiences of hunger, poverty and social marginalisation.

In view of the results of this study, the following recommendations are made: The four major outcomes that emanated from the responses of the participants ought to be utilized as pointers of systemic failure of the government in the eradication of inequality and poverty. Secondly the empirical results of the study ought to serve as a warning and a red flag of how many communities perceive themselves as the marginalized in the project of the new South Africa. The indicators of systemic vulnerability suggest that we need to read food shortage as “a hermeneutics of socio-critical theory”. In the sense that the outcomes of the empirical study speak to and “exposes the role of institutions, traditions and text as instruments of power, domination and social manipulation” that have been employed by yesterday’s freedom fighters to oppress their own people (Van Eck 2006:690).

Furthermore the state and private institution must take note of the emergence of a new category (mustard seed) of vulnerable groups of the youth (22-35 age), the women (40-55 age), and most importantly the pensioners. The specific needs of these new groups demands more than food parcels. They require interventions that will strategically position and assist them to transcend the limiting structural systems for personal growth. The state needs to implement strict measures to stop the looting of the public purse and capital outflows driven by the private sector. The critique of the parables of Jesus (as reflected in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Lk 16:19-31) would demand that we view economics as an expression of national value systems in trade and other relations within the power dynamics of specific interests in a given socio-political context. Thus radical transformation of the template of apartheid economic model embedded in our current financial systems will enable the state to respond to the needs of this new class of the vulnerable.

We need to appreciate that the demands and aspirations of this new class are being rooted and are spreading like the mustard seed at their own terms and conditions. These groups indicate to us that “the elite compromise” (Terreblanche 2012:64) and reconciliation contract of 1994 has expired. Our country need to craft a new vision and a new social contract for social justice and equality.

As a country we must not tolerate the fact that in 2016, 14 million South Africans go to bed with empty stomachs on a daily basis¹⁴⁷. Therefore it is imperative that the actual experiences of the impact of hunger to be utilized as indices for evaluating the levels and extent of socio-economic transformation and justice for affected families and communities. The study in its entirety reflects on how factors of systemic vulnerability have become an index that must be considered in policy formulation and implementation processes of economic transformation and social justice.

We have observed the application of the parables of Jesus as an interpretive tools against the entrenched kingdoms of vested interests. The given analytical criticism enables the reader to unmask and consciously engage “intentional world-views within dynamic ideological and cultural frame of reference” that perpetuates social injustice. The application of the parables of Jesus as symbols of social transformation opens up another “world-view” for the vulnerable. It could be argued that the parables of Jesus serve as mediators of the “world view” and legitimate demands of the vulnerable in confronting the agenda of privilege, “state capture” and elitism of White capital and its Black collaborators, who operates like the “native collaborators” who exploited the peasants for the benefits of Rome (Van Eck 2009:4). The kingdom critic of the indices of systemic vulnerability articulated by the parables of Jesus ought to serve as transformative demands as well as the monitoring and evaluative systems of public and private acts that advance the interests of the elite at the expense of the marginalized majority (Van Eck 2011:8).

This study can serve as point of reference in conducting further research on the impact of social marginalisation on communities’ perception of self, their relation to their environment and fellow citizens. The current study shows that the elite (both black and white) section of our country has an ill-informed consciousness about the meaning of accountability to others and about the resources entrusted to them.

¹⁴⁷ See Wiseman Khuzwayo (2016:3) in his analysis of the General Household Survey 2015 released by the Statistics SA. In the report, the statistician general, Pali Lehohla asserted that more South Africans “rely on state coffers” than on individual initiative. Such results show a rapid increase of reliance on state grants “from 12.7 percent in 2003 to 45.5 percent in 2015”. In the same vein the number on single households that benefit from state grants has risen “from 29.9 percent in 2003 to 45.5 percent in 2015”. This deliberate creation of dependence on government for electioneering

Hence their exercise of livelihood derives from the premise of firstly serving self-interests. The value of life and all material possession is perceived as an end in itself. The study further showed that the mismanagement and exploitation of our country's wealth and natural resources for the benefit of the rich and the powerful is contrary to the values of Ubuntu-botho which are the bedrock of the broader value systems and worldview of hungry communities.

Furthermore the study seeks to serve as a tool to sensitise all persons in positions of leadership to develop an attitude of accountability¹⁴⁸ to the public about the responsibilities of trust bestowed upon them. We have observed that the undoing of systemic vulnerability demands a deep sense of custodianship and the responsibility of care of collective South African identity. It is important to come to an understanding about the ethical implications of belonging to a country that has undergone colonialism and racial oppression reflected in unequal social relations. As citizens of South Africa we need to be aware of practices that continue to entrench a false sense of self-importance of the privileged groups and clicks with vested interests that are not subjected to the quest of all South Africans for human rights, equality and dignity.

The study demands and places a special kind of moral responsibility to the vulnerable to espouse a form of a deliberate struggle embedded upon "the notion of social memory" (Katongole 2005:21) for justice, equality and dignity. The vulnerable must keep alive their memory of subjugation under colonialism and apartheid and must refuse to allow yesterday's freedom fighters to become their new masters and oppressors. The vulnerable must espouse the collective memory that exposes the Askari (a turned freedom fighter against people and comrades) tendencies practiced by the political and economic elites. The collective memory against hunger must be informed by the transformative power of the mustard seed to be radically rooted

purpose though it guarantees votes for the ruling party, nonetheless it has resulted into a people who have lost a sense dignity and belief in their abilities to be self-reliant.

¹⁴⁸ Wole Soyinka (2004:xii) in the preface of *The Reith Lectures 2004 (Climate of Fear*, Profile Books, Hatton Garden, London) he presented in London. He reminds that the demand for accountability cannot be assumed and simply taken for granted. Those of us who expect accountable actions from our public representatives must consider that, "alas, we can hold to account only those who accept, are bound by, or can be compelled into, our code of accountability". One wonders whether it is still possible for African National Congress government to be sensitized to the issues of accountable governance practice, since it could not muster the courage to call President Zuma to account for numerous scandals he has subjected the country and his party.

against injustice and spread at will to perpetuate the demands for justice and dignity for the affected communities. The consciousness of systemic vulnerability analysis must convince the hungry to deliberately confront the Askari mentality of self-enrichment by the few, the state capture (actualized systemic vulnerability of state institutions and systems of governance), the plundering of state funds by elected officials, and wanton profiteering in the private sector that has lost a sense of Ubuntu-botho and social conscience.

The parables of the Nazarene refuses to permit even a single vulnerable individual to “stand there in silence” (Kung 1974:576) in the face of the global systems of exploitation represented by The International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. On the local level the transformative spirit of the parables are critical of the structures of white capital elites and their Black Economic Empowered surrogates. The hungry have a moral obligation to name their situation of destitution for what it is: a state sanctioned “institutionalised violence” (Tlhaqale 1986:135). Systemic vulnerability in democratic South Africa must be unmasked and named for what it: “as establishment violence” (Van Eck 2012:104). As such it must be confronted and be uprooted by the collective of the vulnerable by demanding moral, ethical and accountable leadership that will govern under the Constitution and the rule of law. These demands must be seen actualised without resorting to violence, “because it is no exaggeration to say that we have all in different ways been wounded¹⁴⁹ by apartheid” (Tutu 1999:154).

¹⁴⁹ The depth of the wounds inflicted by apartheid to all South Africans will take a long time to heal. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was an attempt to facilitate the process of healing. However the journey for healing and restoration of each individual will take its unique form depending on the level(s) of suffering that each person was exposed to. This deep level of “woundedness” is well captured and narrated in the experiences of torture and solitary confinement that Albie Sachs details in *The Free Diary of Albie Sachs*, (2004:194-195), Random House, Johannesburg, South Africa. Sachs articulates how his torture and solitary confinement inculcated in him a sense of shame and failure for nearly giving-in under torture, in that “something profound inside of me shattered...I just cannot carry on, not for loss of belief, but because I have been crushed”. On another level, individual pain becomes collective phenomena. Hence this collective woundedness find expression in the introduction of James Baldwin’s (1964:11) essays, *Nobody Knows my Name: More Notes of a Native Son*, (Corgi Books-Transworld Publishers Ltd, London, Great Britain). In the case of Baldwin, its simply, “something had ended for me”. Such levels of being wounded will require more beyond political and constitutional change that our country has gone through. We cannot dispute the fact that such depths of woundedness has led us as a people to the fields of massacre at Marikana, the scandals of Nkandla, the episodes of state capture and the shame of Esidimeni.

The hungry must confront the “Askari functionaries” with the demands of justice, human rights and dignity as envisaged in the parable teachings of Jesus. The vulnerable are duty bound to confront the “establishment violence” of hunger with the “weapons of the weak” as Scott has suggested (Van Eck 2012:102). The ethics of Jesus’ parables dictate that the vulnerable respond to their situation as Jesus. He would have maintained “a critical distance” (Van Eck 2012:131) against the powers that be by refusing¹⁵⁰ to be silenced and bought by food parcels. The transformative imperatives of the parables of Jesus demands justice and righteousness from both the perpetrators and the victims of “establishment violence in all its permutations” and programs of actions that promises a “better life for all” that has only benefitted the state capturers and their families (Van Eck 2012:131).

Therefore the struggle against and the denunciation of the Askari attitude of entitlement by yesterday’s freedom fighters must be actualised by the hungry as the validation of the “signs of the approaching kingdom of God” (Kung 1974:266). The affected communities must strive to achieve the transformative demands of the parables as displayed by “the human Jesus of Nazareth who wearily trod the dusty roads of Palestine where he took compassion on those who were marginalized” (Bosch 1991:512). Thus declaring that the kingdom of God does not tolerate the indignity of a hungry stomach.

7.5 CONCLUSION

This study has shown that South Africa is not out of the woods yet, though we have celebrated 22 years of democratic dispensation. Some sections of the population continue to experience a deep sense of marginalisation. They are at the periphery of economic activity and only participate to advance and maximise the profits and power for self-chosen elites. Even though the study was conducted in the township setting that is relatively better compared to rural situations, the sense of vulnerability exposed by the study is deeply disconcerting.

¹⁵⁰ See Vaclav Havel, www.history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/165ha, (viewed on the 15 November 2016). This refusal to be silenced is an expression of “the most intrinsic existential source of the dissent attitude” as articulated by Vaclav Havel in his essay “*The Power of the Powerless*” (1978). (Excerpts from the Original Electronic Text provided by Bob Moeller, of the University of California, Irvine).

This study is about the well-being of the soul and spirit of our nation. It shows the values and moral worldview that has defined what it means to be a South African in a post-apartheid era. It raises questions about the lack of collective moral and ethical vision that must shape both the public and private governance in pursuance of justice, equality and human dignity. This study is challenging South Africans across the board to re-examine what it means to live with dignity, Ubuntu-botho, and embracing aspects of the diversity of all cultural, religious and racial character of our country.

This study was conducted in view of the transformative demands of the parable teaching of Jesus the Nazarene. Much emphasis was placed on the “dialectic of exposure and concealment” embedded in the parables of the transformative requirements of kingdom of God against social injustices and systemic vulnerability. The focus of this study also included a critique of socio-economic injustice from the critical readings by Van Eck of the parables as makers of social transformation. Therefore Van Eck’s reading of the parables of Jesus was appropriated as a tool for analysis and as a catalyst for transforming our country’s “economic determinism in regard to inequalities of wealth and income” (Piketty 2014:20) and to align it to the transformative vision and ethical values of the kingdom of God.

It has been shown that the transformative categories of the parables of Jesus for social reversal of marginalisation and vulnerability serve as a tool for social systems analysis of all facets that deprives the hungry of inherent dignity and worth as human beings created in the image of God. The parables as pointers to the radical demands of Jesus for justice and righteousness ushers new “ways of translating” and transforming systemic vulnerability and systems of injustice against the poor and the hungry (Parratt 1987:158).

Van Eck’s 12 theses reading of the parables positions them as a transformative paradigm, relevant indices and framework of the kingdom of God against hunger and injustice. The parables are the inspiration in the struggle against the indignity of hunger in the land of the plenty. The parables give affected communities “a language to critically understand the tension, contradictions, fears, doubts, hopes, and “deferred dreams” under a state captured by white capital and its black elite

supporters (Freire 1970:11). The message of the parables of the historical Jesus speaks of the power of the kingdom manifesting in decision making against all forms of injustice.

Though insignificant like the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19), it is “invading” the field of systemic vulnerability. The kingdom is “reseeded” against hunger. It is “taking over” and radically transforming systemic vulnerability and further mediating justice and dignity for those living with food shortage (Van Eck 2013:243).

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APPENDIX A: THE STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

**Universiteit van
Pretoria**



**University of Pretoria
Faculty of Theology**

Passion narratives and Food Insecurity Questionnaire

<p>Naam / Name: Meshack Mandla Mashinini</p> <p>Studentenommer / Student number 10675452</p> <p>Graad / Degree Phd in New Testament Studies</p> <p>Departement / Department: New Testament</p> <p>Studieleier / Supervisor Prof E. Van Eck</p>	<p>TITEL VAN NAVORSINGS- PROJEK/TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: The parables of Jesus as symbols of social transformation in a critical view of food insecurity systems for vulnerable households in urban townships</p>
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CONSENT FORM (to be filled and signed by participants)

I (Mr/Mrs/Ms) _____ voluntarily participate in answering this questionnaire.

Place: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you for your participation.



Section A: Biographical Details

Please indicate your answer by marking with an

1	RACE	AFRICAN		COLOURED		WHITE		INDIAN	
---	------	---------	--	----------	--	-------	--	--------	--

2	GENDER	MALE		FEMALE	
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3	AGE	
---	-----	--

4	TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	FORMAL		TEMPORAL		SELF		PENSIONER		SCHOLAR	
---	--------------------	--------	--	----------	--	------	--	-----------	--	---------	--

6	TYPE OF INCOME	SALARY		PENSION		GRANT		OTHER	
---	----------------	--------	--	---------	--	-------	--	-------	--

7	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	
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8	NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS	
---	----------------------	--

9	ACCOMODATION	OWN		INFORMAL SETTLEMENT		HOSTEL	
		BOND HOUSE		RENTING BACKYARD ROOM			
		FAMILY HOUSE		RENTING FLAT			

Section B: Understanding on the impact of food shortage in getting the things you wish.

Please indicate your answer by marking with an

Do you think that food shortage undermines the respect you might get from others?



Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Food shortage makes it difficult for you to get the things you wish to have.					
2.	Food shortage makes you not to get the things you need.					
3.	You able to provide things that your dependents want.					
4.	Society understand the seriousness of struggling with food shortage.					
5.	Food shortage make it difficult for you to believe that you will get anything you hope for.					

Section C: Understanding on the impact of food shortage on being true to yourself.

Please indicate your answer by marking with an

X

Do you think that food shortage undermines your dignity as a human being?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Food shortage makes you to					



	think negatively about yourself.					
2.	Food shortage negatively affects the way you talk about yourself.					
3.	You see food shortage as your own personal problem.					
4.	You see food shortage as a social problem					
5.	Food shortage negatively affects the way you see yourself in the world.					

Section D: Understanding on the impact of food shortage in how you relate to others.

Please indicate your answer by marking with an



Do you think that food shortage affects your openness to associate with others?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Food shortage makes it difficult for you to relate to others.					
2.	The needy are seen as part of the problem of					



	food shortage.					
3.	Life experiences of the needy makes them feel powerless to deal with food shortage.					
4.	The voices of the needy are not listened to in the search for solutions for food shortage.					
5.	Food shortage makes the needy to be easily ill-treated and used by people in positions of power.					

Section E: Understanding on the impact of food shortage on issues of reconciliation in South Africa.

Please indicate your answer by marking with an

Do you think that food shortage makes it difficult for you to understand the way of living right with others?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Food shortage widens the gap between the rich and the poor in our country.					
2.	Food shortage creates conditions for our country not to be stable.					
3.	The rich lack understanding of the					



	levels of challenges facing the needy as a result food shortage.					
4.	Our nation has the vision for the restoration of the dignity of the families facing food shortage.					
5.	The well-off White & Black people have more than enough chances of getting food resources.					

Section F: Understanding on the impact of food shortage on personal faith.

Please indicate your answer by marking with an x

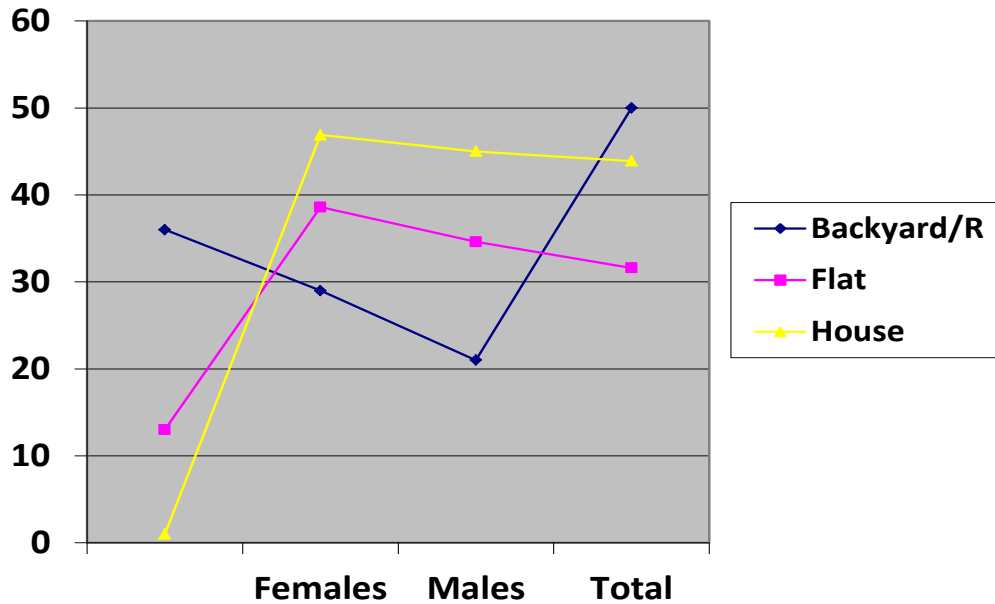
Does the situation of food shortage negatively affects your faith in God/Creator/Supreme Being?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

No	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	The lack of material things make you lose hope.					
2.	A person who believes in God/Creator is in a better position to deal with the challenges of food shortage.					
3.	A person who trusts God/Creator can deal with life challenges with dignity.					
4.	A person of faith in					

APPENDIX B: FURTHER RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE (some aspects mentioned in this section appear in the main body. The repetition is intended to provide proper context in understanding all data covered).

1. FIGURE: 11 RENTING STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS



2. TABLE 17: RENTING STATUS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Renting status of the participants		Total
1.	Overall Total	50
2.	Total females	29
3.	Total males	21
4.	Backyard room renting	36
5.	Total females	29
6.	Renting House	21

The figures presented in Figure 11 detail the number of participants who have to dispose of their meagre resources in settling rent fees on a monthly basis. The picture that emerges shows a total number of 50 participants have rent obligations, with 29 females renting accommodation, followed by 21 males. Further, 36

participants are renting backyard rooms, followed by 13 who have are renting flats, and only 1 participant is renting a house.

At this stage we seek to present the results based on the structured questionnaire. Issues of characteristics of the gender sample, employment and income status of the participants will be presented, including the role of pensioners-as-caregivers will be considered.

The main thematic analysis of five major questions will be analysed. Emphasis will be given to the impact of food shortage on the self-respect of each individual facing challenges of food shortage. The analysis and the interpretation of the main questions will be accompanied by the results of the sub-questions comprising twenty-five questions in totality.

We will further deliberate on how those living with food vulnerability perceive the conduct of persons in positions of power. This aspect will be followed by the examination of the results pertaining to possible abuse of positions by the powerful at the expense of the poor. Furthermore, the question of the widening gap of social inequality will be deliberated, based on the experiences of specific age groups.

In that regard, the emergence of vulnerable socio-economic groups will be evaluated, and the concerns for moral decay within government will get a closer attention. Lastly the overall results and possible suggested solutions for addressing social ills will be investigated.

3. SOCIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The readings and the interpretations of the rhetoric of the vulnerable becomes an enabling instrument to call into question the 'contextual force', and the material conditions (Arnal 2001:1) that sanctions unjust economic systems. Such unjust economic practices continue to justify the widening gap between those who have plenty in the midst of destitute in our country.

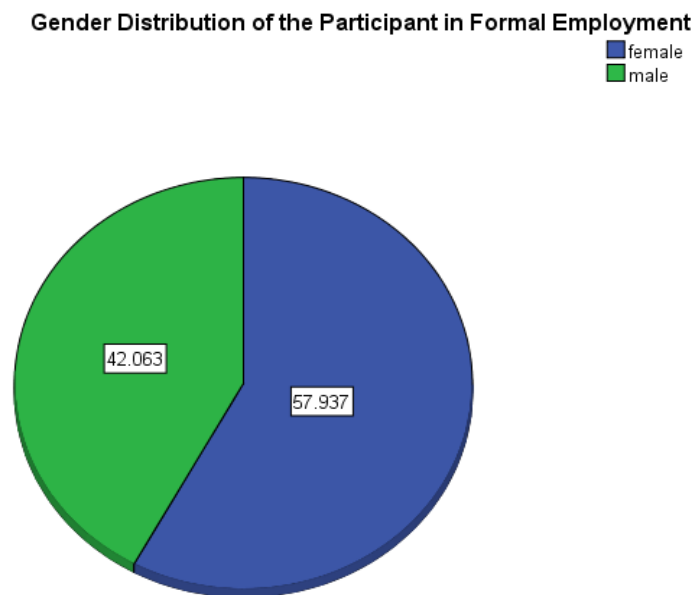
It is therefore imperative to note that the social readings of vulnerability necessitated that our study engage grassroots participants. The conceptual framework of this research was to provide space for the interviewees to articulate opinions and

perceptions in respect to four definitive categories. These include: self-consciousness, material possessions, social relations and issues of spirituality.

4. TABLE 18: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENDER SAMPLE IN FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Female	73	57.9	57.9	57.9
	Male	53	42.1	42.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

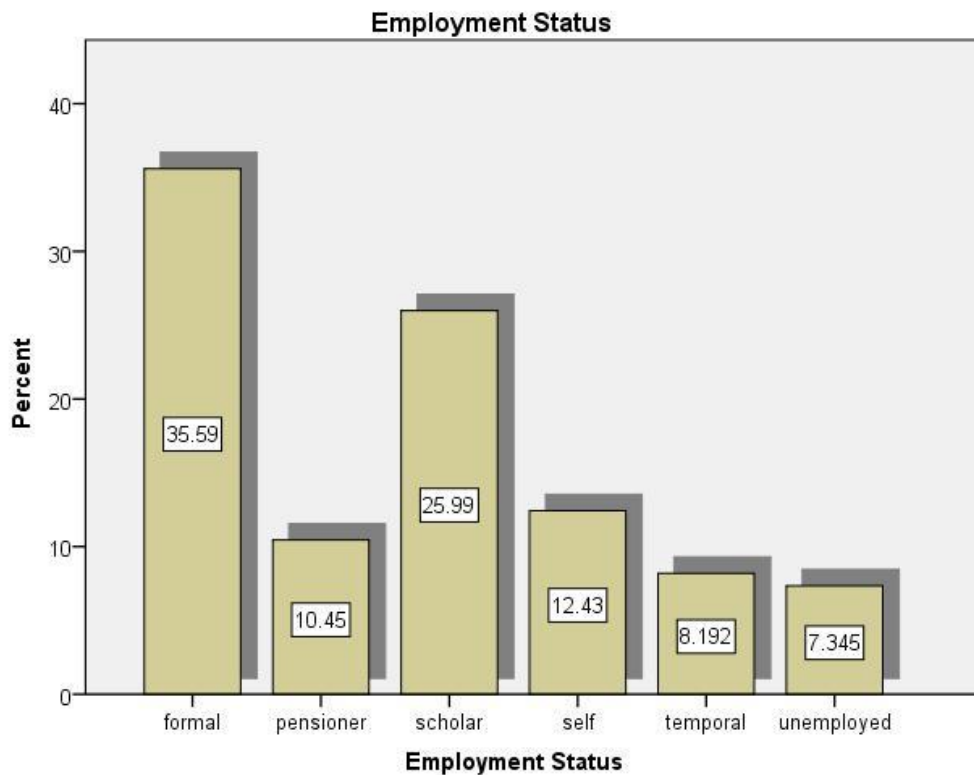
5. FIGURE 12: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN FORMAL EMPLOYMENT



In the study, the majority of participants with formal employment are females comprising of 57%. This dynamic places more responsibility on the shoulders of women who have to provide for families as single parents while acting as breadwinners. The results show that 42% male participants have the benefits of formal employment

It must not come as anomaly that males have a less representation. These figures are reflective of the huge number of female participants who generally are the majority in the churches visited.

6. FIGURE 13: EMPLOYMENT STATUS



The employment status of the participants shows the desperate situation the people are experiencing. The possibility of having full employment comes with responsibilities and expectations from family members for extra support. The figures show that only 35% of the participants are in the formal employment.

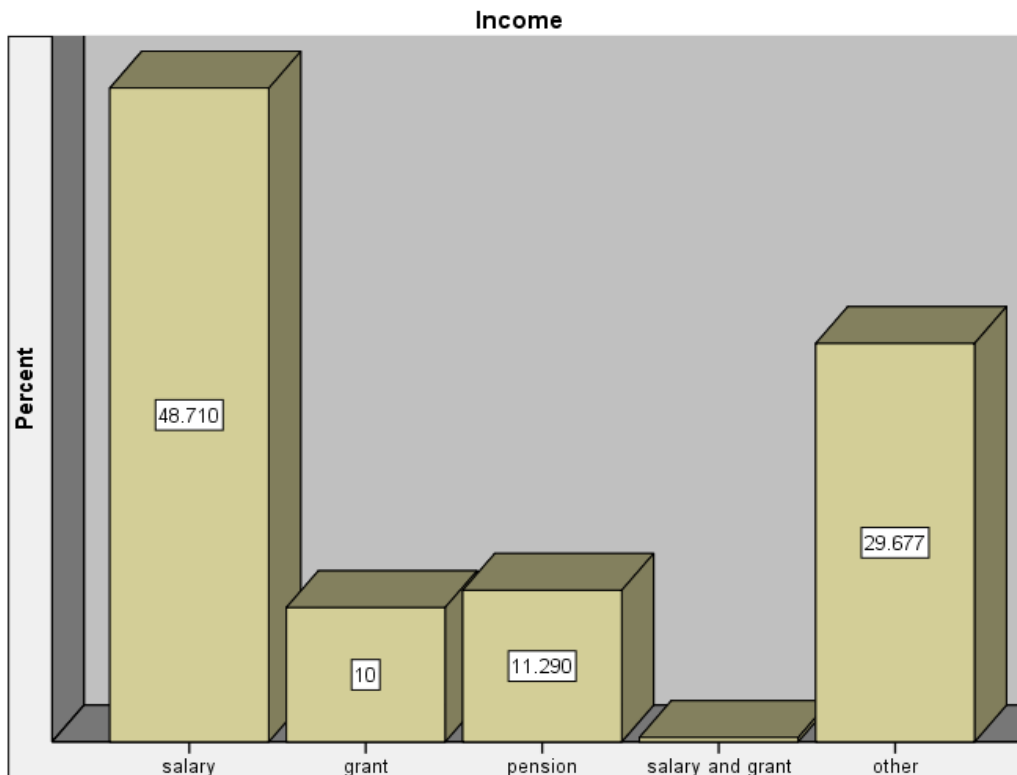
Further, 12% reported they were self-employed, while 8% stated they were engaged in some form of temporal employment, which is a seasonal type of employment that is driven by demand for extra labour by the employers. It is only 7% that referred self as unemployed.

The statistics also show that 25% of the participants are scholars, and 10% are pensioners. The figures show that only the 35% who are employed carry the burden of providing support to their dependants. The worrying factor of the figures is that the pensioners carry a huge burden of supporting their dependants through their pension grants. We are going to pay more attention in the role of pensioners as care givers as we proceed with the results.

7. TABLE 19: INCOME STATUS

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Grant	31	10.0	10.0	10.0
Other	92	29.7	29.7	39.7
Pension	35	11.3	11.3	51.0
Salary	151	48.7	48.7	99.7
Salary and grant	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	310	100.0	100.0	

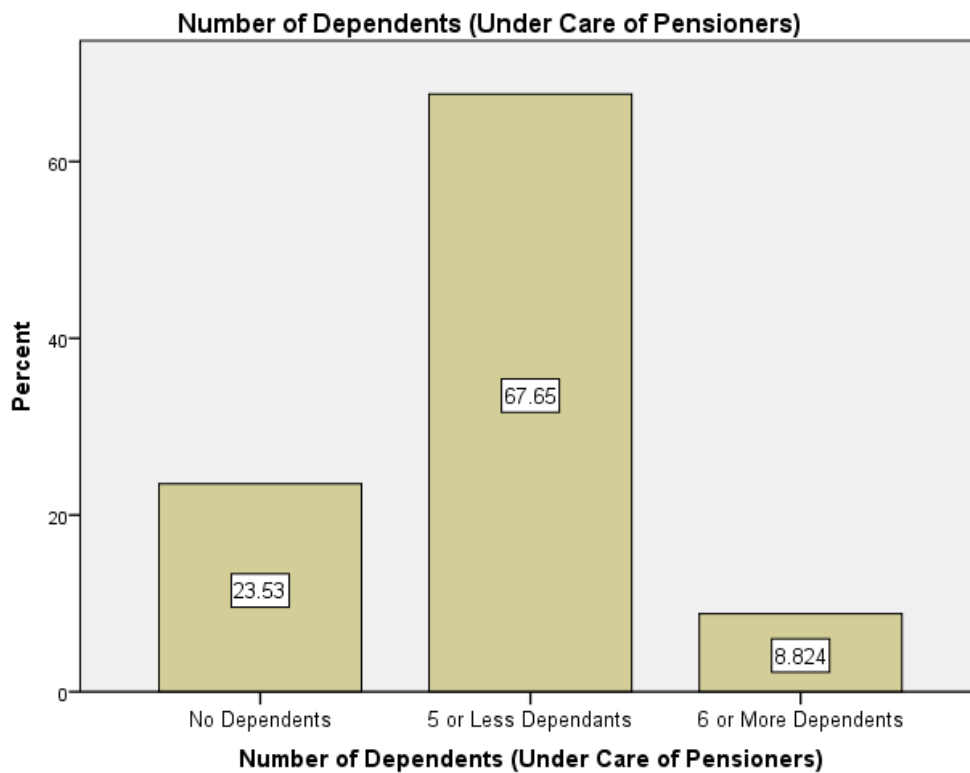
8. FIGURE 14: INCOME STATUS



The income figures show that less than 50% of the participants receive a salary income, followed by 29% who receive financial support mostly through assistance. Again 11% stated they make a living through state pension, with 10% depending on

state grants. Only 3% reported they receive both salary and state grants, mostly adults who have dependants under their care.

9. FIGURE 15: PENSIONERS AS CAREGIVERS



The figures that register concern deal with the forced role of pensioners as primary care givers to their families. The pensioners have been burdened by circumstances to become sole providers with pension incomes. On some occasion these pensioners have become breadwinners.

The figures show that 67% of the pensioners are solely responsible for at least 5 dependants with the stretch of their pension grants. More importantly the statistics show the majority of the pensioners have embraced the role and function of parenthood due to their own adult children being mostly unemployed.

The critical issues around these figures are that the said pensioners had to bear the challenges of raising their own children. However, they are now expected to parent their grandchildren. It is only 8% of pensioners who look after more than 6 dependants, with 23% reporting they have no dependants under their care. It

becomes clear it is only 23% of pensioners who have the privilege to enjoy their pension and spend it as they wish.

10. VULNERABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP AMONG ADULTS (40-55 AGE GROUP)

A surprising aspect was the perceived vulnerability, and a burden of responsibility carried by the (40-55) age group (25%). The majority of the participants who attested to this special kind of vulnerability are mostly women. These women attest to circumstances that impose upon them the responsibility to be care-givers to child orphans as a result of AIDS related mortalities. The burden of care is incremental amidst the strive to create stable conditions for family life, with the meagre resources at their disposal.

The 2014 Female Nation Survey, commissioned by Women 24 represents one million women residing in the metropolitan areas across the country. The study found among other issues that 46% of the women in metropolitan areas 'are bread-winners and contribute to the largest share to household finances'. It further stated that 44% of women are raising at least two children. The disturbing finding of the study is that 87% of the women are found to 'worry about money'. The burden of raising families by women who are mostly single parents is adding more responsibilities on women.

The single parenthood by women in some cases is an act of choice. Yet on numerous occasions' women who are single parents have deserted by their partners for various reasons. The figures before speak of a new reality of children growing in single headed families. In particular black families are experiencing this devastating trend. In this regard women by choice or circumstances beyond their control, the sole responsibility of raising children alone is on their shoulders. (Editorial City Press, 23 November 2014:8).

11. TABLE 20: PRESUMED OVERALL CAUSE OF FOOD INSECURITY

No	Item Factors to Food Shortage	Number of Statements
1	Economic Factors	199
2	Morality and Ethics Factors	55
3	Education and Skills Related Factors	50
4	Family Related Factors	44
5	Population and Immigration Factors	37
6.	Land Related Factors	37
7.	Environmental Factors	32
8.	Governance and Political Factors	29
9.	Spirituality Related Factors	8

The nine issues reflected in Table 20 demonstrate the variety questions that the participants attempted to convey in the discussion of factors they deemed important in defining the causes of food shortage. The participants did not necessarily raise and discuss these issues as they are tabulated. Rather the tabling of the these questions was necessitated by the fact that a general analysis of these multi-layered challenges would not do justice to the grievances of the communities concerned and how serious they sought to bring to our attention their plight.

Hence it is important to note the first three issues raised, and that economic factors were raised 199 times, followed by moral and ethical concerns that were mentioned 55 times, and calls for attention to be given education and skills received 50 statements.

12. TABLE 21: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC FACTORS

No	Economic Factors	Number of Statements
1	Lack of jobs	99
2	Lack of jobs for youth	5
3.	High cost of food	22
4.	Low family and salary incomes	19
5.	poverty	10

6.	Widening gap between the rich and the poor	9
7.	Labour strikes	6
8.	High inflation	5
9.	High petrol price	5
10.	Opulence	2
11.	Abuse and exploitation of farm-workers	2
12.	World economic recession	2
13.	Weak exchange rate	2
14.	High taxation	1
15.	Total	199

In Table 21 we encounter a breakdown of fifteen issues that are characteristic of the economic factors that are believed by the participants to contribute to food shortage. The scarcity of jobs top the list with 99 statements, followed by the high cost of food mentioned 22 times, along with low salary incomes and general low households financial capacity which was mentioned 19 times.

13. TABLE 22: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF MORALITY/ETHICAL FACTORS

No	Morality/Ethics Factors	Total
1.	Self-enriching politicians	17
2.	Corruption	8
3.	Selfishness	8
4.	Greed	7
5.	Fraud	1
6.	Corrupt government	1
7.	Greedy government officials	1
8.	Greedy leadership	1
9.	Unfaithful leadership	1
10.	Total	55

With regard to moral and ethical issues that are perceived to inform the vulnerability of food shortage, Table 16 detail the top three issues as the tendency of those who

hold public office to enrich self, received 17 comments. Corruption and selfishness which both gained eight comments respectively were the second highest.

The fifty-five responses are a direct challenge to the merging discourse about moral regeneration in South Africa. The responses necessitate that as a country we need to be conversant with the structure of the shared moral reality that we need to pursue and actualise. We must be conscious of the fact that the moral reality in our country is embedded within a social context that is prone to advance and serve particular interests, notably intransigent established hegemonic moral systems of the rich and politically connected. Moral hegemony (Kammer 1988:20) serve as a point of reference for *status quo* in entrenching agreed, and power arrangements in the private and public sectors.

Charles L. Kammer suggests engaging in a dialogue about the question of values and moral order, we need to familiarize ourselves with our moral landscape. Hence he could assert that we need to 'feel' and 'know' the nature of the terrain of 'our individual and social moral existence'. It is therefore an encumbrance upon us to ascertain the terrain and the areas of main focus in the envisaged moral renewal with regards to issues of food shortage (Kammer 1988:20).

We cannot envisage and advance moral instruments of change without taking cognisance of the structural system realities of the given social context of vulnerability of hunger.

Thus the spirituality of moral renewal against hunger must engage structural systems that entrenches socio-economic inequalities. Is it unrealistic to envisage a moral practice that will accentuate a singularity of a moral restorative intent of all our socio-economic structures for the benefit of all? Is it not possible for a social regeneration to yield sustaining, healing and corrective systems that could hold the centre for those who are on the margins of economic development in our country?

14. TABLE 23: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION/SKILLS FACTORS

No.	Education /Skills Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Poor education system	33
2.	Lack of skills for farming	13
3.	Lack of skills development for black farmers	3
4.	School drop-outs	1
5.	Total	50

The two issues that were discussed in Table 23 as having an influence in food shortage, referred 33 times to poor quality of our education system. Also the lack of skills to empower those interested in farming, were mentioned thirteen times.

15. TABLE 24: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF FAMILY RELATED FACTORS

No.	Family Related Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Laziness	11
2.	Dependency and entitlement mind-set	8
3.	Family dis-functionality	6
4.	Breadwinners overburdened	4
5.	Lack of family planning	4
6.	Lack of family gardens	2
7.	Teenage pregnancy	2
8.	Poor family support systems	2
9.	Living beyond means	2
10.	Extended families	1
11.	Substance abuse	1
12.	Total	44

Table 24 shows the 12 issues they believed to emanate from family settings and duly contribute to food shortage. The tendency of laziness received 11 statements, followed by the attitude of entitlement, which was mentioned eight times, with the third most mentioned item with six statements, referring to prevalence of dysfunctional families.

16. TABLE 25: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF LAND RELATED FACTORS

No.	Land Related Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Lack of land for farming	22
2.	Unequal landownership	8
3.	Non-productive use of restored land	6
4.	No ownership of land by farm-workers	1
5.	Land grab	1
6.	Total	37

In Table 25, various issues revolving around the access to land and its productive use, or lack thereof, were mentioned 37 times. The fundamental issue of the lack of land for farming gained 22 statements, coupled with inequity in landownership, which was raised times.

17. TABLE 26: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF AGRI-BUSINESS RELATED FACTORS

No.	Agri-business Related Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Lack of resources for farming	14
2.	Few opt for farming as business	14
3.	Incompetent farmers	3
4.	Poor subsidies for farmers	2
5.	Lack of finances to train farmers	2
6.	Modified crop production	1
7.	Farm killings	1
8.	Total	37

The land question and its influence in social vulnerability were followed in Table 26 by 37 statements, which placed the scarcity of resources. Together with few persons, particularly scholars in choosing farming as a career of choice, both received 14 comments. In this section the reader is made aware that participants do not convey sentimental views about landownership and use. They tend to align themselves with practical use of land resources to duly address food shortage.

18 TABLE 27: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

No.	Environmental Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Global warming	9
2.	Draught	8
3.	Mismanagement of natural resources	8
4.	Natural disasters	6
5.	Deforestation	1
6.	Total	32

The qualitative responses in Table 27 delve into environmental factors and their impact on hunger. The topic of global warming was placed as a strong factor, and its subsequent consequence, draught, which both were mentioned nine and eight times respectively. Another issue that gained attention was the mismanagement of natural resources as having direct influence in food shortage, with it being discussed eight times.

19. TABLE 28: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL RELATED FACTORS

No.	Social Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Inequality	7
2.	Poor community participation	7
3.	Food wastage	5
4.	Food dumping by retailers	4
5.	Discrimination	2
6.	crime	2
7.	Impact of orphans by HIV/AIDS	1
8.	Homelessness	1
9.	Appeasement of white fears	1
10.	Total	30

Social factors that have a bearing on food shortage are discussed in Table 28. The issue of social inequality is placed on the same footing with poor participation of society in attempts

to reverse the problem of hunger, both mentioned seven times. Thereafter, food waste on broader social level, is raised five, along with the dumping of food by retailers get to be mentioned five times.

20. TABLE 29: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL RELATED FACTORS

No.	Governance and Political Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Poor political leadership	9
2.	Non-caring government	9
3.	Poor management of public finances	4
4.	Incompetent public service	3
5.	Poor public planning	2
6.	Abuse of power	1
7.	Poor infrastructure	1
8.	Total	29

An in-depth analysis of governance and political issues get attention with the perception of poor political leadership and nonexistence of a caring government, get mentioned nine times in each category. Subsequently poor financial management of the public purse is eluded to four times. Whilst incompetent public service is discussed trice.

21. TABLE 30: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF SPIRITUALITY RELATED FACTORS

No.	Spirituality Related Factors	Number of Statements
1.	Less faith in God	5
2.	Lack of personal spirituality	2
3.	Loss of hope	1
4.	Total	8

The last item to be discussed in Table 30 centres on the question of spirituality. However, the participants could only mention the fact that society does not place more reliance in God. The reliance of God is mentioned only five times. It is immediately followed by dual mentions of the lack of personal spirituality, with a singular mention of

the prevalence of hope as a tool counter issues of hunger.

It could be said that on a deeper level there is a positional disposition about our collective spirituality. This fact also reflects a system of ‘socio-structural, and symbolic elements’ South Africa collective identity. Our spiritual identity is formed primarily by socio-political hegemony that is devoid of indigenous spirituality, let alone the transformative spirituality emerging from the parables of Jesus the Nazarene (Turner & Beegly 1981:375).

22. TABLE 31: OVERVIEW SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD SHORTAGE

No	Priority Issues	Number of Statements
1.	Governance and Political Solutions	92
2.	Economic Solutions	87
3.	Social Solutions	61
4.	Individuals and Family Solutions	49
5.	Education and Skills Solutions	35
6.	Spirituality Related Solutions	16
7.	Morality and Ethics Related Solutions	12
8.	Population and Immigration Solutions	9
9	Agri-business Solutions	6

Table 31 presents nine major areas suggested as vehicles through which solutions for hunger in the townships may be ascertained. The participants suggested three major solutions. Governance and political intervention were discussed 92 times. The second issue that received 87 statements was the economy, followed by social related solutions with 61 statements.

23. TABLE 32: SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

No.	Social Solutions	Number of Statements
1.	Promote feeding schemes	16
2.	Provide food parcels to affected families	14
3.	Fundraise to assist affected families	11
4.	Stop food dumping by retailers	10
5.	Social equality	4
6.	Patriotism	3
7.	Crime prevention	1
8.	Stop entitlement attitude	1
9.	Replace social grants with food parcels	1
	Total	61

When it comes to social solutions, Table 26 presents nine areas suggested for implementation. The first item that was raised 16 times was the promotion of feeding schemes to alleviate hunger. A further provision of food parcels to affected families was raised 14. On the other hand, 11 statements called for deliberate fundraising efforts to assist affected families. Finally, there were ten suggestions directed to the retailers to stop dumping food.

24. TABLE 33: IN-DEPTH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILY SOLUTIONS

No.	Individuals and Family Solutions	Number of Statements
1.	Promote family food gardens	23
2.	Mind-set shift to self-reliance	20
3.	Promote family planning	4
4.	Promote family planning	1

5.	Promote banking saving schemes	1
6.	Total	49

In Table 33, 49 statements suggested solutions that are likely to be driven by individuals and families. The question of promoting food gardens was brought forward 23 times, along with 20 calls for communities to cultivate a mind-set shift driven by self-reliance. On a minor front, four statements, family planning was also mentioned.

25 TABLE 34: IN-DEPTH EDUCATION AND SKILLS SOLUTIONS

No.	Education and Skills Solutions	Number of Statements
1.	Government to establish agricultural training programs	16
2.	Promote skills trans-fare and mentorship for emerging farmers	12
3.	Government to implement bursary schemes for agri-training	6
4.	Promote agri-business partnerships	1
5	Total	35

Table 34 details 16 statements that suggest the government needs to put in place training programs for agricultural related needs. Furthermore, the participants suggest that there must be mentorship and skills transfer programs.

These issues raised by the study signify the willingness of the ordinary township communities to be capacitated with know-how when it comes to farming. These views dispel the commonly held belief that the poor and unemployed are lazy and only rely on the government without taking any initiatives themselves to address their situation.

26. TABLE 35: IN-DEPTH POPULATION AND IMMIGRATION SOLUTIONS

No.	Population and Immigration Solutions	Number of Statements
1.	Influx control for immigrants	4
2.	Establish population control programs	4
3.	Repatriation of immigrants	1
4.	Total	9

The respondents in Table 35 raised the question of population control and strict measures to monitor and regulate immigrants that enter the country. In total, nine statements were put on the table.

Of the four statements, each required influx control for immigrants, and population control measures directed to the South African populace. It is a singular statement that sought the repatriation of immigrants as final solution to the challenges of hunger.

27. TABLE 36: IN-DEPTH AGRI-BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

No.	Agri-business Solutions	Number of Statements
1.	Promote sustainable farming	3
2.	Promote environmental care	3
3.	Total	6

On the in-depth agri-business solutions, the respondents addressed to two aspects with each receiving three statements. The issues raised refer to the implementation of sustainable farming, together with the need of broadly promoting environmental care, as ways and means of providing solutions to food shortage.

The concerns that emanate from the responses pose a direct challenge to the prevailing market based agricultural outcomes. Nonetheless the conceptualisation of ecology in an African context mediates multi-layered meaning and creative actualisation. Therefore within the paradigm of the Afrocentric epistemology, the

reality and the cultural context of the ecological misalignment reflected in capitalist agrarian model have a myriad of factors. It could mean the substitution of interactions with all natural phenomena including the living, the preservation of the legacy of our forefathers and those not yet born.

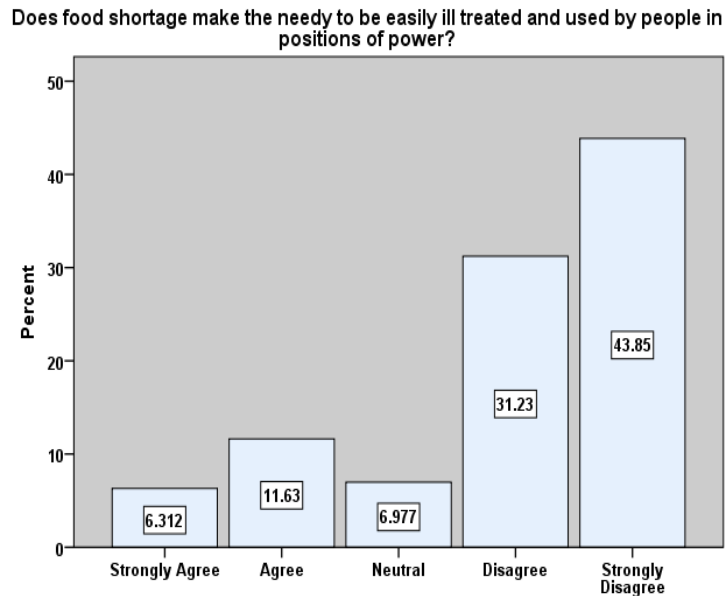
It could also be the outcomes of relating to each other outside of the collective, even in matters of economy. Thus agri-business will dictate business practice and environmental care that relocates people back to the network of their relationships. The notions of sustainable farming and environmental care in the categories African cosmology, conceives of ecology as a network, and a state of interrelatedness between the perceptible objective reality and the spiritual world (Buhrmann 1984:15).

28. THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants were all given a questionnaire that comprised of five sections. They were expected to provide biographical personal details, followed by five broad-based quantitative questions. However, each of the five quantitative questions was subdivided by five in-depth questions, which were intended to solicit more perspectives on any given issue raised. There were twenty-five qualitative questions.

The last part of the questionnaire was a qualitative section with two open-ended questions. In the qualitative section, participants were given an opportunity to provide suggestions they deemed necessary to address the question of food insecurity. Lastly the questionnaire provided a space for the participants to acknowledge with a signature that they voluntarily participated in the study without any pressure. We will therefore reflect on responses of the participants on the five quantitative questions presented before them.

29. FIGURE 16: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE (SECTION D, 5)



In-depth questions were given to the participants to determine how they relate to people in positions of authority, and to find out if such persons are likely to misuse their positions of power against them. Seventy-four percent felt that food shortage does not place them in a position of being taken advantage of by those in positions of power. It is only 17% who strongly felt their position of hunger renders them susceptible to abuse by persons in powerful positions in society. However 6% were neutral. These figures seem to contradict the prolonged labour strikes, and daily reality of violent service delivery protests that have become a norm in our country, with communities expressing displeasure against elected public representative. Is it possible when people face hunger, they feel too intimidated and powerless even to articulate their grievances, fearing retaliation from the powers that be?

30. THE EFFECTS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN ONE’S PERSONHOOD

The impact of food insecurity has resulted in a grave degree of personal and societal fragmentation with far reaching consequences. It could be argued that the government is intervening with necessary interim social relief through the provision of social grants, of which 16% of the participants are direct beneficiaries.

Furthermore, a significant number of the 217 participants comprising (60%), have reported to carry responsibilities with regard to dependants whose livelihood hangs on their shoulders. The primary negative effects of food insecurity clearly emerges in the direct questions that were posed to the participants in relation to categories of self-respect, personal dignity, social relations, openness to reconciliation and issues of personal faith, respectively.

31. HOW FOOD SHORTAGE IMPACTS SELF-RESPECT, PERSONAL DIGNITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

In respect to the question of whether food insecurity contributes to low levels of self-respect, 223 (61%) responded affirmatively, with only 38% stating that food shortage does not affect their sense of self-respect. With regard to the impact of food shortage to the sense of personal dignity, 216 (60%) responded yes to loss of personal dignity due to food shortage, whilst 144 (40%) testified to the negative. It can be deduced from the responses of the participants that their 'collective reality' (wa Thiongo 1981:6) and experiences of food shortage has seriously affected how the historicity of vulnerability has imposed a negative definition of their world in relation to group identity.

In the South African context, particularly the worldview of the Africans, the notion of personhood commonly referred to as 'Ubuntu-botho', carries a conceptualisation that has far-reaching implication. In African categories of being human, a person's sense of being is expressed in relationships with all of reality.

The African worldview has no dual dichotomy of the sacred and the secular. In African worldview, one can lose all material things, except 'Ubuntu-botho'. Ubuntu-botho connects one with self, others and Divinity. In biblical categories 'Ubuntu-botho' could be equated with the concept of the Imago Dei (the image of God). Yet the township residents testify to the affect that food shortage has stolen their sense of 'Ubuntu-botho' (Seteloane 1988:44).

When asked if their perceived lack of food, negatively affects how they relate to other people. Almost 156 (43%) stated that their relationships are not affected, against 204 (56%) who claim that food insecurity directly impinges on their relationships.

32. THE IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE IN RECONCILIATION (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION E)

The logical argument of vulnerability must be closely linked with the question of relationships aimed at ascertaining how the reconciliation project in South Africa is affected by food shortage. It is not surprising that 154 persons (42%) claim that their capacity to relate to other South Africans is not compromised. Whilst 206 (57%) participants report their ability to relate to others is seriously affected.

These negative perceptions are put in perspective by the recently debated Gauteng City-Region Observatory's Biannual Quality of Life survey (2014), conducted in early Autumn, reaching 27 000 people across Gauteng. The survey noted that income inequality was high compared to global standards. What was concerning is the fact that race relations were reported to be severely affected, xenophobia is rising, and public trust of government is very low.

The survey outlined perceptions held by different race groups that reflected some levels of distance and mistrust between blacks and whites. Hence, 44% of whites held the view that there is no possibility that black and white will ever trust each other. At the same time, 40% disagreed, and 17% of whites remained neutral. On the other hand, 73% of blacks held the view that trust between whites and blacks will never materialise. Nonetheless, 8% took a neutral stance, against 16% who disagreed. All these attitudes are being rooted in an economic environment in Gauteng that contributed to the rise in unemployment from 22.6% in 2008, to the current 25.8%, the survey contended (Masondo 2014:11).

33 THE IMPACT OF FAITH IN THE STRUGGLE FOR FOOD SECURITY (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION F)

The only construct that was answered positively by 221 (61%) against 139 (38%) was the question of personal faith not being negatively affected by food shortage. The implication is clear beyond any doubt that township residents experiencing food shortage literally hang on to life simply by the string of faith and nothing else.

34. THE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The study was designed in such a way that the questions that were presented to the participants were in a structured format. These quantitative questions were arranged in two categories. The initial five questions were addressing broad perceptual issues. Furthermore each of the five quantitative questions was further broadened with five sub-questions aimed at allowing the participant to unpack and express oneself on a broader issue raised. In this section, we will both present and provide a brief analysis on selected six sub-quantitative questions, on which must be taken as a deeper analysis of the five broad quantitative questions already deliberated.

35. THE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF VANDALIZED PERSONHOOD

35.1 The ravages of hopelessness

In the above paragraphs, we observed that 223 (61%), of the participants negatively, when asked how the effects of food insecurity contribute to their sense of self-respect. We further noted that it is only 38% who said that they are not affected in any way. It is not surprising that in the recent past, South Africa has witness with shame and disbelief the mobilisation of the so-called 'poo' strikes, as an expression of the community's anger against poor service delivery among the shack dwellers of the Western Cape. When communities have no sense of self-respect, anything is possible.

It cannot be disputed that people's sense of personal respect and dignity is violated by the reality of food shortage. In an Africa concept of being, one can state there is a sense of the violation of 'Ubuntu-botho', the concept of being fully human. Perhaps in biblical terminology, this sense of personal violation also impacts negatively the 'image of God in man'.

Nonetheless when posing a follow-up question of whether food shortage makes it difficult for one to have hope of attaining anything that one wish for, a gloomy picture emerges.

In this instance 151 (41%) of the respondents argued that their capacity to muster hope amidst food shortage is not impeded in anyway. On the other hand 163 (44%)

of the participants reported their ability to hope is affected, with only 44 (12%) who held a neutral position, while 0.5 % did not express any opinion.

One wonders how difficult it is as a parent to raise children when one barely retains an ounce of self-respect in the eyes of one's own offspring due to inability to provide the basic of all human rights, such as food. Therefore, we can only conclude that these figures tell us a significant number of township residents have a low sense of self-respect and are hopeless about the possibilities of a better future. They have no hope for themselves and the future of their children. What then is the implication of this reality of low self-regard in how people express themselves in family circles, in workplaces, churches, and the society at large, especially when faced with the demands of living?

36. THE POWERLESSNESS OF THE VULNERABLE

It has come to our attention that an overwhelming number of township folk are striving to lead meaningful lives whilst under the assailing of low dosage of self-respect, as if fate has not dealt a fatal blow. We further posed another question to the participants to find out about the possibilities of having feelings of powerlessness as a result experiencing food shortage.

To the question at hand, 64 (17%) of the people stated they do not feel powerless though experiencing food shortage. However 234 (64%) of the participants agreed that they were experiencing feelings of powerlessness in the face of food insecurity. It is just 56 (15%) who settled for a neutral position, and only 1.6 % did not articulate a position. This study is spitting mind-boggling facts and feelings regarding a section of South Africa's vibrant communities who are literally crucified on the cross of vulnerability. When an individual, family and community are harbouring deep-seated feelings of powerlessness, where does anyone begin to talk about salvation and hope?

37. HOW THE POWERLESS ARE USED AND ABUSED BY THE POWERFUL (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION D, 5)

It is without doubt at this stage of our study we can begin to see the link between powerlessness and the misuse of the office of leadership against the victims of food

insecurity. A straight follow-up question was addressed to the participants with regard to the possibilities that the vulnerable individuals can easily be ill-treated and used by those who hold positions of power, in all levels of social formations.

A lesser number (61) of respondents disputed the assertion of the above question. This number was followed by 23 (6%) of participants who were either for or against the question. This left 268 (74%) who without any hint of doubt stated it is highly likely that those in positions of power will ill-treat and abuse the vulnerable. The insignificant 2.2 % did not advance any opinion. The response of the participants in this specific 251 group comprising 70% of the participants differs sharply with the general overview of the responses of the entire study.

The cross-section (in the whole study) responses provide a perception that possibilities of being taken advantage by those in position of authority are diminished, as asserted by the responses on the main question. In the contrary, the same question posed to different age groups yields totally different responses confirming the assumptions that vulnerable members are at a greater risk of being disadvantaged by persons in positions of authority.

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On the contrary, the same question given to different age groups yields total different response. This dynamic confirms to the reader the assumptions that vulnerable members are at a greater risk of being disadvantaged by persons in positions of authority.

38. HOW FOOD SHORTAGE CREATES CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL INSTABILITY (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION E, 2)

Reconciliation will remain a pipe dream in South Africa if the conditions that breed food insecurity are not ameliorated with immediate effect. The figures that are

emerging from the in-depth analysis of the effects of food shortage tend to concur with that thesis. The study has given witness to the corroding consequences of food insecurity in the personhood, sense of self-respect and reaching one's capacity of mustering hope against hope, in the face of harsh realities of poverty.

We have observed that food insecurity brings tidal waves of destruction that erode all the defensive walls on their path, up to the last line of defence, the sense worth of any human life. Nevertheless the scaffolding of human dignity could not keep the resilience of the poor intact, as the figures attesting to mounting desperation were nailed at the mast for all to see.

Any attempt to arrest the negative impacts of food insecurity among affected communities and households could serve as barometer for reconciliation in our country. It is therefore important for us to come to terms with the views of the affected, about how the position they purport that their social conditions are a breeding ground for instability, both in their respective communities.

In this regard 45 (12%) of the participants hold the view that their food struggles do not foster a sense that South Africa will be swept by a wave of instability and social unrest. Only 20 (5%) people settled for neutrality. It is a significant number of 289 comprising (79%) of the respondents that register their fears and concerns about the contributory role of food shortage in creating conditions that will foster instability across the land.

39. THE ADVANTAGES OF THE BLACK AND WHITE RICH CLASS AGAINST THE POOR (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION E, 5)

A pertinent question was raised regarding the impact of food shortage to the attempts of fostering reconciliation in our country. We have witnessed the public role of the South African Truth and Reconciliation in facilitating forgiveness, amnesty, restitution and possible rehabilitation of the victims of gross human violations, in the our public 'theatre of pain and catharsis' (Doxtander & Salazar 2007:xi). It is therefore important to get the views of persons who are the least beneficiaries of the democratic changes in the twentieth anniversary of the present administration of the African National Congress.

The underlying reason for the soliciting views of those affected by food shortage was to determine how the extent of deprivation will influence peoples intentions to lead meaningful lives with others, both those of their same class and race and also those who they perceive to be well-off, whether Black or White. In the initial attempt of linking the negative impacts of food shortage to the national project of reconciliation, we noted that 206 (57%) participants stated their capacity to relate to others is severely affected.

Therefore the questions need to be pressed further by seeking to determine how the destitute perceive the prevalence of opportunities to access more resources for self-benefit, by the rich, regardless of race. This questioning sought to find out if the destitute hold any notion about a level playing field in as far as taking advantages and opportunities for self-development is concern. Thus it is only 63 (16%) who claimed there is equal access to resources for all race groups and without discriminating the poor. Be that as it may, 226 (62%) hold a view contrary to the former, with 17 % taking a neutral position. These results put forward a new analysis of the rich and the current social power arrangements, by the poor.

The destitute have reached a stage where they understand that wealth is no longer defined by race, particularly white race. As far as they are concerned, wealth is a system that benefits, the few across colour line. They have come to a point where they have observed that the rich serve and protect each other's interest without giving significance to the colour of one's skin. Njabulo Ndebele (2000:15) articulates the raw feeling of the vulnerable. He asserts that the 'autonomy of expectations' of the poor is by political choices of convenience, 'located outside' of considerations by the white capital and of the Black Economic Empowerment arrangements.

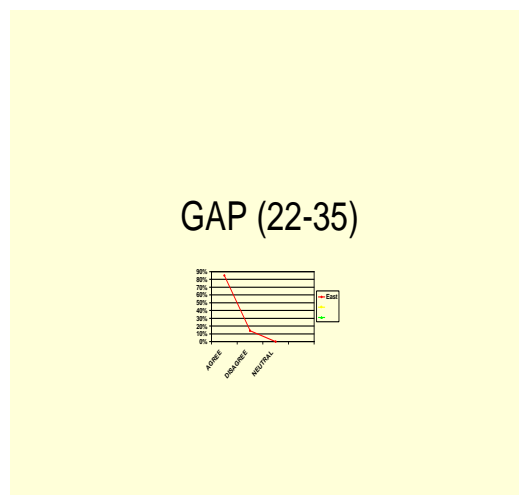
The implication is clear; while the hungry are striving and praying for the provision of 'our daily bread' the rich (it does not matter the race) are squandering 'more than enough' (Crossan 2010:130) resources for their own benefit. Perhaps it is such perceptions that fuel the spread of poor service delivery strikes in the townships across the country.

It could be argued that the township violence, domestic violence and the destruction of municipal infrastructure, attest to the notion of misdirected anger to family structure ‘which is the last defence’ sacrificed by incompetent governance (Biko 1978:118). It is obvious if township populace hold such views about the rich, attempts to promote reconciliation are doomed to fail.

40. TABLE 37: THE CONTRIBUTION OF FOOD SHORTAGE ON THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR (QUESTIONNAIRE, SECTION E, 1)

Age group	Quantity	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
22-35	118	104 (88%)	14 (7%)	
40-55	94	80 (85%)	14 (15%)	
18-21	39	29 (74%)	5 (12%)	5 (14%)

41. FIGURE 17: PERCEPTIONS ON THE WIDENING GAP IN 22-35 AGE GROUP

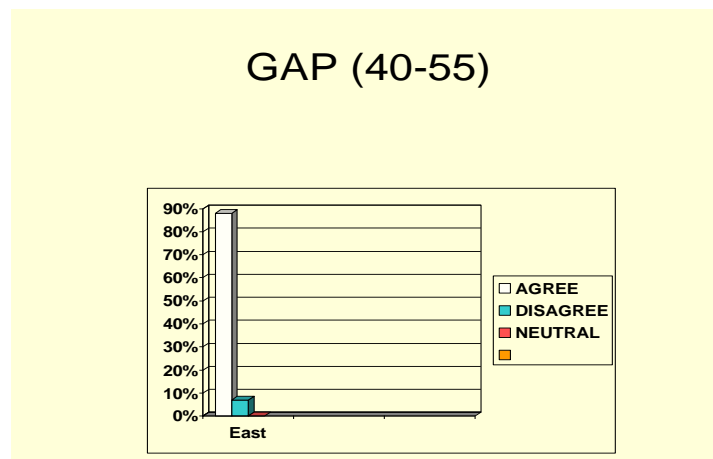


With regards to the widening gap between the have and the have not's, given the same age group dynamics, it does not come as a surprise to observe that the middle age youth comprising 118, 104 (88%) hold a sharp observation of the widening gap, with 14 (7%) disagreeing. The inequality gap is interrogated by the 2014 Credit Suisse's global wealth report (Credit Suisse Research Institute), which stated that global wealth has risen by 8.3% to \$263-trillion, in the context of worsening

inequality. Hence the report cites the figures that show that since 2008 inequality has become worse. It further notes that globally there are 34.8 million dollar millionaires, reflecting a 164% increment since 2000, and 41% of them residing in the US.

The increase in the numbers of the rich reveals a shocking reality of 1 billion people on the globe who are consigned to middle class category, whilst 47 000 South Africans have managed to accumulate \$1-million status, thus an overall 67 000 South Africans belonging to ‘the top 1 % richest people in the world’. This growth of figures of million dollar South Africans takes place in a year when our country’s unemployment rate has reached 35%, which has by default castigated South Africa to the stable of those countries with ‘very high inequality’, such as Brazil, Russia, and India (Isa 2014:5).

42. FIGURE 18: PERCEPTIONS ON THE WIDENING GAP IN 40-55 AGE GROUP



The inequality gap is interrogated by the 2014 Credit Suisse’s global wealth report (Credit Suisse Research Institute), which stated that global wealth has risen by 8.3% to \$263-trillion, in the context of worsening inequality. Hence the reports cite the figures that show that since 2008, inequality has become worse. It further notes that globally there are 34.8 million dollar millionaires, reflecting a 164% increment since 2000, and 41% of them residing in the US.

The 2014 Sunday Times Rich List, states that the wealth of South Africa’s ten rich individuals has reached R205 billion. Their shares rose to 81.4%, to 113 billion rand ownership in March 2013. The new entrant into the list, Et Mr. Ivan Glasenburg

(Swiss based), tops the list with R61.3 billion by the end of November 2014 (Lefifi 2014:10).

Andrew McGregor (2014: 7) analysed the figures in view of the wage demands of R12, 500 by work force mobilised by AMCU strike at Lonmin. The analysis depicts the ever widening gap and income inequality in 2014 between the companies CEO`S and low paid worker. The table below brings to the attention of the reader the immorality of economic disparity in our country today.

The figures speak to the reality of how the free market system in South Africa is arranged in such a way that a tiny minority benefits at the expense of the majority. Hence within the mining sector, the recruited black elites give credibility to a system that disempowers their fellow African counterparts. This exploitative arrangement instils a sense of worth on the part of the black elite, whilst suffocating the low paid workers below inflation wages.

43. TABLE: 38 CEO`S REMUNERATION IN MULTIPLES OF R12 500

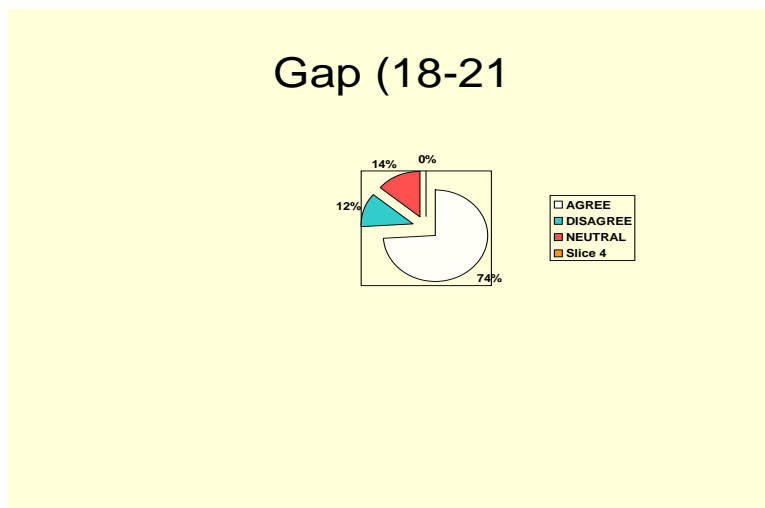
CEO`s REMUNERATION IN MULTIPLES OF R12 500			
CEO	Company	Monthly Salary (incl. gains on shares)	Multiplies of R12 500 as demanded by AMCU
Julian Roberts	Old Mutual	R6 102 748	488
Richard Lepeu	Compagnie Financiere Richemont SA	R5 942 780	475
Simon Crutchley	AVI	R5 257 000	421
Nic Durante	British American Tobacco	R5 240 029	419
David Constable	Sasol	R4 472 333	358
Whitey Basson	Shoprite Holdings	R4 166 750	333
Sifiso Dabengwa	MTN Group	R4 006 416	321
David Hathorn	Mondi	R3 744 928	300
Markus Jooste	Steinhoff	R3 193 115	255

	International		
Sim Tshabalala	Standard Bank Group	R2 390 167	191

Source: WHO OWNS WHOM

The other group that expressed its opinions about their perception on the negative impact of the wealth gap in their sense of worth and belonging to a common citizenship is the 18-21-age group. Their perception must serve as a warning about the national reconciliation and social stability. If more that 70% of the youth in that category feel they are marginalised and have no stake in the further of the country, then all the attempts of development are doomed to fail if the youth are not on board.

44. FIGURE 19: PERCEPTIONS ON THE WIDENING GAP IN 18-21 AGE GROUP



Of ninety-four middle age adults, 80 (85%) also attest to the reality of the poles of opulence and desperations pulling communities apart. It is just 14 (14%) who disagree with the opinions of the rest in this group. However of the overall 39 early youth, 29 (74%) are aware of unequal distribution of wealth in our country, 5 (12%) disagreeing and the last 5 (12%) holding a neutral stance.

The actual lived experiences of destitution by the participants confirmed by Massie (*et al.* 2014,xxii) that the unequal distribution of wealth in our country exacerbate the challenges of skewed living standards, household income, and the wealth gap has

widened further since the end of apartheid in 1994. There is a correspondence of actual life experiences exacerbated by the rich/poor poverty gap.

The 2014 Statistics SA (2014) confirms the seriousness of the reality of the widening gap. The report points out that 56% of youth younger than 18 years of age are poor. In the same vein 49% of the youth in age category of 18-24 comprise of 49% of people affected by poverty, whilst 30% of adults between the age-bracket of 45-54 are categorised as poor.

Another report (Strydom 2013:1) that could be read in tandem with the Stats SA (2014) view is the Momentum's Household Financial Index that issued its report on the 23rd of July 2013. The research canvassed the views of 3 500 families from different backgrounds and class levels. It concluded that our country's households are undergoing traumatic financial constraints.

Even those families within the middle class status, classified as 'anchored', are currently 'drifting' towards vulnerable levels. The Momentum study shows that vulnerability visited upon families does not discriminate. Even high-income earners households are not spared from the ravages of high cost of living. The rising cost of living, accompanied by raising electricity bills, petrol, food and escalating levels of household debts are depleting family's disposable incomes.

45. EMERGING VULNERABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

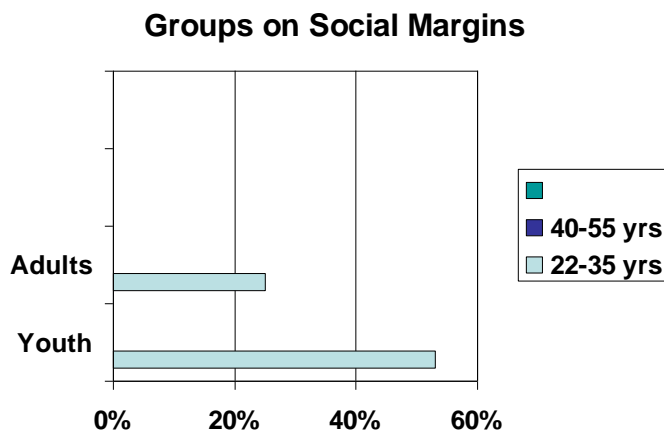
At this stage we must direct our focus on the extent and the nature of exposure to vulnerability of the two groups emerging in the study. In his epic work, *Jesus and the Village Scribes: Galilean Conflicts and the Setting of Q*, William E. Arnal (2001:10) postulated a hypothesis of 'social up rootedness' in his analysis of the economic conditions that informed the formative stages of the first century Jesus Movement. It is logical therefore for us in this study to frame and locate these two emerging groups with a stamp of vulnerability within South Africa's prevailing economic context of opulence, and reflect on how it operate as a frame of reference for their formation and maintenance.

45.1 In-depth analysis of focus groups

In the same vein, the intentions of this study are to identify and analyse the root causes of food insecurity systems both in the affected communities and all layers of South Africa’s social formation. This study in its totality is an earnest attempt to register and respond to the voices of distinctly two emerging vulnerable groups that were identified in the course of data collection.

The said groupings, which are the vulnerable transitional social group and on the other hand the vulnerable socio-economic group have become the centre of gravity of the entire study. The writer will attempt to reflect on the actual experiences, precisely the ‘material situation’ (Arnal 2001:10) rather than the prevailing ideological political rhetoric explaining the reasons giving birth to the emergence of such groups.

45.2 Figure 20: Groups on social periphery



The perceived vulnerability and a burden of responsibility carried by the (40-55) age group (25%), mostly women came as a surprise. These women are primary caregivers to child orphans as a result of AIDS related mortalities, and yet strive to create stable conditions for family life.

On the other hand, the youth (22-35 age group 53%) attest to vulnerability in transitional expectations and social demands, in the face of unemployment and stagnation in social mobility. The precarious social conditions experienced by the youth, leaves much to be desired.

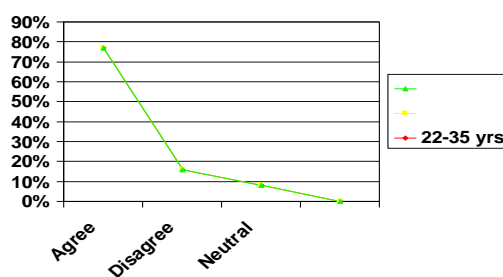
The recent report of Statistics SA (2014), in its twenty-year review of the levels of skills and employability among the youth, depicts African youth as highly disadvantaged compared to other races. The report states that the youth in age group 25-34, 'have regressed in terms of skills'. It further shows that in contrast, skills and employment opportunities among white youth are at 61.5%, 50.7% among Indians/Asians, whilst Coloureds attained 22.5%, and Africans were at 17.9%. Africans lag in acquiring skills (Maswanganyi 2014:7).

The critical vulnerable status of the youth was further raised by the results of the research conducted by McKinsey, which reported that available jobs stands at 1,25 million, against 3.5 million unemployed youth (Netshitenzhe 2014:3).

In the same vein, the African Centre for Economic Transformation argues in the next ten to twenty years, the majority of African people will be based in the cities, with a high percentage of them being youth. The obvious implication is that if this shift is not handled properly, it could lead to social instability similar to the 'chaos such as that of the Arab Spring' (Ford 2014:17). This concern needs to be taken seriously in the light of the challenges of food shortage.

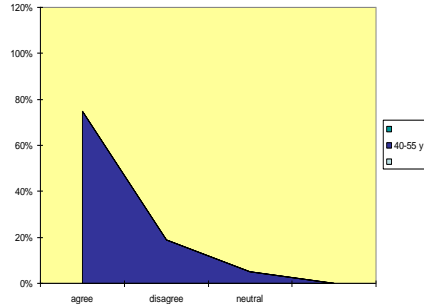
45.3 Figure 21: Perceptions of misuse of power in 22-35 age group

Misuse of Power

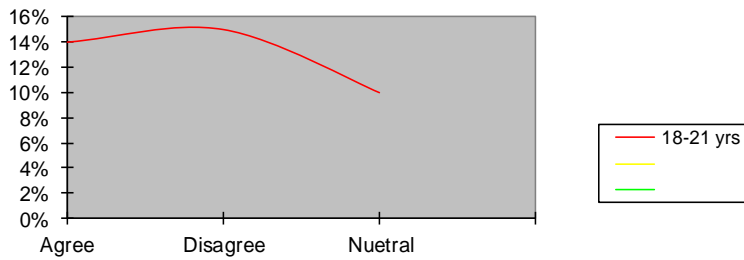


45.4 Figure 22: Perceptions of misuse of power in 40-55 age group

Misuse of power



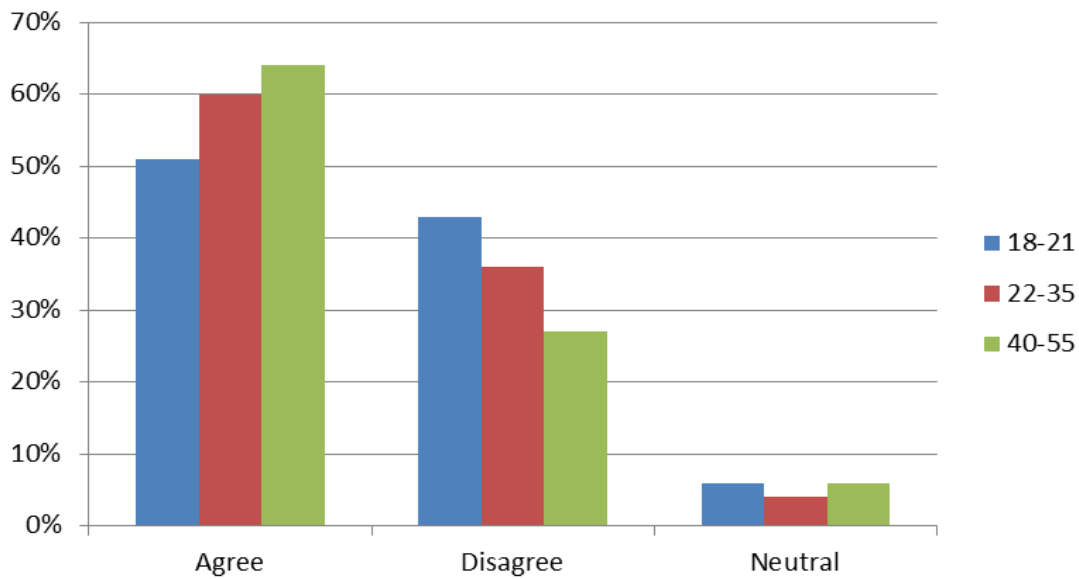
45.5 Figure 23: Perceptions of misuse of power in 18-21 age group



This section has to do with the participants’ perceptions of the misuse of power by all in leadership positions both in the public and the private sector. An in-depth analysis of responses from different age groups was undertaken. Furthermore the views of 251 (70%) participants from different ages between 18-21, 22-35 and 40-55 respectively, analysed with the aim of determining how a specific group will feature.

The dominant view within this focus group accentuates the current leadership in our country is prone to exploit the public. Due to the fact that 92 (77%) from 118 pool of the youth between 22-35 assent to that view, followed by 71(75%) of the middle age adults, with the only exception of 14 (14%) 18-21 youth who hold the least assertive view. In the middle age adults group 19 (20%) disagreed whilst 4 (4%) held a neutral position.

46. FIGURE: 24 IMPACT OF FOOD SHORTAGE IN SOCIAL RELATIONS



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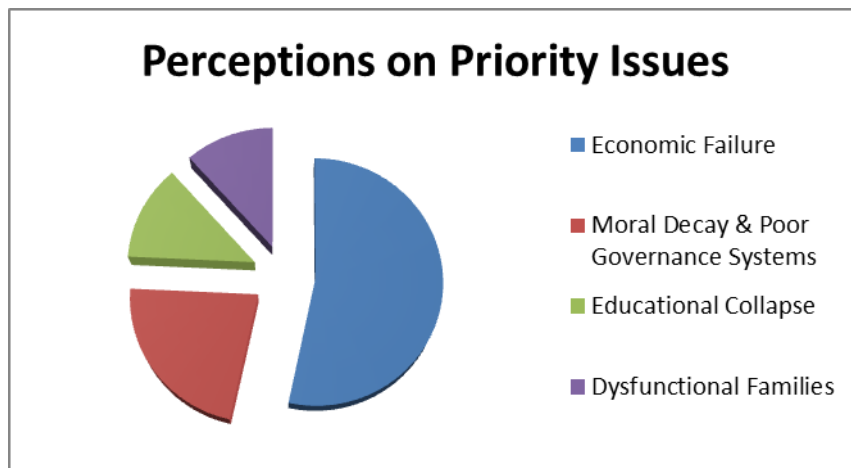
affects their relationships. We could conclude that 151 (62%) respondents, against 86 (35%) affirms that food shortage has a negative bearing on their relationships, with possible effect on race, class and social group relations

Since we have mentioned that each major quantitative question had tributaries of five sub-questions. We have so far deliberated on two tributary questions emanating from the major question on reconciliation. We have witnessed that under broader concerns for the advancement of reconciliation, the number of participants reporting difficulty in embracing the reconciliation vision of our country, has moved from 206 (57%), followed by 226 (62%). This is a growing dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the government intention to promote reconciliation without adequately addressing socio-economic factors that have a bearing on the matter.

Therefore a calculated digging of the reconciliation question, linking it with the perceptions of widening gap between the rich and the poor could not be avoided. The outcome to the question posed, took the figures of desperation from the (57%) alluded earlier, to a staggering (295) 82% of discontent. We cannot afford to bury our heads in the sand when such figures scream for attention. These figures say to us that the remedy for food insecurity has gone beyond the provision of 'soup kitchens' and food parcels. Something greater is at stake.

Reconciliation in South Africa is surely dying a violent death, with serious consequences. Could we be stretching the argument to far by making a reference to the xenophobia attacks that took place in our country, to the 82% upsurge of sentiments, and the inability of the township folk to make sense of the reasons for wealth disparities in South Africa?

47. FIGURE 25: MORAL AND ETHICAL DECAY IN GOVERNANCE



48. TABLE 39: PERCEPTIONS ON PRIORITY ISSUES

49.

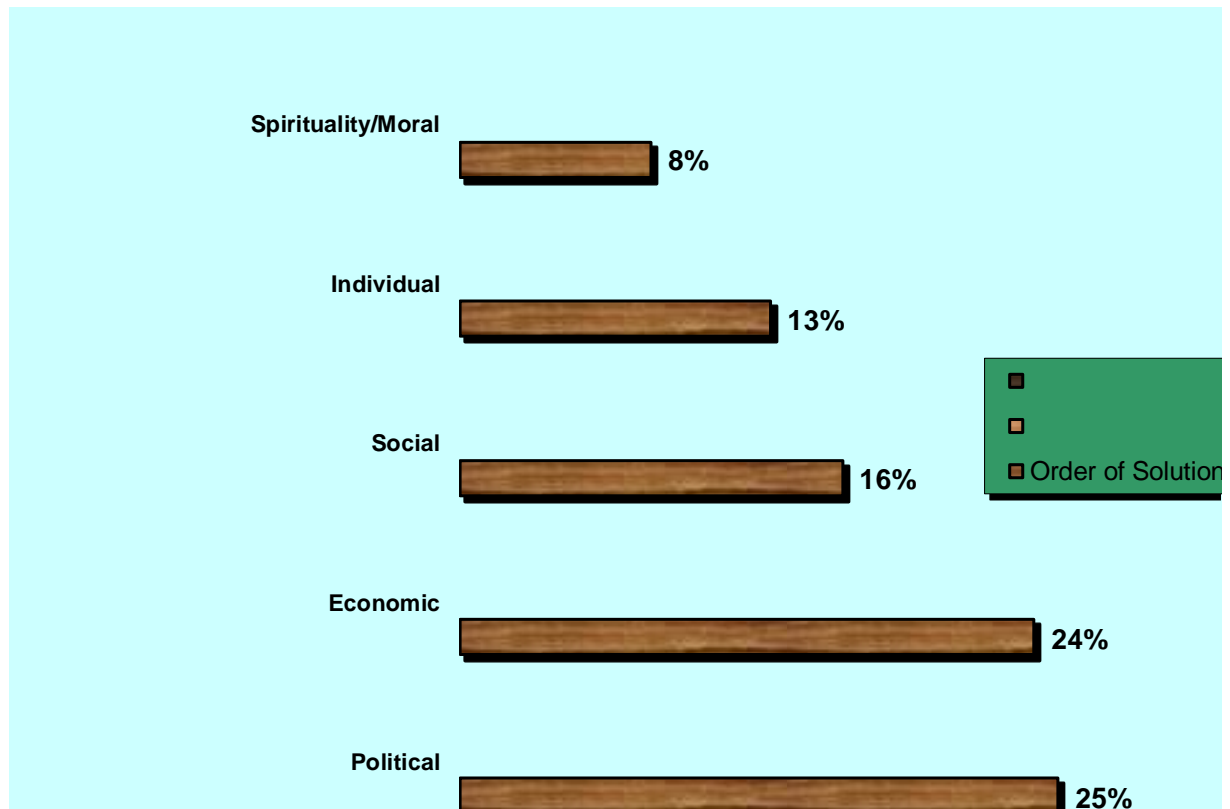
No	Category	Quantity
1.	Economic Failure	55%
2.	Moral Decay and Poor Governance Systems	23%
3.	Educational Collapse	13%
4.	Dysfunctional Families	12%

This study presents serious critical assessments of the incumbent administration by ordinary township residents. The economy is perceived to have failed by more than half of the overall participants (55%). In the same vein (23%) of the participants, forward an argument that moral decay is taking root in public institutions.

A perception of poor governance; rises in corruption and greed tendencies at all levels of public management is factored as contributing to food shortage. The moral decadence in governance is also believed to have resulted in unprecedented

destructive effects in the quality of education offered in public schools. Family institution is not spared from the corroding influence of collective moral collapse giving birth to the instability of township family life.

50. FIGURE 26: PRIORITY OF SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS



The suggestions that were substantiated by the respondents could be grouped to five priorities on the basis of the focus to each issue under discussion. Thus it becomes evident the first issue that needed attention is the political sphere, which solicited 25%. Economic issues follow this at 24%, social issues at 16%, and issues to be addressed by individuals at 13%. Spirituality and morality solutions were given 8% in terms of the discussion that foresaw morals and primary in resolving the challenges of food shortage.

APPENDIX C: ABBREVIATIONS

AIDC Alternative Informative Development Centre
AMCU Association of Mining and Construction Union
ANC African National Congress
AU African Union
BEE Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
EU European Union
FIFA Federation of International Football Association
GDP gross domestic product
GEAR Growth, Employment and Redistribution
ICC International Criminal Court
IMF International Monetary Fund
JSE Johannesburg Stock Exchange
MDGs Millennium Development Goals
NPA National Prosecuting Authority
NUM National Union of Mine Workers
PAC Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
NDP National Development Plan
RDP Reconstruction and Development Program
SAPS South African Police Service
SARB South African Reserve Bank
SOE's State Owned Enterprises
SPSS Statistical Package for Social Science
STATS SA Statistics (South Africa)
RSA Republic of South Africa
TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN United Nations
USA United States of America
WTO World Trade Organization

SUMMARY

THE PARABLES OF JESUS AS SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN A CRITICAL VIEW OF FOOD INSECURITY SYSTEMS FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS IN URBAN TOWNSHIPS

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Department: New Testament Studies

Degree: DPhil (New Testament)

The aim of this study is to determine the use of the parables of the historical Jesus as transformative interpretive instruments of food shortage in urban townships. We will give much attention on the 12 theses critical reading of the parables espoused by Van Eck. In order to reach stated objectives, a sample of 360 township residents across the South Western Townships (Soweto) and Pretoria, comprising of teenagers, youth and adults were invited to participate in the study.

Van Eck's methodology of the twelve theses as interpretative frameworks of the parables will be applied. In that regard the reading of ten parables by Van Eck will be undertaken. The ten parables to be covered will be the following: the parable of the Minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the Sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the Mustard Seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the Great Banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the Richman and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the Merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the Tenants in the vineyard (*Gospel of Thomas* 65).

We will apply specific parables in interpreting four major indicators that emerged in the study. The indicators covered the following issues: the impact of food shortage on self-respect, one's dignity, openness and good relations with others. To achieve the desired end we will use the following parables: the parable of the minas (Lk 19:12b-24, 27), the parable of the sower (Mk 4:3b-8); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26).

Each selected indicator will be interrogated by a singular parable. The remaining aspects of the results of food study will be interpreted by eight parables namely: the parable of unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-33); the parable of the mustard seed (Lk 13:18-19); the parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:1b-23); parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:4-6); the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-26); the parable of the merchant (Mt 13:45-46); the parable of the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-8) and the parable of the tenants in the vineyard (*Gos. Thom. 65*).

We want to show that the given parables can serve as catalyst of transformation in the interpretation of the entire study of food insecurity in the townships.

Keywords: Food Insecurity, Food Shortage, Gear Policy, Historical Jesus, Hunger, Inequality, Systemic Vulnerability, Vulnerable Households, Parables, Poor, Poverty, Spirituality.