

**An Ethnography of a Mamelodi West Hostel: Analysing how Stigma,
Gender, Crime and Political Structure is understood outside and
within the hostel.**

By

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

When I think of a hostel, I am transported to my childhood where I watched “Emzini Wezinsizwa” (house for men); a popular black sitcom that portrayed the lively and interesting lives of five men living in a township hostel, a life filled with struggles, but also hope. The five men travelled from the rural homelands, and came to Gauteng to seek employment in the hopes of making enough money to send back home. These men shared a poorly furnished room in a dilapidated hostel building filled with rubbish, barely working toilets, and leaking roofs. The men drank a lot, gambled, and were very loud. Each man represented a different ethnic group, held different occupations, and were referred to by their surnames. Baba (it means father, and is used to refer to a male elder) Mkhize emerged as the leader of the group. Highly respected and very strict, a traditional Zulu man who was a polygamist, and who could not read or write. He worked as a security guard at a white company. In his spare time, he repaired shoes and was also a barber. Mofokeng was a Sesotho speaking man, who was unemployed and a free loader. He was a heavy gambler, playing *Mochina/Fahfee* all day long. He owed loan sharks money, and had tons of girlfriends. Magubane was a Zulu man who was an *Inyanga* (traditional healer), and was also employed as a post office messenger. Tshawe was a Xhosa man, who was a construction worker and spoke English fluently. He could read and write and therefore, was regarded as the smartest in the group. Lastly, was Chirwali, a foreigner from Malawi. He was a tailor. “Emzini Wezinsizwa” showed us the communal living of people of different ethnicities. These five men would all sit at one table and eat together, they always had three dishes, one for pap, one for meat, and the other dish was for washing hands. It showcased people who became a family, and fought against the corrupt *induna* (hostel security guard) who made their lives miserable.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One: This chapter sets the setting for the dissertation. Using ethnographic excerpts, it provides the inspiration for the research, and the methodology used in the dissertation.

Chapter Two: This chapter provides a historical overview of Mamelodi Township, as well as background analyses of the formation of townships. It also provides a historical overview of hostels in South Africa, and in particular, the hostel in Mamelodi.

Chapter Three: This chapter looks at how stigma is defined. Who actually constructs this stigma? What are the ways in which hostel dwellers are stigmatized by house dwellers? What are the ways in which hostel dwellers stigmatize house dwellers? How do they react to this? How are hostel dwellers using the stigma to their advantage? What are the different meanings attached to the hostel by both its residents and house dwellers?

Chapter Four: This chapter looks at the identity of the female hostel dwellers. How are women in the hostel able to survive? What kinds of relationships exist between female and male hostel dwellers? It looks at the various ways in which women experience stigma.

Chapter Five: This chapter analyzes the economic, as well as the emotional survival strategies of hostel dwellers. It notes the various strategies hostel dwellers utilise in order to survive in the hostel. It tries to understand why this hostel has become an avenue where monetary transactions occur.

Chapter Six: This chapter looks at the emergence of the Hostel Committee. It looks at the political structure of the Hostel Committee. Who exactly is the Hostel Committee? What does it do for the hostel and its residents? What is the significance of the role it plays?

Chapter Seven: The conclusion of the dissertation focuses on how all these different facets of the hostel make it a very complicated, perplexed, and functional place. It notes that all the things which happen in the hostel are a result of what is happening in the outside world.

My honours research was able to scratch the surface of the complexities that surround the Mamelodi West hostel. The aim of this research is to analyze the ways in which stigma is constructed from the outside, and how people inside the hostel react to this stigma. It also

analyzes how gender roles and survival strategies contribute to how stigma is constructed in the hostel. Using participatory data collection, I examine how the Hostel Committee is a political structure, which helps the hostel engage with the municipality and acts as a mediator. This research is an examination of the stigmatization that occurs within the hostel, and how it works in contradictory ways.

Literature

This research dissertation is using the literature of authors such as Mamphela Ramphele, Dunbar Moodie, Anthony Minaar, Ari Sitas, Glen Elder and the recent work of Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama just to mention a few. They are some of the people who have written lengthy on hostels in South Africa. I have noted various literatures in the different chapters. The literature helped give a historical background or context of hostels by telling us the following: When were they built? Why they were built and how they are currently being occupied? The common theme in the literature on hostels is that hostels were designed for migrant workers, and that these migrants were exploited by the labour system. They also note that in some cases hostels were overcrowded and poorly maintained. Migrant workers would apply for accommodation at the hostel on their own or through their employer.

Glen Elder (2003:2) wrote lengthy on hostels in South Africa, his book titled “Hostels, Sexuality and the Apartheid legacy” notes that hostels are old apartheid spaces that were used to house apartheid’s male labor; “Hostels were gendered spaces, the vast majority of migrant worker hostels were built to house men only” (Elder 2003: 5). There were two types of hostels established, the first are hostels that were established by municipalities to house local labor. The second was gold as well as other commodities like diamonds (originating in Kimberly) miner hostels; they were significantly different by being more regulated and widely documented (Elder 2003: 7).

Mamphela Ramphele in her book “A bed called home” notes that “hostels are an important legacy of a policy of systematic racial discrimination and gross economic exploitation of indigenous people of South Africa over the last three centuries” (Hunter, 1936; Bundy, 1972 cited in Ramphele 1993:15). Policies were put in place that ensured that African people were

denied access to urban resources but demanded their labour (Wilson, 1972; Savage, 1984; Saunders, 1988 cited in Ramphela 1993:15).

For this research, I make the distinction between “house dweller”, “hostel dweller” and “dual dweller” for analytical purposes. These terms are used for the purposes of making distinct categories; however, I am well aware of the intermingling and slippage of these terms. The commander who is a hostel elder who has been living in the hostel for over 20 years, highly respected by some hostel residents who view him as a father figure; he is a loud well-spoken and knowledgeable man. The commander dislikes the term hostel dweller, he finds it insulting and degrading, according to him, it carries a large amount of stigma. I have made the decision to use these terms as the terms “house dweller” and “hostel dwellers” make reference to the space that residents of Mamelodi West Township occupy. House dweller refers to residents that live outside of the Mamelodi West hostel, people who are regarded as part of ‘the township’. Whilst the term hostel dweller, refers to residents who live in the hostel. These residents are regarded by some house dwellers as not being part of the Mamelodi West township community, rather are seen as outsiders, pariahs even. This distinction is important to make because it shows a perceived separation between the dwellers. This separation is evident in the tense relationship they have with each other. It shows the boundaries drawn up by some house residents, the “us” versus “them” mentality that happens in this township. Dual Dweller refers to house dwellers that are friends with hostel dwellers, and spend most of their time in the hostel. They go back and forth between both spaces (the hostel and outside the hostel). They are people who occupy both spaces and are not tied to one spatial area. They are friends with hostel dwellers and enjoy spending their time at the hostel. Their perception of the hostel is very positive and they often relate to hostel dwellers on many facets, for instance belonging to the same ethnicity, speaking the same language and having grown up in the same place.

The Mamelodi West hostel is interesting because it is a complex place that is layered with time and space. It represents different meanings to the residents of the hostel. The attached meaning is significant because it informs us of the relationship that exists between the hostel, the hostel residents and house residents (residents who live outside the hostel). Some of the hostel residents I spoke to refer to the hostel as a temporary home, because it provides free accommodation (for the last fifteen years or so hostel residents have not been paying rent). They have the opportunity

to save money and eventually buy a house. For others, it is a place of business; the hostel is an avenue to make money. For the older hostel residents the hostel has become a place they regard as their home, having lived at the hostel for over 15-20 years. The hostel dwellers are aware that the hostel is in a decrepit condition, that it is poorly managed and poses a health risk. Despite its condition, it means something to them; it represents the sacrifices that they have had to make to live there. One of my informants, when we were discussing the way some house residents view the hostel said “the house dwellers view the hostel as their dumping site” (see figure 1). They use it as a rubbish bin to dump all the things that they do not want. The dumping site is at our front door, at one of our entrances, that tells you what they think of us”. While I was hanging out with *Malome* (Uncle) Chippa I chatted with him about this dump site. *An excerpt from my field diary:*

“I was sitting in *Malome* Chippa’s spaza shop -a spaza shop is a business store in a township that sells everyday household items, like bread, vegetables, fruits, maize meals, sugar, cooking oil, candles, soap, alcohol, cool drinks and other basic living essentials. There are about four spaza shops in the hostel all selling similar products. These spaza shops sell various products and produce, solely catering to the needs of hostel everyday life. For examples things like paraffin; small and medium sized maize meal; cooking oil (that is measured using a small cup and then poured into a small plastic bag and sold at R1, 00 a cup); sugar and salt (both products are also measured by using a cup, poured into a small plastic bag and sold at R1, 50 per small plastic bag); candles; sorghum beer; cigarettes and etc. *Malome* Chippa says he sells some of his products in such small portions, because most hostel dwellers like to buy in small portions because they eat alone and thus cook for themselves only. Also they usually cannot afford to buy food because they gambled all their money- *Malome* Chippa and I are busy drinking cool drink and I start telling him that I feel bad for my shoes for constantly stepping on refuse. Whenever I come to the hostel, I use an entrance that has now become a refuse dump, this makes entering the hostel a smelly and dirty process. He laughs at me and says “you will get use to the dirt and smell, it will become normal.” He laughs after that and says “welcome to the world of hostel dwellers”. He further says “house dwellers have used this entrance to the hostel as a dumping site for years now. Despite several meetings with the community, where we all (hostel and house dwellers) agreed we will clean up the entrance and the community will stop dumping refuse at this hostel entrance. The agreement did not hold up long, because not even 72 hours later people are already dumping their refuse at the hostel.” He points out that just outside the hostel, there is

a car wash run by a group of young men and just next to the car wash, there is a street cook; who has a make shift cooking station where he sells home cooked African cuisine. He says that “both the car wash guys and street cook are situated outside the hostel; they too just dump their waste at the entrance and contribute to the health hazard. These are house dwellers that are using the hostel as their dumping site as well, especially the cook. He just dumps both raw and cooked meat at this entrance, contributing severely to the toxic smell.” *Malome* Chippa tells me that he has spoken to the gentleman several times, but his plea has fallen on deaf ears. The cook will agree to not use the hostel as a refuse dump today, but then the following day he will do the exact opposite. My father even suggested that the hostel dwellers take matters into their own hands by taking some of the refuse and dumping it where the cook sells his food, as a way to teach him a lesson. He further suggested that the same be done with people who use the hostel as a dump site, to dump the refuse in their yards, according to him that will stop house dwellers from dumping their rubbish at the hostel.

Malome Chippa said something interesting when we were discussing this. He said that house dwellers are able to behave in this manner (dumping their rubbish at the hostel) because they view hostel dwellers as rubbish. He says “we hostel dwellers are not seen as human beings, as people with dignity who deserve respect. The blatant disrespect shown to us by house dwellers is the main reason why they are able to easily dump their rubbish on our door step”. He further notes that house dwellers responsible for dumping trash at their door step use this as a reminder that hostel dwellers are seen as trash. The physical appearance of the hostel carries stigma as well as the people who inhabit it. The fact that it is used as a rubbish dumping site adds to the way it is perceived, as well as the way the people who live in it are perceived. House dwellers are equating the trash they are dumping literally at the door step of the hostel, to the people who live in it.

Many house dwellers cannot understand why anyone would choose to live at the hostel. They associate the hostel with condemnation and inhumanness, with filthiness and danger; calling it a drug den, a sex house and a place that is destroying the lives of their children. Other house dwellers see it as an apartheid legacy that should be destroyed. Some of the older female house dwellers I spoke to said that it needs to be destroyed to make way for new housing. Sarah who is in her late-40s said, “we need the land so new houses are built for our children. Right now our

children have no jobs and no houses, while this hostel is freely catering to men who were not born in Mamelodi. We need the Municipality to build us and our children houses. The hostel has no place here, it needs to go and make way for new permanent housing; houses that benefit us, the true residents of Mamelodi.”

Dual dwellers and hostel dwellers see the hostel as a home for hardworking men who are forced to come to Pretoria to seek employment. They see the hostel as a place where both hostel dwellers and dual dwellers are able to make money, through the various economic processes that occur in the hostel. While dual dwellers reside outside the hostel, they too have come to call the hostel home, because of the friendships they have made and the amount of time they spend there.



Figure 1 The Hostel Dumpsite

Methodologies

As a resident in Mamelodi I have passed the Mamelodi West hostel countless of times, asking myself why people would choose to live in such a dilapidated building. A building that has broken windows, where there is no electricity, a building that smells atrociously of urine, sewage and used as a dumping site, and where the rats are as big as a brick; A building that is falling apart at the seams, where for the last 13 years or so hostel residents have not been paying rent or getting access to proper running water and sanitation. It was not until my father took me to the hostel one day that the hostel and its residences started to intrigue me.

My father was the one who introduced me to the Mamelodi West Township hostel, as someone who has close ties to the hostel he was the right person to help me with my research. He has been going to the hostel for several years now, his perception and experience of the hostel is different to mine. This was very much an inspiration to doing my research at this hostel. My father was instrumental in me conducting my research. He had access to this space, his friends resided in the hostel and he was familiar with not only the hostel space but its residents. My father's relationship with the hostel started in 2010. He started going to the hostel because he had a friend who had just moved into the hostel. He would visit his friend and it was there that he made friends with other hostel residents. He was introduced to hostel life and found himself enjoying it. He says he related to hostel residence in many ways; He had recently lost his job and was unemployed, he grew up in rural Limpopo, and he speaks the same language as them. He would regularly go to the hostel to de-stress. He began to enjoy spending time in the hostel, entertaining himself and engaging in the various economic processes that occur in the hostel.

1. Participant Observation

Participant observation was a central part of my methodology. I was a participant observer, in that I was an outsider who became involved in hostel activities. This helped make my ethnographic study easier; it helped familiarize me with the hostel environment and the men living there. I volunteered at a tuck shop (spaza shop) as a point of entry in the environment. It is important to note that the Mamelodi West Township hostel has various sections in it; it is divided into different blocks starting from block A to Y. I was working in one section; block P. During this period I simply observed the hostel environment, in terms of the residents' day to day activities. Allowing the men to familiarize themselves with my face and somewhat became comfortable with me. This made it easier for me to approach some of the men for interviews. The spaza shop was my access, it was significant in gathering my research data because of the following reasons: By working at the spaza shop my position in the hostel was stronger in that the residents were more willing to talk to me; hostel dwellers did not see me as a journalist or someone who wants to investigate them; hostel dwellers were more comfortable with me because they were familiar with my face, I was not a total stranger, it made access to privilege information a little easier. My father was also another point of access in the hostel. He is popular

and well liked in the hostel; this resulted in hostel dwellers easily helping me, and opening up about their hostel experiences to me. As much as my connection to him helped my research, it also became a deterrent to my relationship with hostel and house dwellers. Some of the dwellers did not fully open up to me, only offering limited information. Out of respect for my father, hostel dwellers in particular only provided information that they deemed appropriate and acceptable to him. Hostel dwellers did not want to offend him.

Talking and interviewing female hostel residents was not an easy process. I initially thought it was going to be easy, that I could use my gender to my advantage. I thought that I would have woman to woman conversations, making it easier for female hostel dwellers to open up to me. This proved to be difficult to do, as the women in the hostel refused to talk to me. They saw me as an outsider. The interviews were made possible by two male hostel residents and my father. They spoke on my behalf, using their friendships with the female hostel dwellers to make the interviews possible. The female hostel dwellers did not want to be interviewed alone with me; they preferred talking to me in the company of other hostel residents like my informants.

As part of my participant observation I attended and sat in the Hostel Committee meetings outside the hostel. I also attended gatherings that were held at the hostel to discuss hostel affairs.

My interviews with Dual Dwellers like my father were conducted both inside and outside the hostel. The interviews were informal conversations about their perceptions and experiences in the hostel.

As part of my fieldwork approach, I would wear more masculine clothing; I would always wear baggy jeans and loose fitted t-shirts, caps and sneakers. As a young female I wanted to be comfortable in the hostel. I wanted to respect the male dominate space that I was in, by not wearing tight fitted clothing and dressing feminine. It made me comfortable to walk into the hostel space dressed more masculine; though this did not stop the hostel residents from noticing my presence, they would stare at times and others would give curious glances. On occasions I was very uncomfortable, when drunken hostel dwellers would sexually objectify me. At one point I interviewed a hostel resident who wanted to pursue a romantic relationship with me, when I rejected him, he started yelling explicit derogatory names. I wore masculine clothing to be comfortable, but regardless of what I wore I was still uncomfortable. I was still half protected

because everyone knew my father and his friend *Malome* Chippa. My father's relationship with *Malome* Chippa was important because it ensured that more often than not I was protected, making me feel comfortable at times.

2. Home Based Ethnography

I am a Mamelodi resident (house dweller); therefore I am doing ethnography in my home town. I used a more reflexive methodological approach. I did come into this research with my own biases, preconceived notions, assumptions and judgments. I was aware of my position both as a female in a male space, but also as a house dweller who was writing about hostel dwellers. Conducting ethnography at home was an advantage, because I was already familiar with the environment. I already had access to people who could help me enter this space. The disadvantage was that I was bias and being objective proved to be difficult. I was emotionally attached to the township and it was only natural to not want to be too critical or disagree with certain things. My gender played a very critical role in the engagements I had with research participants, it influenced what information I could and could not access. It was my father's connections that were helpful in accessing a patriarchal space that contained privileged information.

3. Research Journal

I kept a research journal for the duration of my research, so I could note the observations and encounters I had at the hostel. This helped in keeping track of what was happening in the hostel. I noted my initial observations of the hostel: my emotions, how I felt about being a woman in a male environment. I noted how I used my gender to gain access to the hostel. This journal kept track of developments made. *An excerpt from my fieldwork diary:*

“Today I made my fateful journey to the hostel alone. I decided to wear a black cap while I do my ethnography at the hostel so that I can be inconspicuous. I wanted to hide my face, so I decided to lower my cap, just low enough to cover my eyebrows, positioning it just above my eyes. I did this for two reasons: One, so that hostel dwellers do not pay too much attention to me, by being inconspicuous I do not have to worry about standing out like a sore thumb. I want to fit in, and not stand out in this male oriented environment. I pulled this off, because most of the time I am wearing my cap accompanied with a pair of dark jeans and a sweater (very masculine attire); the

second reason was so that I can hide the fact that the hostel environment makes me somewhat uncomfortable. Being in the presence of males, engaging with them in their territory was intimidating. I received curious stares from hostel dwellers, and angry glares from older male hostel dwellers. My cap in many ways became my friend, because it hid my facial expressions when things got a little bit nerve racking. I walk to the hostel, when I got there; I awkwardly stand outside and proceed to call my father on his cell phone. I inform him that I have arrived and am outside the hostel waiting for him to fetch me. I proceed to tell him that I am afraid to walk inside the hostel alone. He refuses to come fetch me, not budging at all, and instead he opts to stand next to one of many broken windows in *Malome* Chippa's spaza shop watching me as I enter inside the hostel. Over the phone he tells me that I have nothing to be afraid of, that he will watch over me as I enter the hostel. I nervously enter the hostel via a makeshift entrance (before it became an entrance it originally used to be hostel rooms that housed up to 30 people inside. It got destroyed after a drunken night led to it being burned down. Leaving behind half destroyed walls with weeds growing on the sides, and black ash cracked cement floor as a result of the fire). I passed a mound of refuse; the smell was so toxic, heavily strong and disgusting. The smell was overwhelming my senses; it smelled of rotten garbage, excrement, dead rats, paraffin, and urine. I notice my father exiting the hostel room he was in, to come fetch me; he does this so that I can avoid walking all the way to the spaza shop alone. He wants me to avoid having to pass a group of men on my own. He holds my hand as I approach him; we pass by a group of older men sitting on a bench drinking their *Chibuku* (traditional sorghum beer). I proceed to greet the elders, I am warmly greeted back. A couple of feet away, just outside *Malome* Chippa's spaza shop a group of young men sit under a tree playing a board game, some are standing whilst others are sitting on crates and chairs. As we make our way to the spaza shop, onlookers from various spots in the hostel start noticing me, giving me curious stares. The men sitting under the tree are the first to look our way, of course they notice that the man accompanying me is holding my hand, their stares make me uncomfortable. I then lower my cap even further than before, so that they cannot make out my face as well as to make sure that they do not see that they are unnerving me. We enter the spaza shop; I greet *Malome* Chippa by shaking his hand. I then notice four men who are sitting on a table, chatting amongst each other. One of them I recognize as *Malome* Moholo, my father's friend. I also greet them, as I approach the table I am given a crate to sit on. Now seated on the crate, I listen to the chattering around me while trying to make myself comfortable on the crate. *Malome* Moholo decides to fetch a chair in the next room, which he offers to me. A couple of men are standing outside the hostel windows, where my father was watching on as I enter the hostel (the windows are broken, there are no glasses on them, leaving only the iron bars, making

it easy to exchange goods back and forth) asking *Malome* Chippa to sell them cigarettes. They do not enter the hostel; instead opt to stand outside the broken window, and buy things within the hostel, in this case the spaza shop. This is the new way in which people from the outside buy goods within the hostel without actually entering the hostel. Just outside this window where *Malome* Chippa sells, there is a car wash and a man selling food. So it is easy to get customers to buy from him through this window. Majority of these customers are house dwellers, who do not want to walk all the way inside of the hostel just for a couple of cigarettes, whilst others just avoid coming in the hostel in its totality.”

This fieldwork diary speaks of the first day at the hostel which was filled with a little bit of anxiety, I was anxious and afraid of the place, as a house dweller I had heard the rumours of this place; how unsavoury and dangerous these men are, and I took those rumours to heart. The idea of walking into the hostel alone was scary; it was a place I feared tremendously.

4. Oral History

I interviewed over 15 elderly men at the hostel, men who have lived at the hostel for more than 20 years. The older hostel dwellers had substantial knowledge of the history of the Mamelodi hostel; they remembered the hostel during apartheid with nostalgia. This was incredibly helpful in giving me strong ethnographic data of their hostel experiences during apartheid.

5. Archives

I made use of the South African National Archives as part of my research methodology. I was able to retrieve information on the Mamelodi Township as well as obtaining information on the Mamelodi West hostel.

6. Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviewed were the form of methodology I used the most. This interview format proved to be the easiest way to engage with my research participants. It made my research participants feel more comfortable with me and thus they became trusting. Through this method I was able to interview more than twenty participants, both women and men; I made use of a voice recorder for all interviews. This method allowed me to ask questions, and the research

participant were able to respond to these questions in their own way without being limited by me. It was more of a conversation, it allowed the research participant to lead the interview at times.

7. Semi- Structured Interviews

This was the final methodology I used. I used this methodology to interview a small number of research participants, most of them were men. I used a voice recorder, and I wrote down questions that I wanted to ask. The interview is structured; it helped me a lot with research participants who had a lot of things to say.

Ethics

Before conducting my research at the hostel, I asked for a permission letter from the Hostel Committee, this letter granted me access to the hostel and its residents. The ethical issues I encountered in this research dissertation are the following:

I was present at meetings both outside and inside the hostel that the hostel committee attended. As an outsider who was gaining important and privileged knowledge, I ensured that I had a letter of permission from the hostel committee. The permission letter was to not only follow them around and attend meetings but to also interview hostel residents. Some problems that emerged with the committee were that some hostel dwellers blatantly told me that the committee does not speak on their behalf or represent them in any way. Some hostel dwellers pointed out that the committee did not have any real power to hand me a permission letter. They were only interested in talking to me if my research was going to paint them in a positive light, and not stigmatize them further. The hostel is not a formal environment and such the issues of power and leadership are indistinct.

Female hostel dwellers were difficult to interview at first because they regarded me as an outsider. They did not trust me. I was able to secure interviews with them through my informants' connections. *Malome* Chippa, *Malome* Moholo and my father were able to convince female hostel dwellers to talk to me. They only allowed me to interview them in the presence of these men. Female hostel dwellers in romantic relationships with male hostel dwellers were much more open to speaking to me about their life histories and experiences in the hostel. This was a total contrast to female hostel dwellers who engage in transactional sex who were more

closed off. Both female hostel and house dwellers had concerns about their identity being revealed, some noted that they were distrusting of people who record and write things down.

Naming practices were significant in this research dissertation; some hostel dwellers wanted their real names mentioned. They insisted that I use their names; they took pride in participating in the research dissertation. There is politics in using real names, the attachment to this dissertation was important for some hostel dwellers; they instructed me to use their real names. While other hostel dwellers did not want to be named, and insisted on remaining anonymous. For this dissertation I have used pseudonyms for those who chose to remain anonymous. Unless stated otherwise the names used in the dissertation are pseudonyms. The name of the hostel is known in the township as Mamelodi West hostel. I chose to not change the name because I am a Mamelodi resident, and I am quite familiar with the area. Also it is quite obvious which hostel I am referring to. There are two other hostels: the first hostel is “Nkandla” which was previously an old hostel that was renovated. It is an upgraded and fancier version of the old hostel; the second hostel is known as “Kingsley”, this hostel is not as fancy as Nkandla but has access to more amenities than the Mamelodi hostel. The residents of Kingsley hostel pay rent every month just like in Nkandla. The Mamelodi hostel does not actually have a name; it is referred to as “the hostel” in the township. Changing the name would not help in anyway, because it would be blatantly obvious which hostel I am referring to.

I wanted to initially interview the drug users in the hostel, but I opted not to. The issues that were brought up and proved difficult to ignore were the mental state of the addicts. Safety was also a key concern here.

Throughout my research I ensured that every research participant gave their consent, interviews always started with me asking the participants for permission. Some of the research participants signed a consent form, which detailed who I am and what I am doing at the hostel and whether they agree to be part of my research. While other research participants opted to not sign but rather gave verbal consent.

CHAPTER TWO

An Historical overview of Mamelodi Township and Hostels in South Africa

1. The History of Mamelodi Township

“The African township represented the strength and the will to survive by ordinary masses of the African people. In its own quiet way the township represented a dogged defiance against official persecution, for in the township the moments of splendour were very splendid indeed, surpassing anything white Johannesburg could offer” (Lewis Nkosi: 1966).

The words of Lewis Nkosi describe the resilience, vibrant life and strength of people living in townships in South Africa. Townships are painted with hustle and bustle of people’s bravery, creativeness and willingness to survive through the harshness of circumstances and still live to wake up to the same conditions again. The formation of townships was as a result of many factors, the main one was industrialization¹. Industrialization in the 19th century brought about migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in large numbers (Chiloane 1990:19). Urbanization can be defined as the rapid migration where families migrate from rural areas and permanently reside in urban areas (Chiloane 1990:19). Pretoria became one of the most industrialized regions in South Africa; this resulted in an influx of black workers and their families (Chiloane 1990:19) The early 20th century was when blacks were forced to live in locations: these are regions/locations that are recognized by local authorities which include municipalities and government locations (locations became later known as Townships) and this occurred by custom rather than law that blacks live in locations on the perimeter of Pretoria (Chiloane 1990:34).

There was no location, village or separate site for black settlement in Pretoria prior to 1905 (Chiloane 1990:34). According to Tsheko Chiloane² it was not “until the 1888, there was no specific areas set aside by the authorities for the housing of blacks on a separate basis in the

¹Dorothy McCormick (1999:1531) defines Industrialization as the process of building up a country's capacity to convert raw materials into new products, and the system that enables production to take place. The process of industrialization implies increasing efficiency in the use of both labor and capital.

²I have mostly relied on the work of Tsheko Chiloane in this section because the literature that was available was in Afrikaans. I cannot read Afrikaans so I chose to use Chiloane as my literature source.

Pretoria municipal area” (Chiloane 1990:41). There then became a great need for more accommodation for residential purposes, it became extremely necessary due to the high rate of industrial growth (Chiloane 1990:41). Urbanization would later become problematic, because “the process of urbanization itself created a housing problem for blacks employed in Pretoria’s manufacturing industry and commerce” (Chiloane 1990:41). The problems were that white people started fearing that a large black population permanently residing in the urban area might cause conflict, another fear they had was that black people might spread contagious diseases from their settlement (Chiloane 1990:34). The relocation of black people seemed like the only solution, they were moved out of town and placed in locations specially designated for them. According to Tsheko Chiloane’s research the establishing of black locations seemed to be advantageous for whites for the following reasons: (1) the government was providing housing. (2) The government ensured that there was a tight control with regards to influx control in locations where pass laws and permits system were put in place. (3) Locations served as a labour reservoir. (4) Locations were seen as a temporary solution to a housing problem, because black people could not permanently stay in white urban areas. Regions that were under the municipalities provided housing, the conditions of these houses were that residents had to rent them and residents would pay on a monthly basis (Chiloane 1990:39). The municipality was strongly against ownership of houses, there was also the strict control by the municipality police and the supervision of superintendents (Chiloane 1990:39). It was highly emphasized that the settlement pattern be based on ethnic and racial allocation of land (Chiloane 1990:39). White housing and black housing was different, not only did whites get better areas allocated to them but they also had better quality houses, with water and electricity as basic services. Black workers were offered housing on a twenty year lease, the houses were made of poor building materials, having access to water and electricity was not prioritized and they were allocated in poor and far away areas. Mamelodi Township was one of those areas allocated to blacks for housing. Figure 2 shows a map of Mamelodi, it also shows areas allocated to different ethnic groups.



Figure 2 Map of Mamelodi Township

The City Council of Pretoria in 1945 purchased an area in Mamelodi that would be managed by the municipality (Chiloane 1990:15). In 1953 a white owned farm of Vlakfontein on the eastern side of Pretoria was bought by the authorities from its owners; Vlakfontein was later to become the black municipal township of Mamelodi (Chiloane 1990:21). Mamelodi is one of the first established townships in Pretoria; it was specifically designed to house black workers. It was originally named “Vlakfontein” the name was later changed to “Mamelodi” (Chiloane 1990:15-16). “The name Mamelodi is said to be taken from the Tswana phrase “*Tshwane ya Mamelodi*” which means “musical whistle from the Tshwane river” (Chiloane 1990:16). Though many of the older Mamelodi residents I spoke to give a different narrative to how the name came about. The Commander and *Ntate* Tholo (Mamelodi residents) told me that Mamelodi means “mother of whistles”, during apartheid white police officer would come to raid the township; the women (mothers) would whistle warning the men in the area to run and hide on top of the mountains. They would wait for the women to whistle again telling them that the coast is clear. Often the officers would retaliate by hurting the women for hiding the men. The women were the ones protecting the men at the time by whistling and warning them against the dangers that were

coming. As a way to honor them the township is called “Mamelodi”. Mamelodi became a township because not only was it far away from urban areas but also because of the availability of land (Chiloane 1990:110). “The establishment of Mamelodi was economic namely that the government was developing the separate and segregated township of Mamelodi, according to the needs of Pretoria’s manufacturing and commercial industry. The authorities wished to keep the cost of managing and reproducing the black labour force as low as possible. The black working class in Pretoria was to be forced to subsidize most of its own housing and essential services. This would prove problematic because of the low wages black workers were getting; this would be virtually impossible” (Chiloane 1990:111). “The basic aim of the establishment of Mamelodi was to serve as a labour reserve. It was planned in such a way that it should remain a satellite of Pretoria with no economic viability or industries so that it could not become an independent town but would exist only for the convenience of Pretoria’s industries and White Population.” (Chiloane1990:111). The township is close to industrial areas, where most black people were employed (Chiloane 1990:111). Mamelodi serves the function of Pretoria’s eastern industrial regions, the Watloo area is filled with industrial companies therefore; Mamelodi Township’s main reason is to maintain a constant supply of cheap labour (Chiloane 1990:112). This led to cheap housing services and facilities being offered in order to maintain the black labourers (Chiloane 1990:41). Mamelodi was also established for health reasons; clearing of slums and preventing diseases was a reason to establish black municipal townships (Chiloane 1990:112). This is critiqued by Chiloane saying that if health reasons were why Mamelodi was established. Why is it that the townships are situated near sewage farms, and are far away from medical facilities available in town? Why do townships receive inadequate services? He says the reason for this township has everything to do with the fact that it was far away from White areas (Chiloane 1990:113). The establishment of Mamelodi was also a political one, black workers were being moved to this township by the government because they wanted to divide black people from white people (Chiloane 1990:113). The authorities wanted to control the lives and political aspirations of black people and most importantly prevent them from claiming political rights in White South Africa (Chiloane 1990:113). “The segregated and separate township of Mamelodi could be an effective means of preventing further black urbanization; the allocation of housing could be used as a political weapon and an instrument of influx control to restrict urbanization” (Chiloane 1990:113).

Mamelodi is no different than any other township; it was established to maintain and reproduce the relations of class domination. The goal was for White supremacy to be preserved; this meant that black people were to remain subordinates and inferior (Chiloane 1990:115). Tsheko (Chiloane 1990:115) notes that “the state aimed to control the aspirations of the black working class which was striving for power sharing”. The township provided two critical things: firstly “it would assist the authorities in determining a political culture acceptable to them; secondly it would assist the state to circumvent political participation of blacks by claiming to offer them full political participation in the local structures imposed on the township” (Chiloane 1990:115). The government’s strategy with the township was to create conditions that allowed for cheap labour and to remove and separate black working class from white areas, it was important that they keep Pretoria white (Chiloane 1990:115). My aunt (a house dweller and long-time Mamelodi resident) noted that Mamelodi is just like Soweto; both are black townships that served to house black workers who came from the rural areas. This township along with Soshanguve and Atteridgeville (Townships in Pretoria) were placed far away from white people but close enough that they could travel to work. The Commander, a hostel dweller said that Mamelodi was a township designed for black workers. It segregated black people into different ethnic groups as a way to control easily them. He says that the name Mamelodi commemorates the women who would protect the men during apartheid by whistling to warn them against the dangers (the police) that were coming.

2. The History of Hostels in South Africa

Hostels in South Africa represent two things, firstly they are concrete reminders of the apartheid system and secondly they are symbolic of the migrant labour system, upon which Apartheid was based. Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama (2017) writes that “hostels came about as part of the broader migrant labour system, which enabled employers to draw black people from the rural areas in South Africa, as well as from across the country’s borders to work for minimal pay in the cities. It was part of how the system was designed that the workers would not be permanent residents in their areas of work, but would oscillate from rural to urban areas for work and back to rural areas at the end of the contract period. Hostels were only for men, women were not allowed to live there” (Xulu-Gama 2017:39).

The National Party created laws that legitimized hostels, hostels were legislated by the Group Areas Act of 1950(Xulu-Gama 2017:39-41). The migrant labour system gave birth to the hostel and compound system, and these migrant labour hostels are estimated to have provided accommodation to millions of people(Xulu-Gama 2017:39-41). A racial capitalist order in South Africa was able to develop and succeed through a central key element of workers' hostels (Xulu-Gama 2017:39-41). Hostels helped to increase rates of profitability by reducing the cost of the reproduction of labour. They were built specifically to house migrants from rural areas, who came seeking employment in urban areas (Xulu-Gama 2017:39-41). Hostels are mostly synonymous with housing mine workers; these hostels were situated close to the mines (Xulu-Gama 2017:39-41). Marie Wentzel (1993:1) wrote on this, stating that the discovery and mining of diamonds in the Kimberley area in the late 1860s created a great demand for labour. This resulted in a huge influx of black workers streaming in to work in the diamond mines (Wentzel 1993:1). The majority of these workers would work periodically on the mines for periods such as three to six months (Wilson 1972 cited from Wentzel 1993:1). It would appear that most of these migrant workers were Pedi, Tsongas or Southern Sotho's, and the reason is said to be because they had prior experience of being migrant workers (Wentzel 1993:1).

One of the most important reasons for becoming a migrant worker was to obtain cash to buy weapons and consumer goods as well as pay for lobola (bride wealth) (Turrell 1987 cited in Wentzel 1993:1). Housing for black labourers was provided by the mining companies, this enabled the workers to come and go freely (Turrell 1987 cited in Wentzel 1993:1). This freedom is said to have cost the mining companies money. Even though the workers were searched each time they entered and left the mine, these companies suffered great losses in terms of illegal diamond trading (Turrell 1987 cited in Wentzel 1993:1). The migrant workers would come to work drunk, or barely made it to work on Mondays (Turrell 1987 cited in Wentzel 1993:1). Thus in an attempt to end illegal diamond trading, prevent drunkenness and to have a more efficient labour force, the mine owners decided to provide housing for mineworkers in closed compounds (Van der Horst 1971; Turrell 1987 cited in Wentzel 1993:1). In Dunbar Moodie's (1994:12) book "*Going for Gold*" he notes that as a way to assert their authority mine management in 1976 would control their workers, for instance Sotho men who were taken to a dormitory that housed 80 men were told to strip naked for medical examinations. Both young and old had to compulsory strip naked, this caused great embarrassment for the older men because it violated

their conceptions of seniority (Moodie 1994:12). According to Sotho custom men who are circumcised are not allowed to strip before boys, who are the uncircumcised men (Moodie 1994:12). The process was a way to initiate the miners into a subculture which deprived them of any values about human dignity; they were not regarded as human beings (Moodie 1994:12-13).

The prevalence of hostels, specifically in townships has been one interesting phenomenon. In South Africa there are 402 hostels countrywide, these hostels fall under the control of provincial administrations and local authorities (Minnaar 1993:10). This excludes mine company hostels and some privately owned ones, since not all privately owned hostels are registered by their owners with the local authorities (Minnaar 1993:10). By 1990 there were hostels in all but three of the 25 townships which make up the East and West Rand (Minnaar 1993:10). The 56 hostels in these townships together with the four townships of Pretoria at the time housed almost 200 000 people (Minnaar 1993:10). Black mineworkers were housed in closed compounds for the first time in 1885 (Minnaar 1993:10). The closed compound system compelled them to live in a walled or fenced in compound for the duration of the contract (Minnaar 1993:10). They were generally only permitted to leave the enclosure under supervision to go to work (Minnaar 1993:10).

At a later stage fenced paths supervised by *indunas*³ or as Dunbar Moodie (1994:11) refers to them as boss boys, these fences were constructed between the compounds and the mines. This was done to prevent any communication between the mineworkers and the outside world (Wentzel 1993:2). This system was used deliberately to isolate the migrant workers from the community around them (Minnaar 1993:24). The closed compounds were in poor conditions, mineworkers had to sleep on the floor in rooms without doors, but with large openings between the walls and the roof (Wentzel 1993:2). The compounds were overcrowded and very cold in winter, food supplies were inadequate and medical services were of a low standard (Wentzel 1993:2). There were both short term and long term economic benefits for the mine owners, as

³ Historically *Induna* (man in charge) is a Zulu term that refers to a rural leader. It originates from “traditional leadership or authority. It is the *Induna* that mobilize the people, it is through him that energy will be expended, more muscles used and more attitudes changed. As men of authority they played a significant role, because they provided the vital link between the workers and the mine owners (government), serving as translators, interpreters and mediators of the mine owners (government)” (Miller 1968:183). *Indunas* were point men for mine owners and kept the workers in check at all times. *Induna* is a term that I will connect chapters with in this dissertation, where I showcase how authority emerges in the hostel.

well as political advantage (Wentzel 1993:2). The single-sex hostel system which has dominated patterns of migrant labour in South Africa for more than a century had its origins in the on-going pattern of large-scale utilisation of cheap migrant labour, and the control of that labour by means of pass laws and the compound (Wessels &Wentzel 1989 cited from Wentzel 1993:2). Vedalankar (1993:2) states that hostels originated from the mines, where cheap accommodation was provided, to easily control the workers. By providing cheap accommodation, that in a way helped keep the cities white, by allowing African workers into urban areas when they were needed and expelling them when they were not needed (Vedalankar 1993:2). The conditions in hostels were for the most part miserable and wretched, this situation worsened as the administration of the hostel changed (Vedalankar 1993:2). Hostels were passed from the white municipalities to administration boards and then to the Black Local Authorities (Vedalankar 1993:2). Hostels are a complex phenomenon serving varying functions and performing many roles (Vedalankar 1993:2). He further notes that hostels mean different things to different people, for instance some people think of hostels as accommodation housing single males, while others view hostels as cheap rented accommodation in the city whilst others see them as a means of control over workers by employers (Vedalankar 1993:2). On the other hand, hostels have been seen as urban military bases from which weapon wielding mobs, attack townships and informal settlements (Vedalankar 1993:6).

Ari Sitas writes that “the creation of hostels in the period after World War Two was designed to keep the 'tribes', the 'national groups' or 'ethnic groups' separate and homestead-bound” (Sitas 1996:236). “Throughout their history, hostels have been institutions that marked black experience; along with passes, pass queues, curfew regulations, living in hostels and surviving. They have been an unremitting source of grievance and anger; even those who are mobilized for the preservation of hostels speak poorly of their actual life conditions there” (Sitas 1996:236). Hostels were very much linked to beds, rooms, dormitories and complexes, which required one to pay rent (Sitas 1996:237). By paying rent it meant you would also follow rules that were implemented, and if you did not adhere to those rules you would be kicked out or expelled (Sitas 1996:237). Hostels “whether they were under Municipal, township or administration and jurisdiction their ability to control and coordinate the activities of their workers was always proscribed” (Sitas 1996:237). Ari Sitas (1996:237) calls “them 'diffusionary forms of control' to distinguish them from compounds. In essence, although similar in design and purpose, hostels

differed from compounds because of operational contingencies (Sitas 1996:237). They were under the authority of public bureaucracies which tried to 'service' a multiplicity of employers" (Sitas 1996:237). The hostel or compound residents worked in a variety of settings each one with its different patterns and hours of work (Sitas 1996:237). Making strict controls over the movement of people very difficult, and a constant source of frustration to municipal and administration police forces (Sitas 1996:237).

Dunbar Moodie (1994:11) writes how black migrant workers on the South African gold mines would sign up at recruiting stations and be contracted to work for four months to two years at these mines, away from homes and families for wages that were extremely low. Black migrants lived in compounds, each room occupied by about fifteen to fifty men, under a close surveillance of management appointed police (Moodie 1994:11). The compound system was seen as the most effective way of labor control (Rex 1973 cited in Moodie 1994:11). "Black miners were locked into a total system in which they were little more than puppets of management. Every possibility for effective resistance has been systematically removed" (Moodie 1994:11). This "left workers exposed to the self-formative effects of a veritable panopticon⁴, total institution controlling not only their productive but also their personal existences while at the mine" (Moodie 1994:12). These were seen as men of two worlds, meaning that in migrating to work the men cast off their rural home selves and take on their mine selves (Moodie 1994:12). Mining was attached with the construction of masculinities, household responsibilities and ethnic solidarity (Moodie 1994:14). Everyday power on the compound was exercised by the compound manager and his assistants together with the *indunas* (management-appointed black supervisors) and their police boys,

⁴ Michel Foucault (2008:3) describes Panopticon as a mechanism for discipline, where order is met and power is exercised by a hierarchical figure without division by the people it oppresses, because the individual's behavior is controlled at all times. Panopticon originates from Jeremy Bentham. According to him Panopticon is when a large tower is at the center, where it is possible to see each cell in which a prisoner or schoolboy is incarcerated. Each individual is seen by the warden, but they cannot communicate with other prisoners or the warden. All of the inmates are visible to the warden. Panopticon induces a sense of permanent visibility that ensures the functioning of power. Visibility is thus a trap that abolishes the crowd. The prisoner can always see the tower, but never knows from where he is observed; where power is visible yet unverifiable. (Foucault 1977) (Foucault 2008:5)

The migrant hostel also represents the Panopticon because it used power to discipline the workers. A set of techniques used to supervise workers, where migrants were disciplined by instilling fear in them.

clerks and black personnel assistants (Moodie 1994:19). The *induna* for instance was expected to maintain order in the compound and to prevent drinking in the rooms, dagga (marijuana) smoking, gambling and homosexual liaisons (Moodie 1994:20). However he in fact permitted much of the behaviour or activities that were formally forbidden, so long as it did not threaten order (Moodie 1994:20). South African gold mine compounds there were myriad brotherhood, formed around for example entrepreneurial services (hair cutting, bicycle repair, tailoring or herbal medicine), religious concerns, burial societies, musical tastes, rural politics, homosexual dalliances or other shared interests (Moodie 1994:20). This environment included trafficking illegal alcohol and drugs as well as gambling. Attempts by white management to control any of these activities or interest were met with fierce resistance (Moodie 1994:20). The mine compound left room for alternative cultural adaptations (Moodie 1994:20). Although the mine sought to control workers' leisure time, compound dwellers obliged management to leave space for their own activities (Moodie 1994:20). These activities made up migrant cultures (Moodie 1994:20).

According to J.S.G Douglas (deputy commissioner of police in Johannesburg), the compound must be suitably constructed to contain the 'natives', it is surrounded first of all by high galvanized iron fence (Moodie 1994: 77). It has barbed wire at the top which prevents anybody getting in or out (Moodie 1994: 77). The gates are constructed that they have turnstiles by which each native can file in singly (Moodie 1994: 77). The buildings are so constructed that from the compound manager's office he can see down any direction along the line of the huts (Moodie 1994: 77). These cramped accommodations were arranged in squares of barracks-like buildings, surrounding dusty quadrangles in the center of which might be found the kitchens, mine offices, *indunas'* houses and change houses (Moodie 1994:78). These men were illegally empowered by the compound manager to commit any black miner at any time to the mine lockup called by the workers *stokkies* or *stokisi* (Moodie 1994:80). Black mine policemen behaved brutally to the point where there were allegations of habitual assault, this resulted in groups insisting on being represented by one of their own (Moodie 1994:80). The management expected the *induna* for

each ethnic groups to act in lieu of tribal village headmen⁵ to his subordinates, thus wherever possible management preferred to appoint an *induna* of royal blood (Moodie 1994:80).

Mamphela Ramphele in her book titled a “*bed called home*” writes that hostels were a euphemism in South Africa for single sex labour compounds (Ramphele 1993:1). Hostels were constructed to house Africans, who were until 1986 when the pass laws repealed, only permitted to reside in the urban areas to minister to the needs of the white minority and to depart there from as soon as they cease to minister (Ramphele 1993:1). The construction of the hostels and the regulations governing such accommodation were provided for under the Natives Act 21 of 1923, which was among other things motivated by the need to ensure that further labour requirements be met by housing African men in hostels and barracks in urban areas (Ramphele 1993:1). Jonathan Crush (1992:390) noted that housing for black mine laborers was developed in existing township or in new developing townships because firstly it allowed segregation, meaning the black laborers were far away from the white people. Secondly it was cheaper because services in these townships were already provided (Crush 1992:390). Having covered a general history of hostels in South Africa, I will now move onto look at the specific history of the field site from which I will be drawing my data in this dissertation.

⁵ This is a theme I will pick on in later chapters, where I will note the importance of ethnicity. Its significance when it comes to hostel dwellers being represented.

3. The History of Mamelodi West Hostel



Figure 3 Mamelodi West Hostel



Figure 4 Mamelodi West Hostel

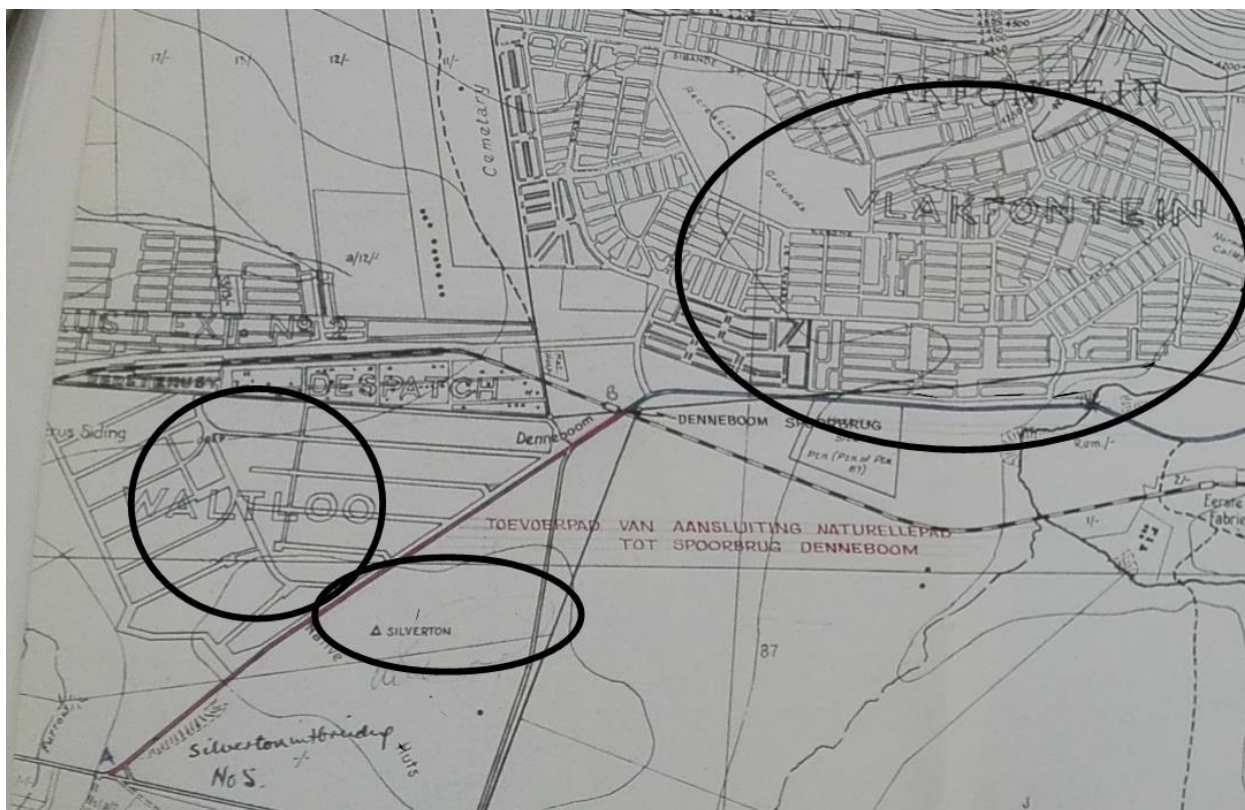


Figure 5 Map showing the position of Mamelodi (Vlaktefontein) in relation to Watloo and Silverton

Mamelodi West hostels were built in the 1960's, by the Apartheid government, to house migrant workers. They were to accommodate black migrant workers who came to urban areas for work. These hostels were situated in the township because they were close enough to travel to and from work and far enough that they were away from white suburban areas and urban areas (See figure 4). The Mamelodi West hostels both housed private contracted workers and state workers. The National archives⁶ provide detailed information of the hostels in the Mamelodi West area, showing that they were segregated according to several categories. The Mamelodi West hostels were owned by the Tshwane Municipality, which ensured that there was a clear separation of workers by allocating different hostels to workers. Hostels dwellers were segregated in two ways: Firstly, in terms of ethnic background, dwellers of the same ethnic group would be housed in a room together; the majority of hostel dwellers were and still are Bapedi men followed by Zulu men, Tsonga ethnic group having the least numbers. Ethnic segregation, as is well known, was a key part of the Apartheid government strategy and in this way labour hostels played a

⁶ See archival record file *MC 6/1/22^F Private Hostels Maizecor*. South African National Archives

significant role in the maintenance of the ideology of difference amongst black workers in South Africa.

Secondly, some hostels in Mamelodi West strictly housed municipality workers whilst other hostels housed workers employed mostly in the Watloo and Silverton area by private companies like Ford Motor Company, Construction companies, Maizecor, Silverton Ternary, Bosal, D&M Padaanleg and other industrial companies. There are currently four hostels in this area, and archival sources⁷ indicate that three of the hostels in this region were specifically designed and built under apartheid not for miners (as most other hostels in South Africa were) but rather solely for men who worked as police officers or for the municipality, including security guards who worked at the hostel. While the fourth hostel housed privately contracted workers, these were black men from rural homelands who were employed in the urban areas by private companies. Many of the hostel elders mentioned that during Apartheid the National Party would organize trucks to fetch black men in rural areas who were unemployed and bring them to urban areas to hire them as construction workers. These men would then be offered accommodation at hostels; the Mamelodi hostel in which I conducted my research was one of them. In the past then, this hostel was a shelter for unemployed rural men coming to Pretoria to seek employment. As I will describe in subsequent chapters, the hostel has continued to serve that function to this day.

Hostel residents were required by the state to register at the municipality; some companies would register on behalf of their employees, for instance employees of the state like police officials and security guards. It was not necessary for them to register because they were already on the municipality system whilst others would let their employees register themselves by going to register at the municipality using their ID documents and state which company they worked for. They had to provide documentation from that company noting that indeed they are employed by them. For those who were unemployed they too had to register, they would have to notify the municipality that they were currently unemployed and that they had means to pay the rent either through a family member on their behalf or were actively looking for work and that they would be employed by month end. If they could not afford to pay they would be removed from the hostel and their room would be given to someone who could afford to pay the rent.

⁷ See archival record file *MMA 2/1/1 Legislation Policy*. South African National Archives

Many older Hostel dwellers told me that it really was not hard to get work during Apartheid, as a black man you could get a job easily, because they were not required to be skilled at a lot of things they were hired for. I was told by *Ntate* (father, used when addressing male elders, a father figure) Makola and *Ntate* Glen that as long as you had a two hands and feet, and were a hard worker you were hired as a construction worker, security guard, and gardener, cleaner and other manual labour. They note that you were taught these skills by the government and companies that hired you, so thus it was not necessary to have prior knowledge of them. Paying rent was a key and important part of hostel life during apartheid, the rent at the time ranged from R1, 50 to R2, 00; if you did not pay this money you would be kicked out of the hostel. The migrant labour system exploited black men, the hostel also became another area where they were exploited; because it forced dwellers to pay for barely adequate living conditions, where overcrowding was common and sharing of beds became a norm. Hostel dwellers had no choice but to accept the conditions or face the wrath of the authorities in charge. Both police officers and security guards would conduct surprise raids where they would randomly enter hostel rooms at night while dwellers are asleep. They would line them up against the walls ask for the hostel dweller's receipt as proof of payment (permit). Police officers and Security Guards who lived at the hostel would join in on the raids, their rooms were not raided. It was assumed that because they were state officials they were following the law and paying their rent.

Police officers and Security guards residing in the hostel, in some cases would warn other hostel dwellers who were their family members or had befriended. They would warn them, that a raid was going to occur and to ensure that their permits were in order. They also warned those who were harbouring their family members illegally, that they should hide them in the township somewhere. As part of the raid, a hostel dweller had to present a receipt that showed the dweller's bed and room number. Each hostel room had a bed number that needed to be present on the receipt, if your bed number did not correlate with the number on the receipt, you would have to pack up your belongings and be taken to the local police station. There they would organize transport for you to be taken back home to the rural area. Receiving and having on you a permit was part of the hostel identity. It became an instrument that legalized and legitimized their stay in not only the hostel but the urban area, so the permit was a very central part to living in the hostel, a symbol of hostel identity.

The permit became a symbol that ensured that hostel dwellers were able to stay and work and feed their families. It ensured they had a place to call home for temporarily, and it ensured that security guards and police officers did not brutally beat them for not following the law. Older hostel and house dwellers told me during the course of my research that the National Party would let the black security guards and police officers “beat you to a pulp”, if you did not follow the rules and law. The white superiors would watch on and delight in the hostel dwellers being beaten up by one of their own (another black person). Raiding of rooms and showing of permits was part of hostel life, it became a norm and thus an integral part of the hostel dweller identity. In fact, police raids were such a part of hostel life that if they did not happen, and permits were not checked, hostel inhabitants would be worried, because it meant something was wrong. Anthony Minnaar (1993:24) also notes this by stating that there were continual pass raids by police in the townships more generally. Pass raids were supplemented by regular and frequent police raids on township homes in the middle of the night, to check permits and ensure that everyone sleeping in the house was registered at the local township superintendent’s office and therefore eligible to be in the area (Minnaar 1993:24).

Hostels in South Africa are often seen as having being overcrowded, filthy and having stripped its workers of their humanity. The Mamelodi hostel as I have mentioned above was similar in that regard in that its workers lived in overcrowded, and poorly serviced hostels. What is interesting here though is that a discrepancy exists where some of the older hostel dwellers contradict this image, where they tell a reminiscent, nostalgic version of the hostel that existed. They remember the hostel in a different light, where during apartheid, when hostels were under the management of the local municipality. They had access to electricity, water, sanitation, a communal kitchen for cooking purposes, a laundry area where they could wash their clothes, clean rooms and bedding, clean working toilets and showers. They had cleaning staff that made sure the hostel was clean and tidy at all times. During my research, when I spoke with hostel elders, they often became very nostalgic when reminiscing about the olden days. To them hostels back then represented the good life; it represented honest hardworking life and represented a purpose. It also represented stability in their lives, as well as successful social reproduction and social control. One of the hostel dwellers I spoke to said the following:

Ntate Matlata (Real Name): “When I came to the hostel in 1970, I was a young man with purpose; I came here to look for a job. I got one working as a construction worker, a brick layer in actual fact. You see all the nice suburbs you see, like Constantia Park they were built by these two hands. I did not have any working experience, I was self-taught though. *Makgowa* (whites) would teach us how to work and that is how you learned, that is how you obtained skills. Throughout the years you would perfect those skills. When I first came here to the hostel we had a security guard at the gate, it made us feel special because we had someone watching over us. There was control, not everyone could just come in and out of here, and do as they please. We had order, we had purpose and we had pride over this place. No women were allowed in the hostel, it was a space for men, this was a place of work, and it represented hard work. The men here meant serious business, it was also fun. We would occasionally drink beer in the shebeens outside the hostel, and enjoy life after a hard day of work. We had peace of mind because we had stability and a home far away from home, the hostel became our home. Now it is different, it is ruined; there is no peace of mind, just crime and violence, just hardship and struggle. It no longer represents hardworking men; it now has become a place of struggle.”

Jacob Dlamini (2009) in his book *Native Nostalgia* writes about his childhood growing in Katlehong, a township in east of Johannesburg. He recalls his childhood with fondness, nostalgia. According to him nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement (Dlamini 2009:16). “Nostalgia is not about the past but rather about the present, how present anxieties refract through a prism of the past” (Dlamini 2009:16). He notes that despite the horrific injustice of apartheid many black people had an ordinary life relatively free of spectacle (Dlamini 2009:16). He is nostalgic about the art, literature, music that blacks produced during apartheid. “I am not saying that there was no poverty, crime or moral degradation, there was. But none of this determined the shape of black life in its totality” (Dlamini 2009:19).

Ntate Matlala is not the only hostel dweller that feels like the hostel no longer represents what it used to under apartheid. *Ntate* Speelman (Real Name) who is also a long time hostel resident shared the same sentiment.

Ntate Speelman: “I came to the hostel a long time ago. I’m from KwaNdebele, Mpumalanga, having left behind my parents and my wife to come to Pretoria to look for work. I was a young man struggling, looking for a job and a place to stay. I found a job as a construction worker, building houses. My *Mlungu* (White boss) said to me “*kry julle slaap plek,*” he told us to get a

place to sleep and he mentioned the hostel to us. The *Mlungu* said that he will organize for me to get a Dom Pass (Identification document); I could then register at the Municipality so I can stay at the hostel. When I first came to the hostel, it was nice. I was thrust in an environment where I did not know anyone, we were strangers living together in a room, and we all had the same reason for being here at the hostel. It was a hard adjustment living with people you did not know, but everyone minded their own business and life was good because we had everything. My first night at the hostel I was not afraid, I was happy that I had a place to stay; I had a bed, my own locker. We had electricity, water, rooms with beds and a communal kitchen to cook meals for yourself; we even had a security guard at the gate. We would come back from work and find our rooms and kitchen clean. The hostel was so organized that we had announcement speakers in the hostel; dwellers would be notified if they had a visitor over the speakers. Women were not allowed inside the hostel, they would have to wait outside of the gate. The security guard would call you over the speaker and you would go and meet the women outside. It was different with men visitors' though, they could come in, and they would sign a visitors' book. They were only allowed in the common areas like the garden and dining hall. The hostel was controlled, less chaotic and they were more jobs then. The hostels now are ruined, they are hopeless, and people especially young ones do not have respect. We had respect for our elders; we were well behaved and responsible, unlike now where everyone does what they want, and goes wherever they want. Even women live here now, where have you ever heard of women living in hostels? This is chaos I tell you, chaos, the hostels are ruined.”

This quote talks to the perceived crisis of social reproduction, where the older generation thinks that the world is not the way that it used to be or should be. That the younger generation or young people do not respect them anymore. Fraser McNeill (2011) notes that economic insecurity and growing inequality has created a perceived crisis of social reproduction. Where the younger generation is seen as embodying society's illness (pollutants of society) and disregarding the knowledge and experience that older generation has, by being disrespectful, not listening and not following traditional values, they are more prone to being sick, falling pregnant and dying young from diseases because they no longer follow their elders rules (McNeill 2011). There is a crisis happening where the younger is not listening to the older, following their rules and practicing their culture in order to live a long, controlled and successful life (McNeill 2011).

I noticed during my research in Mamelodi West that when I spoke to hostel elders, they often made it a point to reference that there were security guards in the hostel. The security guards for

them represented order and structure in the hostel. It also showed that access to the hostel was restricted and limited, and thus made living in the hostel a place one could be proud of, a dignified place for hostel dwellers to live at. Hostels during Apartheid, under the leadership of the National Party were seen as being more structured, more ordered, and more organized and representing stability in one's life. The living conditions of hostels during apartheid were seen as better and more stable. Hostels were not drug dens, crime was low and people were able to find jobs, the hostels functioned well. Compared to Hostels today were hostel dwellers describe their living conditions as chaotic, unstable and out of control. The lack of electricity, sanitation and poor water service brings about chaos, dirt and unpredictability; so much so that hostel dwellers say that everything today is "*kak*" (a mess). *Kak* is a common South African term used to describe people's frustrations; hostel dwellers use it to express their frustration with hostel conditions and the state of their lives. It also describes the instability they feel along with feelings of not being in control of their lives. However, as I will discuss in this dissertation, contemporary hostel dwellers have reversed this stigma. They have to some extent turned the current living conditions into part of constructing a positive masculinity, saying things such as 'germs make us stronger'. Thus, the Mamelodi West Hostel has been the site of fluctuating ideas around what it means to be 'a man' in South Africa both during and post-Apartheid.

Ntate Mulaudzi (Real Name) a hostel dweller and *Ntate* Danie (Real Name) who is a house dweller said that people living in urban areas and rural areas have similar struggles, both are living in poverty and there is no difference anymore. *Ntate* Mulaudzi further notes that living in urban areas is not as appealing and exciting as it used to be; "today you will just die of hunger, because unemployment is so high; unlike back in the day where one could easily find a job. It did not matter what type of job you had, you were just happy that you could send money home. An income was there to support your family because living *ko makgoweng* (white areas/urban areas) was something we were proud of, it represented progress and stability". The dilapidated condition of the hostel has created a lot of resentment for the older generation who are house and hostel dwellers. *Ntate* Sello (Real Name) who is the chairperson of the hostel committee (which is the subject of the last ethnographic chapter in this dissertation) and *Malome* Touch (Real Name) who is a police officer, both gentlemen who are hostel dwellers share *Ntate* Danie and *Ntate* Mulaudzi's sentiment. They believe that South African democracy and the freedom it brought, is to blame for the state of hostels today; its decrepit conditions, the lack of electricity

and sanitation, the poor water service and lack of management is said to be a result of people being “too free”.

The perceived crisis of social reproduction is important to note here because it speaks directly to how the idea of being free, especially for the younger generation, means that they no longer respect and follow in the footsteps of the older generation. The older generation believes that the younger generation is adopting the values and morals of westerners, and as such are losing their African or traditional values that are seen as extremely important. A crisis is perceived to exist because the freedom is seen as the illness that is killing and corrupting the younger generation. It creates more problems for them by corrupting them and instilling them values and morals that are not traditional. Freedom is causing more problems for hostel dwellers instead of solving them⁸. Most hostel dwellers believe that the neglect of the hostel today is largely because everyone wanted “freedom”, free from paying rent, which resulted in many of them stopping paying rent because it became more expensive.

This perceived collapse of the hostel resulted in what many older hostel dwellers see as chaos, a chaos which is echoed in wider society – for them at least. In this sense, the Mamelodi West hostel can be seen as a microcosm of older men’s perceptions of the society in which they live, mirroring the changes in politics and economics over time. The idea of freedom had consequences, these consequences led to the perceived destruction of the hostel. They further note that today criminals occupy the building, both house dwellers and hostel dwellers took the idea of democracy too far. Both dwellers are said to be responsible for the chaos that they are living in; the broken windows (this was as a result of drunken hostel dwellers that fought with each other), the dreadful smell is as a result of house dwellers dumping rubbish just outside the hostel. The graffiti, living in a drug den with drug users, the increase of crime and the lack of services. The current government is seen as having failed to help hostel residents who have made the hostel their home. The government is seen as having neglected to upgrade the hostel,

⁸Similar processes are occurring in other parts of the country like in Limpopo, where Fraser McNeill (2015:47) wrote an article on the Hummer man. The Hummer driver is said to be a rich man that seduces young poor Tshivenda speaking women into sleeping with him. He got rich through BEE appointment or tenders which he is showing off in the rural area where residents are poor. Given the rise in economic insecurity where the poor is getting poorer and rich getting richer. This article highlights the frustrations people experience, where promises were made by the ANC government, where wealth was promised, but instead they are poor. Where the government and its cronies are getting richer through tenders and the people are getting poorer. (McNeill 2015:47)

maintain the building and communicate with its residents about the future plans for the hostel. The National Party is credited for taking care of the hostel and its dwellers, of maintaining and providing services to its residents. Most importantly it is credited for bringing stability in the lives of older hostel dwellers, having given these dweller jobs and an income to send back home.

Conclusion

The state of the hostel today is seen by both hostel and house dwellers as good reflection on the governing of the ruling party; the chaos, the lack of leadership and services. Where everyone wants to be in control but it just leads to destruction and violence. Many people feel that the government has ruled this country into instability, where unemployment levels are high as ever and where everyone wants to lead. This disappointment and frustration that elderly dwellers feel, also has something to do with the fact that leaders are no longer seen as representing their people nor do they have their best interest at heart. Even traditional leadership is seen as carrying out policies of the government in return enriching themselves and those around them. Traditional leadership has had to work with the government, and as such has had to become involved in building local institutions. They have had to move into party or administrations positions; this has made them get involve in government affairs; Thus making traditional leadership neither modern nor traditional but rather the incorporation of both (Miller 1968:183-184). The condition of the hostel has brought about a stigma that is attached to both the hostel itself and its residents.

However, as I will show in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, the perception of a crisis is not the only lens through which we can make sense of the shifting role of Mamelodi West hostel in contemporary society. It may appear to be in ‘crisis’, and many older residents may feel strongly that this is the case, but the ethnographic data I have gathered points to a more complex situation – one in which there is order and control, albeit informally enforced, and one in which the ideas of ‘chaos’ as mentioned above, have been turned on their head by (mostly younger) hostel residents who claim – as we will see in the following chapter – that germs, dirt and squalor are not a weakness, but in fact “make them stronger”.

CHAPTER THREE

“*Tshila ga e bolaye*”: Germs do not kill us, they make us stronger: Stigmatization in the hostel environment.

1. Introduction

My honours research findings revealed a few interesting things; one of those things was the role of stigma in the construction of identities. I discovered that stigma existed in the hostel. It made itself apparent through the various conversations I had with both hostel dwellers and house dwellers (Township residents who live outside the hostel). House dwellers particularly would say things like: *Mahosteles a se batho* (hostel dwellers are not human beings); *Mahosteles ba di tshila* (hostel dwellers are dirty); *Mahosteles ke di tsotsi* (hostel dwellers are criminals); *hosteles ke tulo ya batho ba sa ithateng, ga ena serithi* (this hostel is a place for people who do not love themselves, it has no dignity); *Nna ka se tsene ko tulong ela* (I will never enter that place). It was through such conversations that I uncovered that hostel dwellers were regarded by people living outside the space as inferior and undignified human beings. The image of the hostel was tainted and many house dwellers disliked the place, often vigorously so. My ethnography also revealed that hostel dwellers are very much aware of this stigma that surrounds them. I decided to follow this ethnographic trail of stigmatization, to uncover how it explicitly emerges in the lives of hostel residents. This chapter provides a critical ethnographic analysis of the stigma that occurs within the hostel community. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter above, the aim is to understand and analyze stigma by looking at how it is defined and constructed from the outside. And how it is internalized, or processed, by those upon whom it is prescribed. Basically, I wanted to understand the ways in which hostel dwellers are stigmatized by house dwellers. What are the ways in which hostel dwellers stigmatize house dwellers? How do they react to this? How are hostel dwellers using the stigma to their advantage? What are the different meanings attached to the hostel by both its residents and house dwellers?

Hostel dwellers recognize that house dwellers dehumanize them through various processes of stigmatization. The stigmatization that occurs here is a two way process: hostel dwellers are able

to use the stigma put upon them by outsiders to assert their masculinity and negotiate positions of power. The negotiation of power is used by making reference to notions of tradition, their engagement in intimate relationship with female house dwellers, as well as health as a way to strengthen their position. Hostel dwellers are aware of this constructed stigma against them. They react to it, by using it in various ways to negotiate and assert their authority in the community. The stigma then becomes a two way process where both dwellers stigmatize each other. Hostel dwellers note that indeed they do live in a building that is falling apart and maybe a health hazard, but they are finding means to survive and thrive in this building. One of the ways in which they point this out, is through making referencing to the fact that there are more employed hostel dwellers than there are house dwellers. This implies that the people who stigmatize them are unemployed angry people, who are jealous because hostel dwellers are employed and live rent free. Another reference that was made is that the hostel even though it houses so called “uneducated rural people”; its inhabitants are smart enough to find various ways to make money.

The way in which hostel dwellers use stigma to assert their authority in the Mamelodi community is highlighted by an incident that occurred in June 2017. The incident I describe below, describes how a young female house dweller was stigmatized by both hostel and house dwellers. I remember the day vividly, it was a Sunday afternoon. As usual the hostel was packed with people. I remember seeing this young coloured woman, she was maybe in her early twenties. She was yelling and screaming just outside the hostel, accusing a couple of hostel dwellers of sexually assaulting her. This Sunday afternoon, it was scorching hot; the atmosphere at the hostel was filled with spirited energy. This is not unusual for a weekend, where many hostel dwellers are drinking, listening to music, it is bustling with people and both men and women are dressed to the nines.

I am seated next to one of many broken windows at *Malome* Chipipa’s shop. Just outside I notice this young woman being dragged by the arm from a car. The driver is swearing at her and she is swearing back. I notice a couple of people both inside and outside the hostel, stop what they are doing and watch this scene unfold. The young lady starts speaking incoherently in Afrikaans, swearing at the man, she then starts taking off her clothes. The man takes a beer bottle from his car and starts pouring the alcohol on her, she is screaming at this point. People are now gathering

in the shop; at this point I am feeling absolutely uncomfortable as the only woman in the shop. I am also feeling saddened and ashamed of what I am witnessing in front of me and the inability to do anything about it. Inside the shop, the men are laughing at the woman, calling her all sorts of degrading names. They are encouraging the man to continue pouring alcohol on her, to teach her a lesson. One of the men in the shop says that she is crying because she says she was raped by two men in the hostel last night. Apparently she is relatively new to the township and suffers from mental illness. She started drinking with a couple of hostel dwellers, and that was when she was taken advantage of, raped. Some of the men in the shop start denying this happened, saying that girls like her do not get raped; pointing to the fact that she is now stark naked outside the hostel. They are implying that she is a loose woman, who is stripping naked for attention, and as such she does not supposedly qualify as a rape victim. Eventually the police were called (that was only after she started causing commotion by stopping cars that were passing by); the assailant who was dragging her was long gone by then. The young lady refused to be escorted by the police, but agreed to put her clothes back on. I was so shocked at the level of brutality spoken by these male hostel dwellers. I was shocked at the level of patriarchy and misogyny embedded in the language spoken at the hostel, but also how onlookers outside the hostel, particularly women, did nothing to help the young lady. We all just looked on as she broke down in front of us.

The hostel dwellers get power from stigmatizing house dwellers. This incident highlights how the use of fear and violence is used here to assert authority in the township. We can turn again to Max Weber (1918), who writes about how the state has legitimate monopoly on violence, and this brings about power, because it creates fear. The hostel dwellers in many ways are doing just that, they have monopoly over violence, although the extent to which it is 'legitimate' is debatable. The police did nothing to help the young woman, hostel dwellers were able to get away with it. They play into a label given to them by house dwellers, labels such as uncivilized, barbaric, dangerous and crazy. The language used by hostel dwellers to describe what was happening, was also a weapon they used to instil fear and to provoke house dwellers. Calling the young woman "a crazy whore", "she is not the type to get raped", "she just got drunk and now wants attention" such behaviour from hostel dwellers creates fear, terrifying female house dwellers. There is also the on-going culture of catcalling women; where hostel dwellers give unwanted attention to women passing by the hostel. Hostel dwellers blatantly disregard and

disrespect women who pass by the hostel, the savagery in their language creates fear and frustration for female house dwellers. Female house dwellers I have spoken to have complained that whenever they pass by the hostel, they always get unwanted attention from the men. They are catcalled and when they do not respond to advances, they are called degrading names. These sorts of experiences from women are some of the reasons why hostel dwellers are stigmatized. They are called barbaric, uncivilized, acting like caged animals; they are seen as not possessing any form of human quality.

2. What is stigma?

Erving Goffman (1963:3) states in his book titled *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity* that the term stigma originated with the ancient Greek referring to bodily marks or brands. A type of tattoo that was a cut or burned into the skin of a criminal, slave or traitor that were designed to expose infamy or disgrace (Goffman 1963:3). These markings were used to visibly identify these people as blemished or morally polluted people (Goffman 1963:3). The bearers of the marks were slaves or criminals and these individuals were to be shunned (Goffman 1963:3). Goffman (1963:3) defines and categorizes stigma in three distinct forms: the first one is external or physical deformities such as scars, physical consequence of eating disorders like anorexia nervosa or bulimia, leprosy or a physical disability and obesity; The second is personal traits or blemishes of the individual character such as dropping out of school, working a low wage job, single parenthood, bankruptcy, unemployment, welfare dependency, adultery, mental disorder, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, alcoholism and criminal background (Goffman 1963:3); The third and last category of stigma is what Goffman calls ‘tribal stigma’, these are “traits (imagined or real) of an ethnic group, nationality, or religion that is deemed to be a deviation from the prevailing normative ethnicity, nationality or religion” (Goffman 1963:3).

According to Goffman (1963:4) stigma is an attribute that is deeply discrediting, it reduces the possessor or the stigmatized in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted discounted one. He (Goffman 1963:4) looks at how through time the definition of stigma has changed, and how it has become problematic to define stigma. Stigma according to him is attributes of an undesired differentness, the person with the stigma is considered not quite human (Goffman 1963:4). He further explains that we (people who stigmatize) exercise varieties of discrimination through which we effectively reduce the life chances of the person who is stigmatized (Goffman

1963:4). Stigma theories are then constructed around the person who is stigmatized to explain their inferiority, and account for the danger they represent. He makes reference to the terms we as society use in our daily discourses to stigmatize such as cripple, bastard, and moron (Goffman 1963:4).

Goffman (1963) admits that defining and pinning down stigma is hard to do, while he focused more on both the psychological and social meaning of it. There are more contemporary scholars such as Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton (2002:2) who further expand on Goffman's definition. They note that stigma and discrimination are social processes that have become effective tools used to create and maintain some form of social control, as well as to produce and reproduce social inequality (Parker & Aggleton 2002:2). What is meant here is that those who stigmatize are the ones who seem to have some sort of power over those who they stigmatized; they assert their control over those they stigmatize by discriminating against them (Parker & Aggleton 2002:2).

Graham, Diana and others write in their article titled "*Stigma: Ignorance, Prejudice or Discrimination?*" that stigma involves three critical elements: ignorance, prejudice and discrimination (Thornicroft, Rose, Kassam & Sartorius 2007:192). The first is the lack of knowledge (ignorance); the second is people's attitudes (prejudice) and lastly is their behavior (discrimination) towards those who are stigmatized (Thornicroft, Rose, Kassam & Sartorius 2007:192). Prejudice itself carries negative emotions, as well as anxiety, anger, resentment, disgust, distaste and hostility (Thornicroft, Rose, Kassam & Sartorius 2007:192). All these bag of emotions are carried by the one who stigmatizes, using it as a basis to reject or otherwise label the one who is stigmatized (Thornicroft, Rose, Kassam & Sartorius 2007:193).

Through Goffman's lens we understand stigma to be a negative attribute, though evidence suggests that it can actually be used as a positive attribute. Though we first need to note the following: "The understanding of the stigma process, is that it is first an identification and labelling phenomenon, the process has the advantage of situating stigma where it belongs: society. As a result, stigma is not fixed but variable and culturally and contextually charged and rechargeable. Stigma is a very complex and shifting social, cultural and political phenomenon." (Eba 2007:15). Africa has a HIV/AIDS epidemic, HIV/AIDS is stigmatized, and this stigma is

caused by the following: (1) Instrumental stigma, this refers to the use of stigma as an instrument of prevention or protection against harm or negative outcome associated with the stigmatised. It is using AIDS related illnesses to create fear” (Eba 2007:34); (2) “Symbolic stigma, this model locates the source of HIV-related stigma in the use of HIV as a means to express prejudice towards groups that were marginalized or stigmatized before the epidemic”. An example of this would be gay, commercial sex workers, migrants etc. (Eba 2007:38); (3) “Attribution as a basis of HIV-related stigma an individual’s understanding of the cause of the disease can affect and shape their reaction towards that disease and those affected by it”. For example when traditional beliefs use to explain the disease. (Eba 2007:41). One of the ways in which HIV-related stigma can be turned on its head is when the negative message is turned to a positive one.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) tackled HIV-related stigma head on by using T-shirts labelled “HIV Positive” as a way to create awareness and education. They turned the AIDS stigma at its head by proudly wearing HIV Positive t-shirts while marching for ARVs. In Venda HIV/AIDS peer educators would also proudly wear HIV Positive t-shirts in the community as a way to bring awareness to AIDS (McNeill 2011). They were aware of the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, and the people who openly spoke about it (McNeill 2011). The peer educators were labelled as having HIV/AIDS, this did not curb them. They instead use this platform as a tool to get employment in government institutions (McNeill 2011).

3. Who constructs stigma?

The stigma of the hostel and its residents is, in one sense, produced by house dwellers. The construction of the stigma is as a result of a tense and sometimes precarious relationship between the two groups. Townships were used to create spatial segregation between whites and blacks. The government used them to draw a distinct line between blacks and whites; where whites lived in nice suburbs while blacks lived in faraway degraded spaces, who only came for a couple of hours into white spaces to work. The apartheid government saw blacks as inhuman, barbaric, to be ruled over because of their inferior nature. Townships – as I outlined in the above chapter - reflected these qualities by being poorly serviced and chronically overcrowded. White power and superiority was showcased through the possession of labour through owning mines, owning the hostels and as thus owning the livelihoods of black people. The clear power marker was also in

where white people lived, far away from hostels and townships, away from what became known as the “swart gevaar” (black danger).

The Mamelodi West Hostel in many ways is used by house dwellers to draw a distinct line between them and hostel dwellers. The hostel becomes a space that house dwellers use to showcase their power by painting it as *gevaarlik* (dangerous), and distancing themselves from it. House dwellers’ perceived superiority is also showcased through references made about the hostel and its residence. Statements made referring to the hostel’s condition, as being inhabitable, undignified, as well as referring to its residents as barbaric, uncivilized and crazy.

4. The ways in which hostel dwellers are stigmatized

1) How the house dwellers construct Stigma (Stigma from the outside going in)

The construction of stigma in this context stems from the differences of not only the physical space one occupies (for instance hostel dwellers versus those living outside of it), but also where you were born. For example are you are a Mamelodi native or rural native? Many of the hostel dwellers are from rural areas. The fact that hostel dwellers are from rural areas and were not born in the township becomes a point of contention. These differences create two different worlds that collide with each other, but in many ways are similar to each other.

The similarities I am referring to are seen through the eyes of what I have termed “dual dwellers”; they are Mamelodi residents (they live outside the hostel) who consider themselves as both hostel and house dwellers. This is due to the amount of time that they spend socializing within the confines of the hostel. They are not tied to one spatial area; they go back and forth between the hostel and outside it. They are house dwellers that are friends with hostel dwellers and enjoy spending their time in the hostel. What is interesting about dual dwellers is that they seems to be very familiar with hostel life, and actually respect hostel dwellers even more for being brave enough to live in the hostel. Dual dwellers recognize that they are judged for associating with hostel dwellers. They are aware of the stigma the place they spend their time in has, they are aware of the stigma their friends in the hostel deal with.

I found in my research that they often admit that they too had preconceived notions about the hostel, and its dwellers, before familiarizing themselves with either. There is a contrast and similarity of life and culture, each dweller is marked by the physical space where they live. Dual

dwellers seem to be comfortable permeating these two spaces. I am told by many dual dwellers that more often than not, they are more comfortable being at the hostel, and dislike the attitudes and pettiness that comes with being house dwellers. They note that many house dwellers do not have anything interesting to discuss, other than gossiping about each other. According to them, their inherent laziness and entitlement makes them focus less on seeking jobs and moving out of their parents' back rooms, instead they enjoy spreading rumours and gossiping about their neighbours. It is such toxic behaviours that dual dwellers supposedly avoid. They are forced to seek refuge in the hostel, because such shenanigans do not happen in the hostel. The hostel has become recognized as a space where everyone minds their own business.

Note here the way in which dual dwellers have flipped another form of stigmatization around. They are self-stigmatizing house dwellers, which they themselves are. And in turn relating to a hostel identity, in the knowledge that people outside will judge them, but taking the gamble that this judgment might just, as we shall see below, work in their favour. My ethnographic data thus revealed the complex dynamics of stigma 'going in' and 'coming out' of the hostel.

The relationship between the Mamelodi West hostel and house dwellers has historically been one filled with tension. With unemployment levels high, poverty at an increase and crime⁹ levels perceived to be rising in the community. These are issues that are causing a strain between house and hostel dwellers, causing on-going back and forth accusations of crime. As well as a rise in violent attacks in the community, this thus creates an unsavoury relationship. These are all consequences of social and economic inequality manifesting in the township. The uncertainty and instability experienced by some people in this community, creates a sense of powerlessness and fear that thrives in this environment. This sense of powerlessness many house dwellers experience brings about anger and frustration that is taken out on the hostel dwellers. The house dwellers are able to regain their sense of power, taking control of their lives by ascertaining their power over the hostel dwellers.

⁹The South African Police Service Statistics show that in South Africa community reported serious crime (such as contact crimes, contact related crimes, property related crimes and other serious crimes) decreased from April 2017 to March 2018.

In Gauteng common assault increased by 3.6% in 2017/2018, and common robbery decreased by -2,2%, while murder increased by 3.2%

I argue that the experience of stigmatization in this context is a manifestation of the sense of powerlessness that house dwellers feel. This powerlessness is as a result of the following: Mamelodi West Township consists of houses mostly headed and supported both emotionally and financially by Grandparents and Parents, who are taking care of their adult children. In some cases three generations of Grandparents, parents and children live under the same roof; many of the adult children living in backrooms of their parents or grandparents houses. Female house dwellers are mostly single parents.

Most of the house dwellers are unemployed, and live in homes that rely on a single source income. The source of income comes in the form of social grants or a parent working a 9 to 5 job. It is important to note that not all homes in the township are led by single parents or grandparents, some homes have both parents present who are both employed. What I noticed through the conversations I had with both house dwellers and hostel dwellers, is that most houses in the township have three generations living under one roof. Sometimes you find the parent is single, has never married and the house is owned by the grandparents.

Some of the young house dwellers only have a Matric; they cannot afford to further their studies. They are unemployed and still living with their parents. Parents have to deal with having sons and daughters who are drug addicts (*nyaope* addicts), and who steal from them to support their habit. Add to the fact that grandparents end up having to take care of their grandchildren with their social grant money, they also have to buy groceries and ensure that rent and electricity is paid. Most houses are able to supplement their income by having tenants who rent their backrooms; though this is sometimes not enough to take care of three to four generations living in one house. All these factors create frustration and anger in the community because the house dwellers' lives are unravelling at the seam. They are living in poverty, they are unemployed and they are experiencing crime on a very personal level; because their children are stealing from them. In other words, they are also living through a perceived crisis of social reproduction.

The hostel is where they take out their frustrations, by labelling the hostel and its residents as the problem in the community. By painting it as the source of their unemployment and as a crime hub that exploits their children, they are in essence retrieving back the powerlessness they live through on a daily life. The hostel becomes the scapegoat, the explanation for the sense that things are not quite as they should be. Drugs, prostitution, thieves and drunkards all spend time

there – police do not intervene in hostel disputes, it feels, from the outside and for the house dwellers, to be ‘the Wild West’. Through informal interviews with house dwellers, the sense that the hostel is a source of social ills was often palpable.

Their superiority over the hostel is expressed by the manner in which the hostel is spoken about, the manner in which its residents are referred to. I spoke to Thabiso (a male house dweller) who said the following:

“I know that when I leave my house I can be proud of where I live, hostel dwellers cannot say the same thing. They are grown men living in a place that looks like hell, you cannot be proud of a place like that. I would rather live with my parents than live at the hostel; it is not a place that is habitable. I know that I am unemployed, and maybe I have pride, but I would rather be prideful and live cosy, than live with rats in that place. No I am good, I am really good”.

Thabiso is not the only house dweller who shared the same sentiment. My friend who is also a house dweller thought of the hostel as a place for “crazy people”. She described it as being a mixture of *Marabastad* at the end of the month, when it is overflowing with people, and being at *Noord* Taxi rank, except you do not get to leave, that becomes your experience every day. She perceives the hostel to be a place of utter chaos, destruction and just plain old craziness. She said that she felt sorry for me, and that there was no way in “hell” that she would be caught in the hostel. She said that the hostel is a place for people who had nowhere to go.

This is not the first time I have heard house dwellers say this, as a house dweller myself I have on multiple occasion heard people refer to the hostel as either “hell” or a “dumpsite”. Some have said that people in prison live better than hostel dwellers. Lebo another house dweller I spoke to said the following:

“The hostel is like a dumpsite, everything that is filthy and dirty goes there. Everything that is bad goes there. It is a place that takes in everyone and everything, it is not very choosy. You get all sorts of people in there. Everyone in there is missing a screw in the head; no normal human being can live there.”

As has been demonstrated, the vast majority of township residents are very hostile towards the hostels residents, regarding them as dangerous. Violence and fear are at the centre of hostel identity; hostels are associated with these two things. For instance, the fact that the hostels were

in the past often raided by the police, perpetuates a historical narrative that hostels are dangerous, filled with criminals and should therefore be feared. Today, however, police rarely enter the hostel – adding to its unsavoury reputation. This plays into the already present fears that the community has, and this just strengthened or reaffirmed their opinions about the hostels in the area. The stigma that is associated with the hostel and its residents is very much at the core of what this hostel is said to represent.

In Victor Turner's (1967) terms, the hostel is a symbol: It has found a way to condense meaning, unify and divide groups of people in the community. Such perceptions create a barrier between the township and hostel residents, where there is an 'us versus them' mentality – but as I have emphasized above there is a grey area in this dichotomy, in the form of 'dual dwellers'. Sociologist and Historian Gerhard Falk wrote in his book "*Stigma: how we treat outsiders*" that "all societies will always stigmatize some conditions and some behaviors, because doing so provides group solidarity by delineating outsiders from insiders" (Falk 2001). According to Bruce Link and Jo Phelan (2001:370), they argue "that the stigma process occurs when social labels connote a separation of "us" from "them"; another component of the stigma process is to link labels to undesirable attributes. This creates the rationale that negatively labelled persons are fundamentally different from those who do not share the label (Link & Phelan 2001:370). Stereotypes are used to describe the stigmatized, and this stigmatized person is thought to be so different that they are seen as slightly less human in nature (Link & Phelan 2001:370). The stigma which surrounds the hostel is able to empower its residents, especially the hostel dwellers. Stigma can create fear and as such provide power to the hostel dwellers. Through this stigma they are able to gain what may be described as a sense of authority. The fact that they are considered pariahs of society, they are associated with lawlessness can be seen as a powerful tool; one which they have used effectively to their advantage, to assert their authority in the community.

Max Weber (1918) writes in "*Politics as a Vocation*" that there is a relationship between state and violence. He starts off by quoting Trotsky who says "every state is founded on force" (Weber 1918:1). It is through this statement Weber makes the following points: firstly that the state has the monopoly on violence; secondly that "force is a means specific to the state; thirdly the relation between violence and state is an intimate one"; and lastly "the use of physical force

is quite normal” (Weber 1918:1). According to Weber (1918:1) “a state is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory”. This means that “the state is the only source that has the right to use violence” (Weber 1918:1). “This connection between state and violence means that politics, for us is striving to share power or influencing the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state” (Weber 1918:1), being active in politics means you strive for power. Power is expressed through relationships, for instance “the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate violence” (Weber 1918:1). “For a state to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be” (Weber 1918:1). “Obedience is determined by fear and hope, fear of the vengeance of magical powers or the power holder, and hope for a reward.” (Weber 1918:1). Hostel dwellers also have a monopoly over violence, but they are not ‘the state’. They use fear and the threat of violence as a way in which to assert power and authority. Hostel dwellers are aware of the identity they have, an identity associated with violence. It is an identity that has given them power to control through instilling fear in the surrounding community.

I. Germs

Another way in which house dwellers stigmatize the hostel dwellers is by associating the hostel with germs, the hostel as a germ is both literal and figurative. Associating the hostel to germs is a way to describe the condition of the hostel. It describes the literal condition of the hostel, the health hazard that it poses. The condition or state of the hostel currently is poor; as can be seen from the pictures in the previous chapter. It is an old dilapidated building, in a decaying condition. It has poor water and sanitation; it is used as a dumping site by house dwellers. Literally it is a germ that can cause hostel dwellers and the community to be sick. While figuratively it is a germ that causes sickness to the Mamelodi community, because the hostel houses drug dealers, drug users and criminals. House dwellers are therefore attributing the sickness (drugs, crime and prostitution) that is plaguing the community to the hostel, which is the germ that is responsible for this sickness.

An example of a drug that is currently plaguing Mamelodi township is *Nyaope*. This drug is a concoction that is made up of various substances like rat poison, soap powder, and the main ingredient, Anti Retro-viral (AR-V's), HIV/AIDS medicine. The mix is then rolled with dagga

and smoked. It is a drug that is increasingly used by the township's youth. The hostel – as a source of *nyaope* - is therefore blamed by house dwellers for corrupting the moral fibre of the community, as well as bringing instability in households by supplying these drugs and crime. It is constructed as the source of a substance that is literally killing young people in the area. The hostel thus symbolizes the germ that is slowly eating away at the moral fibre of the township, and creating in its midst a sickness that is plaguing the community. It is a way in which house dwellers insinuate that the people, who live in this germ (hostel), are causes of the problems in the community. The hostel dwellers become the sickness. The hostel symbolically takes on the role of the germ. The disrepair of the hostel, as well as the perceived lack of control and lack of rent payment is associated with having unsavoury, dangerous, savages, and undignified, possibly mental ill and poor inhabitants. They are regarded by some house dwellers as lazy men who are sponging off the municipality. The stigma thrust upon the hostel itself also transfers itself to its residents, who are seen as inferior for choosing to live in the hostel.

II. “Hostel dwellers are not from here, they are outsiders”

House dwellers, as I found in my ethnographic investigations, stigmatize hostel dwellers because they are not perceived to be Mamelodi natives. They are seen as outsiders or rather guests to the township. I interviewed two middle aged male house dwellers who are my neighbours, *Bra* (Brother) Harry and *Bra* Schumacher. I remember it was a Tuesday afternoon, and they were smoking and drinking *Hansa* (beer) while sitting on crates under a tree. I had asked to interview them; *Bra* Harry had responded with “sure, you are more than welcome to interview us, as long as you remember to bring me RGs (cigarette)”. I arrived with four RGs and joined them under the tree. I explained my research to them, and how I was asking the help of older gentlemen to gain information. With eagerness they recalled the little information they had on the history of the hostel. They were quick to answer when asked who actually lives at the hostel. They responded by saying, “outsiders, rural folk, men who are from rural areas”. They pointed out that hostel dwellers are not Mamelodi natives, they are rural area men who are here for job opportunities. The conversation continued between us, I asked them what they thought of hostel dwellers. Their response was that “hostel men are rural fools, who are easily controlled by women, especially female house dwellers”.

I mentioned earlier that most hostel dwellers are from rural areas, and that this fact is a big contention between house and hostel dwellers. They are considered outsiders by house dwellers, they are reminded of this by house dwellers whenever they are referred to as “*plaas jappies*” (rural dimwits), or are excluded in community meetings and not consulted in any projects that occur in the township. A clear separation exists in the community that is marked by the space hostel dwellers occupy and the fact that they are not Mamelodi natives. Rejection and exclusion is at the centre of the stigma experienced by hostel dwellers. “*Plaas Japie*” is a common term used to describe people who are from rural areas, it implies that you are backward and naïve. This term carries stigma; it stems from the fact that rural areas are associated with backward, uneducated people. Seen through the eyes of house dwellers, hostel dwellers are regarded as foolish and naïve, slow, and not street smart. House dwellers will use this term to insult hostel dwellers; they will mark their territory (space and women) by undermining them with insults that refer to their ruralness. Hostel dwellers mentioned that house dwellers are very insecure, and will use such terms to prevent them from dating female house dwellers.

5. The ways in which hostel dwellers stigmatize house dwellers

1) How the hostel dwellers react to the stigma (Stigma from the inside going out)

I. “*Tshila ga e bolaye*”: Germs do not kill us, they make us stronger

“*Tshila ga e bolaye*” is a Sepedi saying which translates to “germs do not kill us, they make us stronger”. Hostel dwellers are using this statement, as a way to stigmatize house dwellers. They are turning the stigma put on them on its head, by asserting their power through various ways. I mentioned earlier that the hostel is seen as a germ in the community. Here we see how the hostel is a place that does not represent the germ that kills them or the community, but rather they argue that germs do not kill them, they make them stronger. Hostel dwellers also use notions of African tradition, engaging in intimate relationships and the economic processes that are occurring in the hostel as tools to assert their power in the township.

I first want to explain how this statement came about. I was doing my ethnography at the hostel one afternoon, and one of the hostel dwellers I was hanging out with said something interesting to me, as a way to explain a bizarre incident that we were witnessing.

I was with *Malome* Chippa in his spaza shop. We were sitting in the shop, casually chatting about the on goings in the hostel. I was sitting on one of my favourite spots in the shop, on a crate, next to one of the many broken windows. It is my favourite spot because I can comfortably observe people without being obvious about it, where I can see everything that happens outside and inside the hostel. Just outside the hostel, there is a street cook who sells African cuisine: tripe, trotters, sheep head, chicken intestines and chicken feet as well as pap. Hostel dwellers frequent this food establishment, and quite enjoy the food. One of the cooks, who happen to be the owner's brother, was sharpening a knife on the pavement as people were passing by. Without cleaning the knife, he started cutting the meat, he continued with this process of sharpening the knife on the pavement then proceeding to cut the meat without cleaning the knife for about an hour. Later on, he went to urinate just a couple of feet away from where he was busy cooking, without washing his hands, he continues to cut the meat and cook. The young man was not hygienic at all. His hands were dirty, he was sweating, and he was wearing dirty clothes. I called *Malome* Chippa, *Malome* Moholo, Aubrey and a couple of other hostel dwellers to observe what I was seeing. As they watch this scene play out, they start laughing and *Malome* Chippa laughs and says "I notice that they do not bath at all, they spend the whole day with their dirty clothes. They cook the food with dirty hands and sweat profusely, it is so unhygienic. I told the owner about his dirty cooks. I explained to him the importance of hygiene, I told him to force them to be hygienic by making sure that they take a bath. They can take turns, while the others continues to cook, the others go home to take a bath, and when they come back the others can do the same. I also mentioned that they have to be professionals, they must wear aprons. A presentable and professional eating establishment will attract more customers, I told him, and he just refuses to take my advice". Aubrey then says "well, we are kind of use to this". I asked him what he meant by this? His response was that "*tshila ga e bolaye*"(germs do not kill, they make you strong). He further mentioned that, they enjoyed eating the young man's food, it has extra spices. Laughing, he continues to say it is better to eat at a food establishment where you know what you getting. As we continued this conversation, they mention something that I found very interesting. They said "we men are not really particular about our food; we are not really concerned about hygiene. We just eat anywhere really". *Malome* Chippa's customer, who is a hostel dweller, even adds that germs really make you stronger and not weak or sick. According to him men truly believe this sentiment, and for that reason, they do not mind buying food from the street cook;

even when they see that the cooks are dirty. They will buy the food, because it is cheap and also it is comfort food for them. The street cook's food reminds them of home, and for that reason they will always be his customers. The only two people who refuse to buy food from the street cook is my father and his friend *Malome* Moholo, they are the only two men in the room who find the food disgusting. *Malome* Chippa laughs and says "no one comes between a man and his food, not even dirty unhygienic looking cooks". He then proceeds to tell us a story about a former hostel dweller's experience with food. Billie who is *Malome* Chippa's nephew, a former hostel dweller now house dweller; though if you ask him, he will tell you that he is and will always identify as a hostel dweller. He bought food (pap and tripe) from one of many street cooks outside the hostel. As he was enjoying his meal, he found flies in his food; it was floating in the tripe juices. He opted to remove the flies in his food; he apparently sucked the tripe juices from the flies first and then proceeded to discard them. I was so grossed out by the story he told me, that I kept cringing. He laughs at my facial expressions and says "when you eat street food; you expect some form of uncleanness. Hygiene is not an issue, as long as the food is delicious". He says that most of the time the dirtier the cooks are, the more delicious their food is.

Mary Douglas (1966:4), a famous structuralist anthropologist, writes in "*Purity and Danger*" that hygiene represents cleanliness and order, while dirt represents disorder. Dirt offends against order, because we are socialized through culture, religion that purity and hygiene go hand in hand, while dirt and pollution go together (Douglas 1966:4). When we see someone deviate from this, it offends us, because it forces us to question what we know, it disturbs the knowledge we possess and that offends us (Douglas 1966:4). Dirt is recognized as something that is out of place, a threat to good order and can most definitely be brushed away (Douglas 1966:2). "In chasing dirt, in papering, decorating and tidying we are not governed by anxiety to escape disease, but are positively re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea. There is nothing fearful or unreasoning in our dirt-avoidance: it is a creative movement, an attempt to relate form to function, to make unity of experience" (Douglas 1966:2). Douglas argues that rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience (Douglas 1966:2). Pollution ideas work in the life of society at two levels: (1) this is when people try to influence one another's behaviour, beliefs are said to reinforce social pressures; (2) when pollutions are used as analogies for expressing a general view of the social order (Douglas 1966:4). When social order is

symbolized by order in sexual body; “ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference male and female, within and without; with and against that a semblance of order is created” (Douglas 1966:4). Douglas notes that reflection on dirt involves reflection on the relation of order to disorder (Douglas 1966:5).

The ways in which hostel dwellers use the germs is fascinating because they use it both literally and figuratively. They assert their power both inside and outside the hostel by arguing the following. Hostel dwellers believe that germs make them strong in two fundamental ways:

Firstly, hostel dwellers are cleverly using medical jargons, to help explain how germs are good for you. They argue that exposure to germs develops a healthy immune system; your immune system becomes stronger when you are exposed to bacteria. Their sense of strongness comes from being exposed to the filthy and poorly maintained hostel. The hostel as the germ, strengthens their immune system because it exposes them to bad germs, which can be good for your body.

Secondly, the germ creates a good immune system, which in turns creates stronger men in the process: strong, traditional, African men. They are socially constructing themselves as unlike their male house dwellers counterparts that easily get sick, they are strong and healthy. While male house dwellers are filling up the queues at the local clinic seeking help, because of their weak immune system, compared to their strong one. Maswabi, a hostel dweller that is a heavy drinker and smoker, spends his time scouring rubbish bins in the suburbs in order to find something to sell. That is how he makes a living. He is what is known in the hostel as “*o ya gereza*” (to hustle), whatever he finds in the rubbish bins is what he will sell. He is known to eat the food he finds in the bins. I interviewed him on several occasions, but this conversation was centered on his livelihood. I asked him what the process of going through rubbish bins entails.

“My journey is a long one; I usually walk to the suburbs. I will walk to Lynwood, Equestria, Meyerspark and etc. I make sure when I get there I have one of those big black rubbish bin plastic bags, I use these bags to carry things I find. I go through each house’s rubbish bin, depending on whether the bin is outside. When I go through the rubbish bin, I rummage around bare hands. I do not wear hand gloves or any protection gear. Just the clothes on my back and my hands; I get to scouring the bins until I find something. If I find food and it is still in good condition I will eat it,

or I will sell it; depending on how thirsty I am for a beer that day. I always bring something home. We come back exhausted after searching through rubbish bins all day, but the rewards sometimes are great.”

I asked him if he has ever gotten sick by doing this job, he said that not once in the last six years has he been sick. He says that he eats what he wants, and he does not get sick. He tells me that he has a strong immune system. He describes his body as being as strong as an ox, “I might be old but I am healthy, I do not have diabetes, high blood pressure or allergies like most of the young men here.” This strong immune system hostel dwellers have is, as I have demonstrated clearly, believed by them to be as a result of exposure to germs. It makes you strong and they are implying that the house dwellers who stigmatize them for living at the hostel are the ones that easily get sick; they are queuing up at the clinic, because they have weak immune systems and as such are weak men. Going to the local clinic as a man seems to carry a stigma in of itself for the following reason:

(A) It is free health care, which means it is for poor people. Poverty in itself carries stigma in society, people stigmatize poor people because they seem to represent everything unpleasant. Chaim L. Waxman (1983:3) writes about how poverty is stigmatized and discusses the moral judgments that are made of the poor. According to Waxman (1983:3) the moral judgments concerning the poor is the belief that the poor have no morality for instance that they steal, mug, are loose sexually, are lazy, do not want to get an education and improve themselves.

(B) It plays on notions of masculinity; where men are perceived not to get sick, they are the epitome of health. If they do get sick, they certainly do not go to clinics, they push through the sickness. Clinics are associated with women. The life struggles hostel dwellers are facing now, the poverty they are facing, is preparing them for a future of riches. They are struggling now so that they can become richer later in life. This life lesson is making them strong, not weak, so emotionally they are stronger and richer than house dwellers. The life struggles they are facing now, does not kill them, it makes them stronger emotionally.

II. Tradition

The ways in which hostel dwellers stigmatize house dwellers is often through notions of tradition. Hostel dwellers are using ideas of African masculinity to stigmatize and question the manhood of house dwellers by reference to the following things: “Real men do not get sick”, this saying plays on ideas around a specific form of ‘African masculinity’, implying that African men do not get sick because they are strong, sickness is associated with weakness. Maswabi is one of the hostel dwellers who said that men do not get sick. He also associated clinics with weakness, saying that the medicine the doctors and nurses give you, make you weak. *Malome* Chippa also shared the same sentiment saying that hostel dwellers are strong men, because they do not have to worry about falling sick. He believes that the fact that they are from rural areas, and rely on more traditional medicine and not western medication is what makes them African. *Malome* Moholo said that “house dwellers are so quick to point out that the hostel dwellers are from rural areas, but when they are told that rural men are more traditional and take culture seriously, they dismiss and deny this statement”. The use of stigma, African tradition, intimate relationships and economic processes are some of the ways in which hostel dwellers are asserting their power, and negotiating socio-economic inequalities, in this township.

The use of stigma, African tradition, intimate relationships and economic processes are some of the ways in which hostel dwellers are asserting their power, and negotiating socio-economic inequalities, in this township. Male house dwellers are easily swept by the ills of the world, strong men, especially African men – as the Hostel dwellers would have it - are in control and as such do not succumb to the ills of this world. According to them, your strength is a reflection on the type of man you are. Weak men get sick easily because they have a weak immune system – and this could be a metaphor for how easy life is for male house dwellers, in the minds of the hostel dwellers. What is meant here is that hostel dwellers are thus strong because they never get sick despite living in a filthy and unsavoury place. They therefore truly represent African men, compared to male house dwellers who are always getting sick and queuing at clinics. They are, in other words, taking stigmatization from the outside and turning it into a positive attribute of masculinity.

The ideas around 'tradition' extend into conversations around the very concept of 'Africaness', the township and its 'house dwellers' are regarded by hostel dwellers as being more influenced by 'Western' ways. Township everyday life is a reflection on how western culture has infiltrated and replaced African traditions. Meaning house dwellers have adopted more of a western lifestyle and have discarded their African cultures. Western culture is seen as the germ that is killing house dwellers: this germ is slowly killing them, because they are no longer following African traditions and thus their ancestors are not protecting them from the ills of this life. Parallels can be drawn here with Janzen's (1995) classic text 'Ngoma', where capitalism is seen as the illness that is spreading through southern Africa, causing a rise in the participation on 'Ngoma' cults of affliction. Whilst there is no space here to elaborate on this comparison, it is clear that ideas of 'culture' and 'pollution' are expressed collectively – with the Mamelodi West hostel being but one example of a contemporary local manifestation of this phenomenon.

We can deduce here that hostel dwellers are saying that western culture has slowly eroded the moral fibre of the township; it is thus making them sick. According to hostel dwellers this sickness is evident by looking at the high increase of deaths in the township, the sicknesses that are plaguing both young and old, increase in teenage pregnancy, the increase number of unmarried women, high increase of unemployment and poverty. These are said to be all consequences of not following your culture and neglecting your ancestors to follow western culture. There is literature on the crisis of social reproduction in Southern Africa, whereby older people often bemoan the ways that younger people no longer respect their traditions, sayings things like "if only the youth would go back to traditions, then we would all be ok". So in a way the hostel dwellers are infantilizing the house dwellers by saying they have forgotten tradition. They are saying "we are grown men, we struggle, we suffer, we are strong, and you are weak and are like children".

At the core of masculinity is power, and crisis of social reproduction has to with the loss of this power. Robert Morell (1998:607) defines "masculinity as a collective gender identity that is not a natural attribute; it is socially constructed and fluid". He notes that "there are many masculinities; these masculinities are not fixed but change over time, being affected by changes elsewhere in society and at the same time, themselves affecting society itself" (Morell

1998:607). Hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity which is dominant; Hegemonic masculinity not only oppresses women but it silences other masculinities (Morell 19998:608). According to Mike Donaldson hegemonic masculinities are anxiety provoking, hierarchal, exclusive, brutal and violent (Mike Donaldson cited in Morrell 1998:608). African masculinity was hegemonic in pre-colonial society; the economic and political changes African life underwent has been perceived to have transformed this (Morrell 1998:621). African men, new to the city had to fight to maintain their masculine identity; they were able to do this by utilizing forms of organization familiar to them to do so (Morrell 1998:623). “African workers had strong links to the countryside, their wives and children lived there, the headmen and chiefs whom they elected and consulted with lived there; there is also the fact that they owned a homestead and the value placed on how much livestock they accumulated” (Morrell 1998:624). African workers’ masculinities were measured by all these things (Morrell 1998:624). “Institutions of migrant worker served to perpetuate African masculinities, even while it created a massive working class; African masculinities were constantly being reshaped” (Morrell 1998:624). “Migrant labour came into contact with white masculinities; this permitted a strong ethnic and gender identity to be mobilized in the confines of compound living spaces, in the use of leisure time” (Morrell 1998:624).

Robert Morell notes that migrant men understood their masculinity in terms of respect; this respect was to be given by younger men and women in particular (Morrell 1998:624). The end of apartheid brought about change (Morrell 1998:624). The state set up schools for Africans, formal education was accessible (Morrell 1998:624); “industries expanded and new jobs absorbed a growing African working class, now urban residents rather than migrants” (Morrell 1998:624). “These changing circumstances brought about new styles of dress, violent behaviour and an open scorn of country simplicity were prominent; these developments were part of a process by which a new black, urban masculinity emerged to rival the old and to reject it as a masculinity of the *moegoe* (fool)” (Morrell 1998:625).

Continuing with the theme of multiple masculinities, my ethnographic data demonstrated that engaging in intimate relationships is another way in which hostel dwellers are asserting positions of sexual authority in the Mamelodi community. They often stake claims of sexual rights to female house dwellers. Hostel dwellers believe that dating the male house dwellers’ mothers,

sisters, aunts and girlfriends is a way of showing power. They say that they are using their traditional masculinity to show that there are irresistible, they construct themselves as “African traditional men”. According to hostel dwellers, female house dwellers are also attracted to the pockets of the hostel dwellers. This perception by hostel dwellers is that they are appealing to women especially female house dwellers because they have money - female house dwellers perceive that male hostel dwellers have money because they are employed, they wear fancy clothing and at taverns or shebeens male hostel dwellers often buy female house dwellers alcohol- are strong, they are not easily prone to sickness and they practice their culture. Hostel dwellers believe that female house dwellers choose to be with them, because they treat them good and provide stability by taking care of them financially. Their African masculinity is tied to the fact that they practice their culture even though they are away from home. They are not “men of two worlds” as Dunbar Moodie (1994) writes, where migrants take a different identity when they are either at work or home. They are not assimilating to their environment, hostels dwellers are doing the opposite, and they are keeping their cultural practices close. For instance they still slaughter animals to *pahla* (talk to one’s ancestors), they use traditional medicine instead of western medicine to both perform rituals and when they fall ill. On Sundays the hostel has traditional music sessions, referred to as “*dinaka*”, it is a traditional Bapedi dance performed by men. Every Sunday Bapedi hostel dwellers will perform these dances using instruments like an old pipe that is used as a flute, an empty oil barrel that will be covered in cow hide and it will be the drum. The men will perform these dances until they are exhausted. They enjoy performing for an audience, it attracts both hostel and house dwellers, who will come in their numbers to watch them perform.

All these things make male hostel dwellers perceive the African masculinity identity as a strong black man, who practices his ‘culture’, who calls home the rural areas and has a job. They represent real ‘Africaness’ by following their culture and not succumbing to the pressure of township life by adopting western culture. They are using the stigma of the hostel to say that: this place you house dwellers refer to as dangerous, uninhabitable, undignified and filthy, is the place your women, mothers, sisters and aunts are choosing to live at, with us. They are leaving your “big houses” to come live with us, in our “small rooms”. Also by impregnating female house dwellers hostel dwellers are using the stigma that is put on them by house dwellers and using it against them. Goffman (1963) notes that “stigma may affect behaviour of those who are

stigmatized”. He further states that “those who are stereotyped often start to act in ways that their stigmatizers expect of them, and this not only changes their behaviour but it also shapes their emotions and beliefs” (Goffman 1963). This is also seen in much literature on Witchcraft where people use being labelled as a witch to their advantage, because others will be scared of them.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated through ethnographic evidence in this chapter that house dwellers stigmatize hostel dwellers; they regard them as ‘germs’ of their society who are killing and corrupting their community. They are seen as corrupting the moral fibre of the township by providing a space for drugs, crime and sex workers. They are labelled as dangerous, uncivilized, crazy men, who stain the community with their activities. House dwellers see hostel dwellers as polluters of township, and the township needs to be cleaned from these polluters by getting rid of them. The hostel dwellers are aware of this stigma and are using it to assert authority in the township. They are using the stigma placed on them as a positive attribute. They use germs as a literal and figurative way to construct their masculinity. They construct an African masculine identity to point out that they are superior to the house dwellers counterparts. The hostel has various meanings attached it, which informs us about the broader socio-economic problems these dwellers face. The argument I make is that germs and pollution have become positive attributes of masculinity for hostel dwellers. Max Weber writes on the monopoly on violence, how those who can use violence to instil fear are the ones who have the power. The hostel dwellers in many ways do that, they use their labelled identity of dangerous and barbaric as a weapon to instil fear in the society, and therefore have created a sense of power and authority in the township from what may appear, at first glance, as negative stigmatization.

Levels of Stigma

Female dwellers in the Mamelodi West Township are seen by male hostel dwellers, using a hierarchy to assert status: (1) at the top of the hierarchy are female house dwellers who engage in transactional sex with hostel dwellers. They are seen as being smart and resourceful, because they trick these “rural men” (hostel dwellers are associated with rural identities because they are from rural areas) into giving them their hard earned money;

(2) The middle tier consists of women who are romantically involved with hostel dwellers and have now officially become female hostel dwellers, love brought them to the hostel (women like Katie and Ms Veronica). These women are mostly from rural areas. They come to live at the hostel because their significant others are men who are rural migrants; men who come to the city looking for jobs, and ended up becoming hostel dwellers. The stigma these women face is because they choose to live in the hostel: a place that is dilapidated and perceived by house dwellers to be dangerous and undignified. Women, in this context, are often associated with weakness, naivety and obedience; in contrast the hostel is associated with masculinity, power, and strength. The harsh and poor living conditions in the hostel is said to be made for men not women. The fact that these women are living at the hostel, this is seen by some house and hostel dwellers as them being irresponsible and undignified. However, some hostel dwellers also said that they see these women as loyal, women who stand by their men; men who are hostel dwellers, who have to deal with the stigma of living in the hostel. In the perception of these hostel dwellers these women are in a better position than women who for instance sell their bodies for money in the hostel.

(3) At the bottom of this hierarchy are women who are unemployed, homeless and sell their bodies for sex. They are finding a way to survive in the hostel by engaging in transactional sex with hostel dwellers specifically. The majority of women who are selling their bodies are nyaope users; they are house dwellers who are now living in the hostel because they are using drugs. Some hostel dwellers and older female house dwellers informed me that these women have either ran away from home or have been kicked out by their families, because they have been stealing from them. They are staying at the hostel, because they have nowhere else to go, they end up living in unoccupied rooms in the hostel and finding various ways to survive and one of those ways is having sex for money. They are seen in the hostel as women of a lower status, undignified and they are referred to as "*Amagosha*" which means prostitutes. These women are very much aware of the image the community has painted of them. The women are stigmatized by both house dwellers and hostel dwellers; both men and women see these women as the illness that is killing their society. They are seen as the polluters, who are polluting the community with their bodies. One male hostel dweller who was buying cigarettes at *Malome* Chippa's Spaza shop; he overheard *Malome* Chippa telling me stories about the many male hostel dwellers he knows who have impregnated women who engage in transactional sex, and have refused to claim

their children. The hostel dwellers response to this was “well I understand why they would not want to claim these kids. Who would want people to know that they have slept with women like that? It is embarrassing and it makes you look like a “*houtkop*” (idiot).

The work of Janet Maia Wojcicki (2002) relates to my ethnography in many ways, it both compliments and contradicts it. For instance both female house dwellers and hostel dwellers participate in sexual transactions for money. The difference between the two groups of women is that female hostel dwellers have sex with men for money to feed their drug habits, while the other group of women use the money to survive in other ways that society deems acceptable. In both cases the women regard having sex for money as a form of surviving. Hostel dwellers and house dwellers stigmatizes female house and hostel dwellers differently, female hostel dwellers are seen as polluters and a sickness in society; while female house dwellers are seen as better than their hostel dweller counterpart because they do not live at the hostel. Female hostel and house dwellers see themselves as *hustlers* (resourceful), because they are working hard to make money to survive. Sex is associated with work; it is a job a woman performs to survive. The similarity in my ethnography and Wojcicki’s (2002) work is that in both cases women seem to fall victim to a patriarchal society: where men seem to have the power to violently attack a woman if she accepts his beer and rejects him by refusing to sleep with him. In both cases women seem to be at the hands or mercy of men, they hold all the power, because they have the money that these women need to survive. These women subject themselves to all sorts of uncomfortable and sometimes violent attacks; this becomes normal to both them and society. The violence attacks against women is very apparent in not only the hostel, but the Mamelodi area, where women are being raped and mugged by men because they are seen as weak. I am going to develop these ideas in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Gender roles: *The hostel gives us life*. Female hostel dwellers

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I spoke about stigma in the hostel, in this chapter I will look specifically at how female hostel dwellers are stigmatized. In my honours research I briefly covered the presence of women in the Mamelodi West hostel. The role of women in the Mamelodi West hostel became an interesting ethnographic avenue to follow. In this chapter, I seek to understand who are the female hostel dwellers? How are they able to survive in the hostel? What kinds of relationships exist between female and male hostel residents?

As should be clear from the previous chapters of this dissertation, the hostels are believed to no longer represent hard work, respect and dignity; they instead embody frustration, chaos, loose morals and sickness. My honours research provided evidence that suggested that there may be a gendered power struggle in the hostel. Male hostel dwellers often seem to be very possessive of their space, because hostels were specifically built for migrant workers who are mostly men. The presence of women in the hostel has disrupted this space through what they regarded as unsavoury and undignified behaviour, the presence of women seems to have created resentment and anger for male hostel dwellers.

Hostels tend to represent a male dominated environment, women in this hostel are seen by both hostel and house dwellers as challenging men. They are challenging men in what is considered by most to be 'their' space. They are going against the norm (historically, as mentioned in previous chapters, hostels have been spaces where women were forbidden). Women were only ever meant to be visitors in the hostel, never actual residents in the hostel. The hostel represents and reproduces a patriarchal system, and these women are perceived by some men as representing a complication to this well-established system of control. Glen Elder (2003:4) notes that "over the last fifteen years, the "invasion" by women of the destructive and previously "male-only" black hostel system suggests two things: On the one hand, it suggests a profoundly transgressive spatial act. When women occupy hostel space, after all, the geographies of their daily lives challenge the material, symbolic, and masculine intent of hostels as spaces on the

South African landscape; On the other hand it is undermining the emancipatory effect of that female invasion, the sexualized discourse that pounced upon the women who tried to live in the hostels has confounded their survival strategies” (Elder 2003:4).

Malome Moholo said “women who live here want to share rooms with us; there is no privacy in these rooms. We all know women are trouble, next thing you know the men will be fighting over them. There will be no peace. Women who live here, they do not know their place”. The state of the women’s lives in the hostel is one that is complicated but interesting. My evidence suggests that mostly female house dwellers (women living outside the hostel), see women living in the hostel as a threat to their relationships for the following reasons: Some men living outside the hostel are known to pay female hostel dwellers to have sex with them (engaging in transactional sex); Male house dwellers are in this context often accused by their significant others of bringing pollution into their relationship (sex is associated with pollution: in the previous chapter I noted that hostel dwellers were stigmatized and seen as germs, sex in the same way is seen as direct way of transmitting such germs); Male house dwellers are often perceived by their wives as using family money to support female hostel dwellers. James, a Dual Dweller, said “my woman hates that I come to the hostel. She says the only reason I come to the hostel is so to sleep with the women in here. She does not understand that the hostel for me is a place where I come to entertain myself, to hang out with my friends. She does not believe me when I tell her that I do not come here for the women. Yes I sometimes hang out with some of the ladies, but I have never slept with them. We drink alcohol together, laugh with each other. That is all it is”. He made the point of clarifying that he does not spend his money on the female hostel dwellers; he only gives his wife money.

2. Female Hostel Dwellers

I interviewed four women who chose to remain anonymous, so I will refer to them as Ms Veronica and Ms Xhleni, Katie and Connie. These women regard themselves as female hostel dwellers; they were extremely interesting for various reasons, and helpful in my understanding of why a woman would choose to live in the hostel.

I interviewed Ms Veronica in her boyfriend’s room; a small room that they share with the boyfriend’s cousin and friend. The room is divided by old lockers, which were given to hostel

dwellers by the apartheid government; the lockers are used as dividers to create a sense of privacy for each roommate. Her boyfriend is a sales personnel for an Italian Bathroom supply Store, and she is a Paramedic. She tells me that her boyfriend is living at the hostel, because he is saving up money to buy a house. He has been living at the hostel for the last five years; noting that he was not always employed during the five years. There was a period where he was unemployed and she was taken care of him. She met him while visiting her uncle who lives at the hostel as well; it was her first visit to the hostel. She was a young impressionable woman from rural Limpopo who did not have any friends in the township, who came to visit her uncle. She had no idea that her uncle lived in such a dilapidated place. She told me that he always spoke of the hostel with such gusto, saying that it is an ideal place to live; so it never occurred to her that it would be a rundown place. Her boyfriend shared a room with her uncle and three other men at the time. He pursued her for three months, even though it was love at first sight for her she had to make sure he was a decent guy. She eventually gave in and they started dating. She tells me that she was petrified of dating a hostel dweller and ashamed of it. She later realised that he is a good guy that they share the same interest and values. The boyfriend is a Bapedi man, who grew up in rural Limpopo like she did. According to her these shared interests made him the perfect guy for her. Her uncle was not happy about this relationship in the beginning; she tells me that he said that the hostel is no place for women, especially his niece. He eventually warmed up to the relationship when he saw that the boyfriend was a good man, a man who was not chasing after every skirt that passed him by. She notes that the added bonus is that her boyfriend has a job so he can buy her uncle beer. The conversation I had with her revealed a couple of things: (1) she has a job, and can afford to live somewhere else but chooses not to. She has options; she is not living at the hostel out of desperation. She is choosing to live with the man she loves. (2) Love brought her to the hostel. Even though it was her uncle who introduced her to the hostel, she stayed for love. (3) She is aware of the stigma attached to the hostel and its residents. She also notes that she is aware that her presence in the hostel is not welcomed by many male hostel dwellers. She is aware of the space that she is in, and recognizes that she is not welcomed. She plays her role in the hostel very delicately, when she feels unsafe (this happens usually when she is alone) she does not freely move around the hostel. She tells me that even though she has been living in the hostel with her boyfriend for about a year and half, she is not that well

acquainted with the hostel. She further notes that she only ever uses two entrances to the hostel, entrances that she is familiar with, that are busy and people are always around.

Ms Xhleni is an older woman in her fifties, who is quite popular in the hostel. She breaks down the gender roles or barriers society has imposed in the hostel. She drinks a lot and loves being in the presence of male hostel dwellers. You will normally find her sitting with a group of men, loudly chatting and drinking her beer. She talks in a very masculine manner; the language that she uses is very masculine, she uses words like “*Di bra*” (my brother) “*Mfanaka*” (my boy) “*Heita*” (hello). She has no family at the hostel and lives alone in her room with other men as her roommates. She does not conform to the typical gender roles women are prescribed, especially in the hostel. In the hostel it is uncommon for a female hostel dweller to have a hostel room on her own, she has to rely on either a boyfriend or husband or a male family member to have access to a room. She is the only female in the hostel that has no kin ties or partner. Ms Xhleni breaks all these boundaries placed by men for women; she is not passive, nor is she domestic. Lee (2005:7) mentions women often have had to take on the role of breadwinner and heads of households, so because they are no longer regarded as being housewives or domestic, they are able to be seen differently in society, their position changes from housewives (a woman whose place is in the kitchen) to working women who are entering male working environments (Burgess 1994 & Cadwell 1996).

Ms Xhleni in her inebriated state made it very clear in the beginning of the interview that she does not want to be recorded. She required of me to have a pen and paper in hand, and not to ask any personal questions. I started off with asking her what she thought about the hostel and how she felt living in a space that is occupied by mostly men. That question made her extremely annoyed; she made it clear to me that it was none of my business and that my research has nothing to do with women in the hostel. This is despite having told her on a number of occasions what my research was about before the actual interview took place. She refused to answer any question that referred to her presence and any kind of relationship with men in the hostel. When I tried to move the conversation to her knowledge on the history of the hostel and its residents, she simply said that she is not qualified to answer those questions. She was extremely difficult to interview, yelling at certain times and being closed off to certain questions. It was not until I started asking her questions about the female councillor who oversees the services and

maintenance of the area block in which the hostel is located, that she started being chatty. She went on a tangent, swearing at the councillor, accusing her of corruption, it was at this point that the interview became fruitful.

Ms Xhleni tells me that she is from a rural area in Limpopo. She came to Pretoria looking for a job, and she had nowhere to stay when she arrived. She is very vague about how she actually got her hostel room, and where she stayed her first night in Mamelodi. She vaguely tells me that she heard about the hostel from people back home, and simply got a room from people. She admitted towards the end of the interview that the condition of the hostel is toxic for both women and children, and that hostel dwellers' health is at risk. She tells me that sanitation and water services are non-existent; the environment is not conducive to live in for both women and children. She mentions the councillor a couple of times. She rants and yells about what a crook the councillor is and how they (hostel dwellers) are living in filthy conditions, while the councillor plunders their money. My findings revealed that Ms Xhleni is staying at the hostel out of necessity, with no jobs and no income; she cannot afford to pay for other accommodation. She is aware of the stigma attached to living in the hostel. She says it does not bother her, what other people think of her. She has adapted well to hostel culture. Her daily routine is to hang out and drink beer with male hostel and house dwellers, she smokes with them and enjoys their company. *Malome* Chippa says that Ms Xhleni always looks put together, but never has any money, she expects people to buy her alcohol. It seems that she has learned to survive in the hostel by taking on masculine traits.

'Green eyed Katie', as I will call her, is an Afrikaans speaking former house dweller from Eersterust; she is now a hostel dweller. She fell in love with a man in the hostel three years ago. Katie says that she is a woman in love, and has finally met the love of her life. I spoke to other hostel dwellers, and they paint a very contradictory picture of their relationship, a picture of violence and abuse. I call her green eyed Katie because she is a red haired, green eyed coloured woman of German descent. She is known as "*Mlungu*" (white person) in the hostel. Her mother is coloured and her father is German. I met her on a Sunday afternoon in the hostel. The first time I met Katie she was in her room with her boyfriend and roommates, it was a Sunday afternoon.

The hostel on Sundays is very vibrant, noisy and filled with alcohol infused energy. Men and women are dressed to their nines, some in their church clothes, dressed in their Sunday best. The hostel on this particular Sunday was no different, radiating with alcohol infused dwellers who are singing along to the latest trendy music. My father having arranged the meeting with Katie asks one of his friends who is also a hostel dweller to accompany us to her room. When we arrive at her room we find a group of men, about five of them gambling. They are playing a game of cards known as “7 cards”; this type of gambling is widespread in the hostel. Some dwellers make a living through gambling. Some of the men in the group are disgruntled whilst others are cheery. I notice that most of the men are smoking cannabis; you are assaulted by the smell of the cannabis and refuse that is piling up a couple of feet from the door. We greet the men as we pass by, and my father enters the room first and proceeds to call Katie, informing her of our arrival. My father’s friend and I do not enter the room, because we do not know the dwellers that live in the hostel room, and it is considered rude and inappropriate to enter without being told to do so. My father is familiar with the people in the room, so he is allowed to enter. My position as not only a female but practically a stranger forbids me from entering this room. We wait for her and my father to come out of the room. He walks out first and she comes into view barefoot and a glass of alcohol in hand, her hair is unkempt and she looks haggard with her rumpled clothes. She greets us shyly. My father proceeds to do the introductions, he starts telling her that she and I will get along great because we are both light skinned women who can speak English. Katie smiles at that and proceeds to tell me that she will be right back, she just needs to put on some shoes. Still standing outside, my father tells her that she will find us under a tree, not far from her room; we will be sitting on a bench. She agrees to this. Whilst my father was making introductions I noticed a couple of things. My presence brought about an immediate interest and unease for the men who were gambling just outside Katie’s room. The moment they saw me, they stopped paying attention to the game, they gave curious glances and wanted to know who I was visiting. Katie was also apprehensive about the attention we were getting, I could see when we first got there how uncomfortable she was when she came out of her room. She really was not interested in talking to us in front of people. Seated on the bench under a tree, we waited for about 15 minutes for her to come out, only to find out that she was not coming at all. My father decides to find out what is taking her so long (I was apprehensive in the beginning about conducting the interview outside her room, but my father ignored my apprehension and said that we should sit outside when I interview her). Turns out I was right, because Katie refused to come outside and sit with us. We instead went and sat with her in her room while she enjoyed her beer. She organized chairs for us to sit on. She eventually tells me that she really was not in the mood to be outside

and be stared at by people in the hostel. She prefers for us to sit with her in the room, where she can comfortably enjoy her beer and not worry about how she looks. She made a point of telling me that she is usually very clean and smartly dressed, her worn look is as a result of a hectic previous day. She adds that she ended up not sleeping at all, and does not want people to see her look so tired. We start chatting about the research I am doing. Whilst we are chatting, beer in hand she points out to a dark skinned man, who is seated on a chair outside the door with a bible in hand. She makes a point of telling me that he is her man, and he refused for her to leave the room to be interviewed outside where people can see her. Most importantly she mentions that he is angry that I did not approach him to introduce myself and ask for permission to talk to Katie. I apologize for this error in judgment and proceed to approach her boyfriend to correct the situation. To my surprise when I approach him and start introducing myself, bible in hand he starts shaking his head as I try to apologize for my mistake. He simply dismisses me with the following words “I am good, you do not need to talk to me. I am ok”. He was not interested in anything I had to say. Katie and I continue talking; she tells me that she and her boyfriend met at a shebeen. She was going through a rough patch in her life, and needed to de-stress. She decided to come to Mamelodi with her friends to visit a shebeen. Where she met her boyfriend, they drank and danced together. That night she went home with him. She had no idea he was a hostel dweller. She tells me “I was drunk, so I had no idea where he was taking me. He brought me to the hostel. I only realized where I was when I was inside the hostel; my boyfriend assured me that I would be fine, that he would protect me. I do not know what it was about him, but I believed him when he told me that he would protect me. We went to his room, where I found other men there. I was so scared, my first instinct was to run, and I thought that these men were going to hurt me. My boyfriend told me that nothing was going to happen to me that he would take care of me. We ended up sleeping together. He ensured that we had some privacy that first night by making a makeshift curtain with bedding, so no other men were invading our privacy. He held my hand the entire night, I felt safe. He took care of me that night. When I woke up the next day, we had breakfast and a beer, and he walked me home to Eersterus. I heard so many stories about the hostel. I was told it was dangerous and chaotic, the men were criminals and *vuil* (filthy). I will admit that I too felt the same way, but that was before I met my boyfriend. That morning after our encounter, he walked me home, and told me that he would fetch me later. I went back to the hostel again and have been staying here since then. I have been with him for about three years now and he has made me extremely happy. He buys me beer; we drink together and are happy”.

Katie paints a picture of beer and bliss, but other male hostel dwellers say she is living in a toxic environment. *Malome* Chipipa and *Malome* Moholo told me that the boyfriend is quite abusive. According to them, he has beaten her on many occasions for various things, including allegedly speaking to some male hostel dwellers. Katie on the other hand speaks of her boyfriend as a man who loves her dearly, who reads the bible, who buys her everything she wants and needs. She says that he treats her like a queen. She spoke about previously being in an abusive relationship with a man she stayed with in Eersterust. They lived at her parent's house, in one of the back rooms. She says she was miserable and was contemplating committing suicide, that things in her previous relationship were toxic. Katie mentions that if she had not left that life, she would be dead by now. My findings revealed that love is what brought her to the hostel, she has accommodation options in the form of her parents' house but she chooses to stay with him at the hostel. She admits that the hostel is not a safe space and that she is scared. She is aware that women are not welcomed in the hostel. She tells me that she always makes sure that when she is in the hostel to keep to herself, to never be alone with other male hostel dwellers. Katie notes that she always ensures that when her boyfriend leaves to hustle (*o ya gereza*), she also leaves to go visits her parents until he returns. She is unemployed and relies on her family for financial support; she receives enough money to support her and her boyfriend. She is aware of the stigma surrounding the hostel and its residents. She says that she is not embarrassed about living in the hostel anymore and that in actual fact people are always surprised to hear that she is a hostel dweller because she is so beautiful.

Connie is also a female hostel dweller; she is a former house dweller who is dating a hostel resident. They are living together in his hostel room, along with his five of his roommates. She met her boyfriend in 2016; they too met at a shebeen, just outside the hostel. She had her eye on him at the shebeen, she thought he was handsome. He offered to buy her beer, she accepted. She was not looking for a serious relationship; she just wanted to have fun. They started dating in 2016, she was aware that he is a hostel dweller. She initially refused to visit him at the hostel, but later was forced to go and visit him. She never stayed at the hostel; she only visited him for a couple of hours and went home. She says that she was scared of the hostel, she spoke of the perceptions she had of the place. That it was dangerous, rowdy and unsafe to live in. It was until she was kicked out of her family home by her uncle, as an unemployed woman who had nowhere to go; her situation forced her to come to stay with her boyfriend at the hostel. She says that it

was tough at first: her boyfriend shared a room with five other men, there is no privacy. Her boyfriend decided to make a makeshift curtain to divide their sleeping area from the other roommates, as an attempt to get privacy. Connie has been living at the hostel since 2016, she says she hates living at the hostel, but has nowhere to go. She is still unemployed and relies on her boyfriend, who works as a security guard. Connie notes that the hostel is a harsh environment, hostel men are not accepting of women who live there. According to her she is a hindrance to them. She is a female hostel dweller who enjoys drinking and smoking, and she believes that adds to the way in which male hostel dwellers perceive and stigmatize the women in the hostel. She says that living at the hostel is less to do with love and more about surviving.

3. “The Hostel Gives Us Life”: Surviving in the hostel

Female hostel dwellers are becoming more and more common than before. Through the years hostels have become popular living spaces for women. Many of the women I spoke to confirmed to that they no longer feel embarrassed about living in the hostel. According to them they have nothing to be ashamed of. The hostel gives female hostel dwellers ‘life’ in the following way: it is a space where women, who are mostly in romantic relationships with men, choose to make their home. They are there because of love. Some are independent women, who make their own money; they do not rely on their partners for money. Whilst others are unemployed women in romantic relationships with hostel dwellers and rely on them for money. Love is a central part of them being there at the hostel, they are building a life with their partner. These women are not sex workers or engaging in sex for money exchange; they are in the hostel for the pure purpose of a romantic relationship with a hostel dweller.

They chose to live in the hostel with their significant other because of love, according to them loving these hostel dwellers means dealing with the fact that they live in the hostel, and also dealing with the stigma that comes with the hostel. These women all share a commonality, love; they were all brought to the hostel by love. They recognize that the hostel is a dilapidated, poorly maintained place. They are aware of the stigma around the hostel and its dwellers. They too admit that at one point they were of the opinion that the hostel is a dangerous, filthy and sleazy place. They admit that they contributed to painting the hostel in a negative light. That has changed though since meeting their significant others who are hostel dwellers, and they too consider themselves hostel dwellers.

One of my research participants tells me that the men in the hostel often regard them as dirty and homeless women, because they chose to live at the hostel. The women I spoke to mention that some men see them as undignified and inferior, because they live in the hostel. These female hostel dwellers are aware of the dangerous reputation the hostel has, and have found ways to stay away from the danger. They do this by making sure that they do not walk alone in the hostel, to always be accompanied by someone; to never use an entrance they are not familiar with; to not get too friendly with other hostel dwellers, especially other men. One female hostel resident goes so far as to go visit her family when her boyfriend goes to work, so that she is not left alone in the room with the other roommates. Katie told me during an unstructured interview that she does not feel safe and comfortable being alone at the hostel, so she always goes home when her boyfriend is away and comes back when he returns from hustling. Another female hostel dweller tells me that she locks herself in the room when her boyfriend is at work, that way she feels safe and comfortable. She notes that when you live at the hostel, the key is to not trust anyone, to make sure that you do not pay attention to other men. She says that men at the hostel will easily prey on you if you are too social with them, so to protect yourself and your relationship you have to keep away from male hostel dwellers. In the previous chapter I spoke about the young woman who accused male hostel dwellers of raping her. She was walking around naked in the street, after she was allegedly raped, and was ridiculed by male hostel dwellers who called her all sorts of degrading names. I find this very interesting that in this patriarchal space, these women are forced to stay away from men. To not engage socially with other men; even though most of them have been brought to the hostel by their male partners. It speaks to how men essentially control this space in the hostel. It also speaks to the fact that women in this space have little agency, because they are not able to move around freely and are restricted, this also makes reference to the clothing women have to wear in this space. As a woman you are made to feel like you should wear clothes that cover your entire body; you should not wear revealing clothes, no shorts, no skirts and no showing of cleavage. This lack of clothing is seen as being disrespectful, and you are regarded as a loose woman. I also noticed that I too had to dress very respectfully in the hostel; I had to make sure that I covered up my body. On my part this was done strategically, so that the male hostel dwellers can see me as a respectful young woman. A woman who is at the hostel for research purposes, I had to dress in way as to not to offend some hostel dwellers.

Especially male hostel dwellers who loathe the presence of women in the hostel, I had to dress to their liking, and avoid being a target for sexual advances.

On the other hand, some women who live in the hostel demonstrate agency in other, more subtle ways. The hostel can also act as a space where women can challenge patriarchy. Even though female hostel dwellers might not be treated equally to male hostel dwellers, they have found a way to have agency in this space. Some women are using the agency they have (which would be choosing to live in the hostel, with their partners regardless of it being a male dominated space) to push back against patriarchy. By pushing back against this patriarchal stance, they are asserting their mark in the hostel space. Some female hostel dwellers are single hostel residents, they are living in this space without a male partner, no attachments, no romantic relationship. They are single women who are using the hostel as an avenue to sell sex to survive. The fact that they are engaging in sex for money exchange as a way of surviving, speaks volumes, because they are redefining the meaning of the hostel space by changing its use. The hostel was and still is a space where men lived whilst looking for jobs or already employed. It represents masculine survival. Women, specifically these women who engage in sex for money, are changing the space by polluting it with sex. It is replacing a space associated with hard work with pleasures of the body (sex) and as such demeaning the hostel in the eyes of many men.

During my field work I encountered a lot of interesting situations, I met many interesting people. Two of the people I met were women, interviewing them was interesting and fun. These two women are close friends, and are dating male hostel dwellers. Phumla and Lebo are unemployed former house dwellers, who engage in transactional sex in the hostel. It is known as *Mavuso* (upliftment) in the township. *Mavuso* is a sex for money exchange relationship, where the woman is compensated with cash after sleeping with a man. It is not a romantic relationship and it is not exclusive. You can engage in *Mavuso* with multiple men. Sex is not the only thing involved in a *Mavuso*, washing laundry and dishes or cleaning can also be part of the agreement. The men in this type of relationship are seen as uplifting the women by giving them money; the men are seen as helping the women survive. Phumla and Lebo never admitted to engaging in sex for money exchange, nor did they mention anything about receiving money from men. This information was given to me by *Malome* Chippa, my father and *Malome* Moholo. The three men said that Phumla and Lebo are involved in *Mavuso* relationships with a couple of male hostel

dwellers they know. The two ladies instead told me that the hostel allows them to be themselves, they are free. They also said something that I found very interesting and that is “*hostele ya re phedisa*” what this basically translates to is “the hostel gives us life”. The hostel is thus an avenue for their survival. Kea is a former house dweller who is now a female hostel dweller. I spoke to her while she was getting her hair braided at the hostel. We were laughing and joking about relationships, while drinking our cold drink. I asked her why she started living at the hostel. She responded by saying that her mother kicked her out. I could tell that it was a sensitive issue, so I opted not to pry further. She eventually tells me that she is unemployed and recently started dating a male hostel dweller. She mentions that she relies on him for financial assistance; he works at Ford Motor Company. Kea admits that she is able to survive in the hostel through the financial assistance of the man she is dating, according to her, he spoils her immensely. She describes her relationship with him as “someone I am currently seeing”; she does not refer to him as her boyfriend. The male hostel dwellers I spoke to, say that Kea is sleeping around on this guy while he is at work. She never admitted to sleeping around or engaging in sex for money exchange with anyone.

There is a clear distinction that is made by Lebo, Phumla and Kea, on some level, they regard themselves as workers. The hostel in many ways is seen as a place for workers, whatever the job description may be it remains a place where people come to seek employment. This goes back to the migrant labour system, where hostels were specifically built for workers. The fact that these women say that the “hostel gives them life”; in many ways they are seeing the hostel as a place of employment. It is where they conduct their business (transactional sex), and where they make their money. One could argue that, if morality is taken out of the equation, what these female hostel dwellers are doing is no different than the many male hostel dwellers who own spaza shops, who gamble at the hostel, who sell drugs at the hostel. They too are using this space to make money; the hostel also is a place that gives them life, because they are able to survive on the money made in the hostel. Though it can be argued that the two activities are different in that the male activities are part of the construction of masculinities in the hostel; which are legitimized by the patriarchal system that is promoted in the hostel. Whereas the women who make a living at the hostel, are doing so at the mercy of men, who control the space. Who legitimize their stay in the hostel? It is through male hostel dwellers that women are able to “live”. It is the men in the hostel who give meaning to the work the women do in the hostel.

Everything that women do in the hostel is in relation to the relationship with male hostel dwellers.

It is no surprise that these women are conscious of their role and space within the hostel, they are using what they are good at to survive and provide for themselves. So it not only becomes 'survival sex' but it is also transactional sex, in that both parties 'benefit' from this process. The work of Janet Wojcicki (2002) can help in placing this in comparison with similar work on sex work in South Africa. She writes about women in two townships (Hammanskraal and Soweto), and how they do not self-identify with being prostitutes or commercial sex workers but rather consider themselves as survival sex workers (Wojcicki 2002:267). These women are having sex with men for their survival, it is out of desperation. And the community in these townships also does not see them as commercial sex workers. She argues that there is a high increase in violence against women who are involved in survival sex in township taverns (Wojcicki 2002:267). Wojcicki states that when a woman accepts a beer from a man, she is obliged to exchange sex because she "drank his money" (Wojcicki 2002:268). Women who work as sex workers or exchange sex for money in informal contexts experience high levels of violence in their working lives. This violence is consistent with high levels of rape and assaults women in general experience in South Africa (2002:268). She focuses on "the socio-cultural attitudes toward sexual exchange that implicitly condone violence against women under certain conditions" (Wojcicki 2002:268). The term "survival sex highlights the survival and economic component that drives women to engage in sex for money exchange" (Wojcicki 2002:267); She notes that there is a difference between commercial sex workers and survival sex workers; the relationship with their clients is different, the former are seen as a "*Magosha*" prostitutes, someone whose profession is to sell sex whereas the latter do not self-identify as prostitutes and clearly state that they have sex for money because they are trying to survive (Wojcicki 2002:268).

4. Relationships between Male Dwellers and Female Hostel Dwellers

The relationship between male (house and hostel) dwellers and female hostel dwellers is fascinating in various ways. I first want to note that the type of relationships discussed here are of a sexual nature. When I spoke to male dwellers about the existence of platonic relationships between female hostel dwellers and male dwellers, they said no. I was told that the women who reside in the hostel, those who do not engage in sexual relations for money were in committed

relationships and were smart enough to not make friends with male hostel dwellers. They usually stayed away from them.

The male dwellers in the township have a provisional and undefined relationship with female house dwellers. This uncertainty of the relationship is made evident from the conversations I have had with both hostel and house dwellers, with how they describe the women in the hostel. *Malome* Chipipa said that relationships with the women in the hostel do not require labels, because they are short term relationships and that many men are desperate for a companion. Aubrey equates the relationship with female hostel dwellers to that of a 'situationship'. He says that a 'situationship' is the type of relationship that depends on the situation; it is not clearly defined, and has no commitments. It is convenient and usually results out of desperation. Thato described the relationship between female dwellers and male dwellers as a *Mavuso* type relationship; when the two people agree to help each other out, without emotional expectation or romantic ties but a financial pay-out at the end. The dwellers I spoke to all had similar things to say, they all agreed that the relationship with a female hostel dweller is temporary. It does not have a label, money is involved and most importantly no one needs to know that you are sleeping with her. *Malome* Chipipa and *Malome* Moholo told me about an incident that occurred, of a woman who had just returned to the hostel after months of drug rehab. According to them the young woman who was using drugs (*nyaope*) came back from rehab to the hostel to visit her friends. She was dressed in her best, glowing in a beautiful dress, wearing makeup. She looked healthy and happy, having gained weight while at rehab. She was now sober and had even gotten some colour on her, a contrasting image of when she was using drugs and selling her body to survive; where she was extremely thin, unhygienic, wearing dirty clothes and had chapped, black lips as a result of the drug use, looking older than her actual age. Some of the men at the hostel started cat calling, using words like "*baby*", "*sweetheart*" and "*my love*" some were even whistling at her as she passed them by. She simply just looked at them and said "now that I am curvy you want me, leave me alone".

Malome Moholo notes that male hostel dwellers will insult women during the day when they are in the company of their friends, and at night they will whisper sweet words to these same women in their rooms while paying them for sex. He further tells me a story of how these women will knock on the window of the hostel dweller they want to see, that is their signal to one another,

that indeed she has arrived to take care of business. *Malome* Moholo says that both male house and hostel dwellers who insult women who engage in transactional sex are the men who actually enjoy sleeping with them. According to him some of them have even fathered children with some of these women.

Male hostel dwellers' perspectives of female hostel dwellers can also be that of frustration, anger and disgust. The women in this context are regarded as undignified, loose women with no morals and values, who do not respect 'culture'. Male hostel dwellers see female hostel dwellers as lazy, and not wife material. Female hostel dwellers are seen as destroying the hostel, they are the cause of chaos and distrust amongst male hostel dwellers. Male hostel dwellers are said to focus instead on whom they are sleeping with next, interchanging these women. The older hostel dwellers I spoke to said that "these young men need to focus more on being productive; they must send money back home. Instead of buying alcohol for loose women, who do not respect the hostel at all" They use words like "these women are a disgrace, no respect for themselves, they are not wife material".

My findings revealed that money and intimate relationships go hand in hand, if the male dwellers do not have money, they will not get the woman. Many of the hostel dwellers I spoke to said that because they are employed, it is easy for them to attract woman. One of my informants said that "women want a man to take care of her, and that is what they get from us". This statement is implying that male house dwellers are stingy with their money, either because they refuse to give women money, or because they are supposedly unemployed thus cannot give the women money.

I interviewed two young women who live outside the hostel; they are in their early twenties. I asked them if they would pursue a romantic relationship with a hostel dweller. Both of them said yes they would. Their reasons are that hostel dwellers are employed; they offer more stability than male house dwellers. They mentioned that they know that they will be taken care of by a hostel man, even though male house dwellers will laugh at them for dating a hostel dweller (a naïve Bapedi man), they do not mind at all. I asked them why they would be laughed at, they replied that hostel dwellers are mostly undermined and looked down upon by house dwellers. Being a hostel dweller and being born in a rural area, as I argued in a previous chapter, carries a lot of stigma in the community. Female house dwellers are also using male hostel dwellers to survive, they are using them for their money and in return the men get sex. Financial stability is

incredibly important for both female hostel and house dwellers. The hostel can provide that, through engaging in relationships with male hostel dwellers. Women openly talk about how the hostel is a place that has become their source of income, where they can make their own money.

I interviewed a friend of my father's, *Malome* Moholo who is a hostel dweller. I asked him how he approaches women as a hostel dweller. Whether he has ever been with a female hostel dweller or not? His response was that he has never dated or slept with female hostel dwellers. He only ever dates female house dwellers, his approach to meeting a woman is to lie to her. When he first meets a woman, he never discloses that he lives in a hostel, because he is already aware of how some house dwellers stigmatize them. He will tell the woman that he is renting a backroom. To avoid the woman from coming to visit him, he tells her that the landlord is very strict about who comes in and out of the house. He always arranges to meet them in town for a date, and he always opts to go to their place rather than them coming to visit him. I asked him if he ever feels guilty about lying to female house dwellers. His reply was that sometimes he does feel guilty about lying to them. He says that the only option he would have is to date female hostel dwellers, and that to him is not an option. He would never be caught dating or sleeping with a female hostel dweller. To him they represent the destruction and danger of living in the hostel. They are women who do not represent the hostel well; they instead represent the sickness and dirtiness that is often associated with hostel dwellers. This is the same he says with female house dwellers who engage in sex for money exchange with hostel dwellers. He says that he does not want to pay any woman for sex. According to him, female hostel dwellers represent the loose morals and lack of respect that is destroying South Africa today. He says that women who engage in sex for money exchange relationships often are carriers of diseases, they are reckless and dangerous. He says "you will more likely contract a disease from them". For that reason he stays away from female hostel dwellers. He rather opts dating without telling female house dwellers that he is a hostel dweller, and without bringing them anywhere near the hostel. He admits though that this plan of his never lasts, because eventually the lies are discovered. The ethnographic evidence tells us that women do not mind dating men who live in the hostel; Even though male hostel dwellers often disguise the fact that they live in there. This is a contradiction to the previous chapter where some male hostel dwellers said that they are proud of living in the hostel, because the hostel makes them strong and sexy real men. This tells us that hostel life dynamics are complicated, complex and ever changing and confusing especially when sex is involved.

In the previous chapter I noted that male hostel dwellers are able to use the stigma of the hostel to their advantage by dating female house dwellers. I also noted earlier in this chapter that some women are attracted to male hostel dwellers because they perceive them as having money. In the next chapter I will further explain the ways in which men use the hostel to pursue relationship. *Malome* Moholo shies away from using the hostel as a pick up strategy; he does not want to be known as a hostel dweller. Unlike some hostel dwellers in the previous chapter who use the stigma attached to the hostel as a way to approach romantic relationships. The different sexual strategies that are used here is that some male hostel dwellers use the stigma of the hostel; the strongness and Africaness they associate with the hostel to pick up women. While hostel dwellers like *Malome* Moholo avoid being associated with the hostel, they lie about being hostel dwellers to pick up women, because they are aware of the stigma that surrounds the hostel and its residents.

Malome Moholo is not the only hostel dweller who has taken this strategy of lying to female house dwellers, in an effort to pursue them. Tumelo (Real Name) has taken this approach of meeting women too. He says that he does not want to date a female hostel dweller. He believes that female house dwellers who engage in sex for money exchange relationships are very dangerous. According to him they are the type of women who will do anything for money. He states that their desperation for money makes them dangerous, and untrustworthy. Tumelo says if he has to date female hostel dwellers or female house dwellers who engage in sex for money, then he might as well date a prostitute. Tumelo is *Malome* Chippa's nephew, nicknamed "sista" by his family. He was given the nickname back home in Limpopo by his family, because he was secretly using his sister's beauty products. He still continues to use female beauty products to this day. Tumelo is in his early twenties, and he moved to the hostel in 2015. As a young man who was new to the township, a man who was pursuing women, he would lie to them about where he lives. He would tell them that he lives with his brother, and they are renting a room in someone's backyard. He says that he never pursues women in close proximity to the hostel. Though there was an incident I am told by his Uncle where he pursued a young woman who happened to be his Uncle's daughter's friend.

"My daughter's friend had no idea that Tumelo lived in the hostel, he lied to her about where he was staying. My daughter came here to the hostel one day to see me; she was accompanied by her

friend. I had no idea my daughter's friend and Tumelo knew each other, let alone were in a relationship. Tumelo walks in the room carrying 12, 5 kg maize meal on his shoulder, as he reaches the centre of the room, to his shock finds the young lady he has been involved with talking to my daughter and I. He was so shocked and scared by her presence; he immediately dropped the maize meal on the floor and bolted out of the room without saying a word. It was the funniest thing I have ever seen, just downright hilarious, he was nowhere to be seen the whole day, he only came back later that night.”

When his Uncle tells this story, he always laughs until tears are running down his face; he says the story never gets old. I asked them what the young lady did when Tumelo bolted out of the room; I am told that she was totally surprised to see him and when she was told by them that he actually lives in the hostel, she was shocked and angry to have been lied to. *Malome* Chippa says that the young lady never came back to the hostel again after that incident. Tumelo says that he lied out of necessity; he just wants to have a good time. He is not interested in sleeping with female hostel dwellers, and he is also not interested in sleeping with female house dwellers who engage in sex for money exchange with male hostel dwellers. For Tumelo, these two women are the same type of women, desperate, dangerous and you are most likely to get some disease by sleeping with them.

However, the ethnographic evidence tells a seemingly contradictory side to this complex web of sexual networks. Some female house dwellers I spoke to say that they find hostel dwellers appealing, because they are employed and are more likely to give them money and stability. They are more interested in their pockets and what they offer financially, it is a mutual transaction that takes place. In comparison to some of the women I interviewed in the hostel, these women are not interested in love. As one of the female house dwellers I spoke to said “I do not eat love, love does not pay the bills and buy groceries. I need a man to give me money, a man who is going to make my life easier”. Female hostel dwellers who engage in sex for money are also seen by hostel dwellers as only wanting to be with them to make their lives easier.

Surviving in the hostel for women occurs in two ways: either you are involved in a romantic financially beneficial relationship with a male hostel dweller, or you sell sex in the hostel in the form of *Mavuso*. What is interesting with this research is that male hostel residents, engaging in

Mavuso do not openly admit to doing so; they are secretive about it. They often publicly refer to women they are secretly sleeping with as loose women or *Magosha*.

Male hostel dwellers in general see the presence of women in the hostel as an insult to hostel life. Hostel dwellers like *Malome* Chippa, *Malome* Moholo, *Ntate* Touch and others see female hostel dwellers as lazy women who are insulting hardworking, honest living people. The image that is constructed for female hostel dwellers is degrading and demeaning, the identity that both hostel and house dwellers construct for female hostel dwellers is contrary to how these women self-identify. For women like Lebo, Phumla and Kea they see themselves as workers, living in a space that offers them two things: Firstly, freedom, they are free to be and do whatever they want. They are able to be themselves without the constraints that the outside world gives them. Secondly, they are able to work, to survive, to make money in this space for themselves. The hostel is seen as an avenue for them to survive, to live.

The male hostel dwellers do not see the presence of female hostel dwellers who engage in *Mavuso* as a form of work. They say that these women need to find proper jobs, make an honest living and earn money through the ‘right’ channels. They noted that these women are polluting the hostel with their immoral behaviour, and taking away the dignity and the respect that the hostel use to have. They are essentially saying that the demise of the hostel (which has always been exclusively for men, a representation of a male hard work, their masculinity) is as a result of women coming in and polluting it with their behaviour. The hostel no longer represents hard work, respect and dignity; it instead embodies frustration, chaos, loose morals and sickness.

5. Stigma

House dwellers associate the hostel with various unsavoriness, they are labelled as undignified human beings, to dangerous, to mentally ill, homelessness. What I mean by this is that the image of the hostel becomes the image that is thrust upon female hostel dwellers, painting them in an ugly light by the community.

Female hostel dwellers are thus stigmatized for various reasons, from ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the hostel simultaneously. Some of the community members (house dwellers) I spoke to said that female hostel dwellers are the disease that their loved ones are dying from. This comparison of female hostel dwellers to diseases is making reference to two things: firstly the transactional

relationship that occurs, where their loved ones become penniless, because most of their salaries go to female hostel dwellers in exchange for sex; secondly it refers to the potential sexual transmitted diseases male house dwellers can contract by engaging in sexual relations with female hostel dwellers. Lizzie, a house dweller who owns a shebeen said the following: “*Weistse banyanna bale* (those girls) who live in the hostel do not love themselves, some of them do not even bath. Where are you going to get water at the hostel in anyway? These women are shameless; they are bringing diseases from that place. I see them here drinking beer, laughing with these men. The men have no idea what they are getting themselves into”.

On multiple occasions during my research, I heard female house dwellers refer to female hostel dwellers as thieves. This label stems from female house dwellers feeling that female hostel dwellers are stealing money from ‘their’ men, stealing their livelihood and breaking apart stable relationships, thus female hostel dwellers pose a threat to these stable relationships. It is important that I make a distinction between female hostel dwellers that are brought to the hostel because their significant other is a hostel dweller. And those women who are brought to the hostel because they have nowhere else to go, who are unemployed and thus engage in transactional sex as a means to survive. It is important to note that female house dwellers also engage in transactional sex with male hostel dwellers, male hostel dwellers actually brag about the ability they have to steal the women of male house dwellers. As I argued in chapter two that hostel dwellers assert their power in the community by boasting about the fact that they can get female house dwellers.

“Hostels are sites of resistance; the movement of women into hostels spaces comes into sight as a powerful transgressive spatial act that challenges patriarchal codings of the South African landscape” (Elder 2003:16).

Conclusion

The men in the hostel see women in the hostel as a reason for the chaos in a similar way as house dwellers blame hostel residents for the social disharmony in Mamelodi at large.

Female hostel dwellers recognize that they are living in a space where they are not welcomed. They are aware that they are stigmatized. The hostel for women serves to facilitate a variety of different kinds of relationships with different men, and in this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that all the actors in this social drama have different motivations for their actions. The hostel is the place where women are engaging with men for various reasons either as romantic partners or sex for money exchange relationships. Female hostel dwellers are using the hostel space for various ways to survive. Their presence in the hostel has created a disruption in the lives of male hostel dwellers and they are frustrated, because they see the presence of female hostel dwellers in the hostel as no longer embodying the hard honest work that the hostel use to represent.

CHAPTER FIVE

Survival Strategies

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued the various ways in which female hostel dwellers are using the hostel space. I analyzed their methods of surviving in the hostel; their survival strategies. This chapter looks at the various economic processes that are occurring in the hostel, that help hostel dwellers survive.

The socio economic conditions for black people recently in South Africa have been extremely poor. Unemployment is increasing at an alarming rate and this is exacerbated by the global recession. The disproportionate growth in wealth in the country has led to an unequal society, where levels of inequality are at an all-time high and crime is scourging the streets of South Africa. All these factors have given rise to different ways in which black people, specifically hostel residents are surviving. It has given them the ability to be creative in order to make a living. It is the lifelong conditions of extreme poverty and a society rooted in unemployment that has given rise to creative means of make a living. There seems to be an understanding amongst Mamelodi hostel dwellers that they cannot and will not own the economy; the promise of financial emancipation, that would bring wealth into their homes, will never come true. Instead the hostel dwellers have come to the realisation that they are just labourers who have been forgotten, and left to fend for themselves, and as a result now live in an unequal society. This has led to them creating their own informal economy, an economy they are in charge of and make money from.

Slavery, Colonisation and Apartheid are historical processes that were successful in creating a white dominated economy, meaning that the economy was and remains owned by white people. Whites benefitted from an economy that owned black labour. The effects of this disproportionate access to wealth is still seen today in a democratic South Africa, where black people are still largely excluded from the economy and their socio-economic conditions are dire, poverty levels and unemployment is high and crime is on the rise.

This chapter analyzes the economic as well as the emotional survival strategies of hostel dwellers; it notes the various strategies they have developed in order to survive in the hostel. The hostel in many ways becomes an avenue where monetary transactions occur. The variety of economic activities occurring in the hostel is fascinating because these activities intermingle with each other. For instance someone who owns a spaza shop (small tuck shop) can also be a loan shark, who is an avid gambler. There are various economic activities that occur in the hostel, ranging from people who sell food; women who engage in sex for money; some hostel dwellers are selling drugs (mainly dagga and nyaope); some gamble full time; while others are loan sharks; then there are those who own spaza shops; and lastly hostel dwellers who are formal workers (these are people who work a 9 to 5 job), these are people working in the formal economy as security guards, cleaners, gardeners and waiters outside the hostel.

All these economic activities are how hostel dwellers try to make money for themselves. Money is central to all these economic activities that occur in the hostel; it is through money they are able to pursue romantic relationships with female house dwellers, they are able to send money home, they are able to save money by staying at the hostel rent free.

2. Survival Strategies

Carol B. Stack described survival strategy as a form of active action where people use resources to achieve goals and cope with everyday life (Stack cited in Harper & Row, 1974). She further notes that the reaction to joblessness by many men and women can result in families depending on welfare grants to survive (Stack cited in Harper & Row 1974). This might make men feel emasculated if they were the breadwinner, and this can lead to the breaking of families as a consequence (Stack cited in Harper & Row 1974). However there is a close kinship that results between women and men when a crisis like joblessness damages the family, where kin ends up living together, relying on each other to survive (Stack cited in Harper & Row 1974). This is how some hostel dwellers cope with being unemployed, they live with their kin in the hostel as a form of survival. Kin ties make it easier for hostel dwellers to help and support each other. You will find a group of 6 men living together in a hostel room, all related to each other as brothers, cousins, nephews. In some cases they live with neighbours from back home in the rural areas that are considered part of the kin. The neighbour has to meet two important criteria's in order to live with the kin: first, you have to be from the same area as the kin (area is community or

neighbourhood); the second is you have to be of the same ethnic group (Pedi, Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa etc.). These two things are imperative if you want to room with most hostel dwellers. They do not just accept anyone in their living spaces, the survival of the group is depended on the relationships each hostel dwellers has with one another.

Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama recently wrote in her book on hostels in Durban, that the high level of unemployment in urban areas is forcing both male and female hostel dwellers to collectively utilise various forms of capital to complement their incomes in the face of collapsing livelihoods. For instance the three people I will write about have all found ways to capitalize on the hostel environment in order to make a living. It shows that these dwellers are using the hostel specifically as an avenue to make money and surviving, despite the hostel's harsh reputation.

Malome Chippa is one of the first people that I interviewed in the hostel; he is a close friend of my father and a key informant. He is a hostel dweller who owns a spaza shop inside the hostel. He has had several different jobs. He is known in the hostels as a jack of all trades. *Malome* Chippa has worked as a security guard, cleaner, construction worker, baker, and he is also a member of the Community Police Forum. He currently works for the Mamelodi Municipality as a street cleaner; he still runs the spaza shop as a side business. He has hired his nephew who is also a hostel dweller to look after the shop while he works. *Malome* Chippa says his current job is temporary; he is just trying to supplement his money. According to him, at heart he is a businessman. He moonlights as a loan shark for both hostel and house dwellers, and he makes quite a profit from it. He is also an avid gambler, he enjoys playing the lottery and playing "*Fahfee/Mochina*" (it is a local form of gambling, he gambles everyday alongside my father and many other hostel dwellers). Chippa is a nickname he got from playing soccer back home in a rural area called Senwabarwana (Bochum) in Limpopo. Named Darius Keetse by his parents who were raising nine children, four boys and five girls, his parents raised them with one income, where the father was the breadwinner. His father was a migrant worker, because his father travelled for work his mother was the primary care giver for him and his siblings. He tells me that he had a wonderful and colourful childhood. He further notes that he comes from a household of hardworking people; where the younger siblings, who happen to be all male, were taught to cook from a young age because the older siblings had to go to work. His parents were very strict; his family is very traditional and love their Bapedi culture. He went to a primary school near his home, where he tells me that during school breaks he would go home and eat. His high school was located near his home as well, where he was taught in his home language of Sepedi. He tells

me that English is a language he only started speaking when he left home to look for a job; he first spoke it at his place of employment in Pretoria. *Malome* Chippa tells me that growing up in a rural area was a great learning experience for him. It taught him to be resourceful; he says “many times you have to make the best out of the little you have, this necessitates you to be creative, to survive with the little that you have”. According to *Malome* Chippa, he had to learn to be happy and survive with what he received, because not only did his family not have a lot, but he had to share with his siblings. *Malome* Chippa tells me that he was not a good student, school was not his favourite thing, but he knew he had to go to school to have a better life. After high school he worked around the Limpopo area, getting temp jobs here and there, until an opportunity arose where he could go to Pretoria for a job. In 1992 he arrived in Mamelodi Township where he stayed with his brother who was living at the hostel. His brother had saved up some money and was now moving out of the hostel to rent a backroom in Mamelodi West. The brother was then able to secure his old hostel room for Chippa to stay in, while Chippa looked for a job. *Malome* Chippa’s brother moved out, leaving Chippa at the hostel with some relatives who were already living at the hostel. He tells me that his roommates were his relatives as well as people he knew from back home in Bochum. Hostel dwellers, as previously mentioned, prefer to have roommates who are either family or people who are of the same ethnic group, or from the same neighbourhood. According to *Malome* Chippa it makes it more comfortable and easier to live together in such close quarters; it is much easier to trust each other when you know each other’s backgrounds. Eventually *Malome* Chippa found a job as a baker for a well-known Bakery, with the income he made at the bakery he was able to travel back and forth home. During his trips back home, he met his wife, who he married after a couple of years of dating. He tells me that it was important for him to marry a woman who is from the rural areas. According to him rural women are more family orientated and have traditional values, compared to township (urban) women who are only after a man’s money. He has two daughters and one son with his wife and they live in Limpopo while he is based in Pretoria working. After his Bakery job, he worked as a construction worker, with his income he was able to start saving money to build a house for his family.

Malome Chippa points out that hostel dwellers are people who are hustlers; the hostel environment forces them to become hustlers. Hostel dwellers are forever changing jobs and finding different ways to make ends meet. He says that “today you can be a security guard, and tomorrow you are a gardener or construction worker”. According to him the life of a hostel dweller is unpredictable, and as such you have to save money otherwise you will die of hunger.

This is the reason why he was able to use the money he saved up to open up a spaza shop after his construction job contract ended. He opened a spaza shop as result of unemployment, but also because he noticed that hostel dwellers opt to spend less money on groceries and food. Spaza shops are popular in townships, they became a necessity when community members in townships could not afford to travel and buy groceries at shopping malls. *Malome* Chippa is using this business as a form of income, where he sells from his home; the hostel being his home. His spaza sells basic essentials to hostel dwellers, it is cheaper and hostel dwellers cannot afford to buy at shopping malls. Also the hostel does not have electricity and hostel dwellers do not have refrigerators, they buy food in small quantities to avoid food getting spoiled. His spaza shop has benefitted him immensely, because it enabled him to become a *Mashonisa* (moneylender). He tells me that when he opened up his shop, hostel dwellers started coming to borrow money from him because they assumed he had money. According to him he became a loan shark by mistake. This all started with *Malome* Chippa lending money to a friend, this then resulted in other hostel dwellers coming to him to borrow money. This then snowballed into a business of its own, even dwellers outside the spaza shop (hostel) came to him. *Malome* Chippa loans money only to people he knows; initially only hostel dwellers were his clientele, because he not only knew where they lived, but they were his regular customers at the shop. Now his clientele has expanded and it includes house dwellers. These house dwellers are friends of hostel dwellers and have also become his regular customers, because they spend most of their time in the hostel. His conditions are that the money he lends you comes back with a 50% interest. He only lends money to people who are employed. He never lends more than R10 000 and less than R50. An important thing he highlighted was that when someone borrows money from him, he requires an ID and bank card as proof that he will be paid back. He never lends money to family members; according to him it just creates a lot of drama and fights. He says that family tends to not pay back the money, so he opts to rather give them the money or not help them at all. *Malome* Chippa tells me that he avoids lending money to women; he believes that everything with women is a negotiation. According to him, women want to negotiate the type of payment they can offer him, and the type of payment they want to offer is sex. These women want to engage in a sex for money exchange relationship with him, and he is not interested in that type of payment. *Malome* Chippa says that he is in the money lending business to make a profit; his business is about making money, not making a loss, and women complicate things with their bodies. He is able to use the profit he makes from being a loan shark to buy merchandise for his spaza shop, as well as to send money home to his wife and kids. The loan shark business was able to help build his family a nice house in Limpopo. *Malome* Chippa is a true business man, he is not only involved in two family stokvels back home,

but he also joined one recently with his taxi driver friends, who are house dwellers. He is a big fan of gambling, he enjoys playing the South African and the UK Lottery. He is especially a fan of the UK Lottery as well as *Fahfee*, playing them twice a day. He likes to remind me that it is important to invest in different things in order to make money, and that house dwellers underestimate the hustle (creative ways of obtaining money) that hostel dwellers have. *Malome* Chippa is able to show his hustle by having different jobs as well as running his spaza shop and loan shark business. He also has joined stokvels back home and in Mamelodi, gambling is also another avenue he explores to make money.

3. The Economic Processes

I. The Spaza Shop

Malome Chippa plays a central role in my research, because his spaza shop is the place where both hostel dwellers and house dwellers meet. The spaza shop was also a crucial part of my research because it was where I conducted my research from. It is a place that is both visited by hostel and house dwellers; the hostel dwellers are his regular customers at the spaza shop and some house dwellers come in to borrow money from him. It has become a place where everyone passes through; it has become a relaxing place for both employed and unemployed house and hostel elders to enjoy a nice *Chubuku* (sorghum beer) that *Malome* Chippa sells. On hot days and weekends they will sit under a tree, which is a couple of feet away from the spaza shop, and listen to music on radios and reminisce about the olden days while drinking their beer. *Malome* Chippa's spaza shop is not the only shop in the hostel, there are about three other shops in the hostel, each one has its own customers. It depends on how well the owner is liked. Whether or not he gives goods on credit and most importantly what ethnic group he belongs to. Ethnic alliance is very important in the hostel. Zulu hostel dwellers will only buy their goods from a Zulu spaza shop owner. This is the same as a Bapedi spaza owner, who will dominantly have Bapedi hostel dwellers as customers. Ethnic identity and ethnic solidarity played a vital role; it was how the apartheid government controlled black people. The government was able to separate black people into different ethnic groups; ethnic identity became a weapon used to not only control blacks, but to also separate blacks from each other. Ethnic solidarity became an essential way of living life. Dunbar Moodie (1994:19) notes that the wider system of migrant labor necessitated long term separation from home and family in an alien living environment. Miners had to return from work to private or company owned homes under the tight management

of white managers assisted by *indunas*. *Indunas* represented this ethnic separation, and reinforced ethnic solidarity. They were purposely appointed to act as barriers between the different ethnic groups and the government; they were responsible for keeping their own people in line. Hostels were spaces where workers were separated into different ethnic groups and had their own *Induna* supervising them. The brotherhood bond that language and tradition creates is vital to the customer and shop owner relationship. “Brotherhood in South African gold mines existed for a long time, these brotherhoods were formed through entrepreneurial services such as hair cutting, bicycle repair, tailoring, or herbal medicine” (Moodie 1994:19). Things such as “religious concerns, burial societies, musical taste, rural politics, and other informal activities based on home friend solidarities, homosexual dalliances and other shared interests” were also imperative (Moodie 1994: 20). According to *Malome* Chippa in the hostel commonality is essential. People who are of the same ethnic group are considered brothers because they speak the same language as you, they come from the same area as you, because of this they are more likely to help you. They will feel sorry for you if you come asking for food or money, you will have a support system willing to help you; because they feel obliged to help their fellow brother. Unlike someone who is of a different ethnic group, who does not owe you anything. The customers buy from a shop owner who is of the same ethnic group as them, so that a relationship is established and that they can easily ask for goods on credit when they no longer have money. He tells me though sometimes spaza shop owners will refuse to give credit, whether you belong to the same ethnic group or not. Most of the people, who want to get goods on credit, tend to drink their money away. He elaborates by saying that as a hostel dweller you are far away from home, and coming to a new environment. It is then important to have some form of familiarity in the new space; and that roommates represents home, because you speak the same language, eat the same food. You also have the same values and morals, and came to Pretoria for the same reasons. All these factors are important, because it creates a bond amongst hostel dwellers that is critical in surviving in this environment; where alienation and loneliness is commonly found by those who do not have a support system in the hostel. The bond that is created between roommates is vital in the hostel; it is your support system. I observed that my father, who is a house dweller, his relationship with some of the hostel dwellers is very much reliant on the fact that they are of the same ethnic group. They come from the same area back home; thus ethnic alliance is a thread that binds his relationship with these dwellers.

My father: “I started coming to the hostel because of a friend of mine. He at the time was kicked out of his father’s house by his stepmother, after his father had passed away. He was unemployed and had nowhere to go. The hostel was the only place he could stay at, because living at the hostel is free. The first time I entered the hostel was when I went to visit him, and I was not afraid. I had heard stories of the place of course, how violent and dangerous the men are. When I went to the hostel I did not pay attention to these rumours, I was there to visit a friend. I found him with a group of friends outside his hostel room, and they were playing a friendly (meaning no money was involved in the gambling) board game called “*Ludo*”. I introduced myself to the men and watched on as they played their game. I continued to visit my friend, sometimes he would not be around the hostel and I would spend time with his roommates, and they eventually became my friends as well. My hostel visits became regular when I lost my job and needed to keep busy. *Malome* Chippa was one of the friends I made at the hostel. We have a lot in common; we are both Bapedi men who are married with kids, we speak the same language, have the same morals and values and we were both raised in Limpopo. Many of the hostel dwellers I consider friends are Bapedi men, our language and culture bonds us. I started enjoying going to the hostel when I lost my job, and my house dweller friends turned their backs on me. The hostel became my refuge; it was there I could sit with my fellow brothers and commiserate about the olden days, we discuss politics, we talk about sports and we laugh at each other. The hostel became a place where I could escape to, where I was not constantly thinking about being unemployed and stressing. There I could sit with fellow men that are also unemployed and laugh with them. If there is one thing I have observed with house dwellers is that they like to gossip and they are extremely jealous of each other. I on the other hand do not want to gossip about people, I keep away from such things and rather spend my time at the hostel. I am also able to make money for myself at the hostel; hostel dwellers love to gamble and it rubbed off on me, now I gamble for a living. I play *Fahfee/Mochina* (a local popular form of gambling) and the UK Lottery. I am especially a fan of *Fahfee /Mochina*, I like it because I often win and I noticed that the hostel dwellers were always asking me for advice on how to bet, what number to bet on. So I started placing bets for them and I would get a commission when they win. I started gambling out of necessity; I needed to make a living and gambling was one of the ways I could do that. I saw an opportunity here at the hostel; they needed someone who could help them with placing bets, but also give them advice on what to bet on. My job is to assist with the betting process, I also place bets myself as well as play the Lottery, that way I can increase my chances of winning. When I win big from gambling, I am able to loan people money (loan shark), and I make a 50% profit off the money I loan them. My terms are simple: I do not lend money to women; I only loan money

to people I know, but I have on occasion loaned money to strangers. Loaning money to strangers only happens when someone I know well introduces them to me. This person is usually a client of mine or friend, and is able to vouch for the stranger. The client or friend will be responsible for the payment if the stranger cannot pay the money. There are too many risks involved in being a *Mashonisa*; I do not like it, so for now I am out of that business.

II. Mashonisa (Loan Sharks)

The *Mashonisa* (loan sharks) are illegal lenders of money, they offer expensive credit to the poor and vulnerable, they use unsavoury practices to operate their business (Daniel 2004:846-847 cited in James 2013:5). The *Mashonisa* business is very informal, there is no paperwork involved and the clients, as well as the *Mashonisa* prefer to give the money cash. It is a relationship that functions on understanding that we help each other out. It is a business that is risky, there are many issues that one has to deal with; for starters many loan sharks as mentioned above keep their clients ID and bank cards, the problem that arise with this tactic is that they are given old ID and bank cards, while their clients go and obtain new ones. This has happen to Lizzy, Malome Chippa and my father. My father tells a story of a hostel dweller he loaned money to:

“He was an older gentleman, very respectable. He came wanting to borrow R300 and I loan him the money. He was a previous client of mine, so I did not expect things to go so wrong. He kindly handed me his ID and bank card and said that I will get the money month end. Month end came and he was nowhere to be found, I called him, his phone was off, I went to his hostel room and I could not get a hold of him. He eventually called me back after a few days and told me that he went back home, there was a family emergency. He said that he would have the money with him when he returned to the hostel. He still has not come back, I have his ID and bank card, it has been three years now. I still have not gotten my money back, I have not heard a word from him and he switched off his phone.”

Such experiences are quite common; clients will run off and never be heard of again, the borrowing of money and never paying it back has become its own form of survival strategy. The *Mashonisa* business, there is no paperwork involved, it is a relationship based on a verbal agreement and an understanding that you will pay me back. It thus makes it easier for the clients to not pay back the money and just disappear without being heard of again. They will often move to a new area without telling the *Mashonisa* or they will go back home never to return to the

hostel again. People will borrow money from multiple loan sharks and promise to pay knowing that at the end of the month they will not be able to do so because they are other people they owe money to as well.

Malome Chippa and Lizzy said that some of the tactics they use to get people to pay is to instil fear in them. The use, the threat of witchcraft as a weapon to get their clients to pay up; they will say things like:

“If you do not give me my money I will call home and sort you out. I will not even have to pay for transport to get there; I will just sit and watch as you lose money faster than you make it. You will never be able to keep money in your hands again; you will be a working poor man”.

This threat has multiple meanings; it first implies that “home” which refers to the rural areas is synonymous with witchcraft. Many dwellers believe that Limpopo has the most powerful witches in South Africa, so that in itself instils fear. The Mashonisa will say “at home they will use *muti* (witchcraft medicine) to bewitch you, and force you to pay me back”. The other meaning that is implied here is that you will be a slave to money, you will work, but you will not see where your money goes. You will not be able to enjoy your hard earned money, because you will lose it fast on things that do not make sense.

III. Gambling

Gambling is known to be very addictive; we are warned of this by adverts, despite this, gambling is a popular form of entertainment and moneymaking scheme for many people. The hostel dwellers I interviewed spoke lengthily of how their fellow dwellers are addicted to gambling. According to hostel dwellers and dual dwellers, their fellow dwellers’ addiction is measured by how often they gamble and what they do with their winnings. Whether or not one neglects essentials things like groceries, child support, transport money and debts to gamble instead. You are labelled an addict if you mishandle money and are judged if you squander the money. Hostel dwellers will normally say “*o tagwa ke tshetele*” a Sesotho saying that means that the person gets high of making money; they will say this to a person who is addicted to gambling. Hostel dwellers are desperate to get out of poverty; they attempt to use gambling to achieve this. Gambling is an avenue explored by many house and hostel dwellers in order to make money. They see gambling as a surviving tool to get them out of poverty; it is also seen as an investment

strategy that will one day enrich them. They are aware of the risks involved, but they say that it has high returns. Hostel dwellers have adopted the saying “you have to bet big to win big” as a way to rationalize their lottery obsession. It is this sort of hunger for a better life, a better future that is the reason why gambling is popular amongst hostel and house dwellers. There are four types of gambling that occur in the hostel: (1) *Fahfee/Mochina*; *Fahfee/Mochina* originates from the South African Chinese community (That is where the name *Mochina* comes from, it means Chinese in Sesotho) who brought it to townships as a way to make money from black people. *Fahfee/ Mochina* was brought to South Africa in the early 1900’s, originating from China, it was first played by gold miners in the old Transvaal province. *Fahfee/Mochina* is the most common form of gambling in Gauteng townships (Geldenhuis 2009 cited in Scott & Barr 2012: 25). It is an illegal mobile lottery system in South Africa because it is not regulated, audited and taxed and thus it is regarded as illegal.¹⁰ “Gambling in South Africa is regulated by the National Gambling Board (NGB), and all forms of gambling which are not under the control of the NGB are illegal” (Scott & Barr 2012: 720). *Fahfee/Mochina* is the “most widely spread and pervasive form of gambling, it is portrayed as a necessary and beneficial form of support for the poor and unemployed” (Scott & Barr 2012:719). Players bet from choosing a number between 1 and 36. The numbers are placed in a bag containing cash and bids and in exchange they get the winning number, which the *Mochina* hands to the runner¹¹. *Fahfee/Mochina* is a popular form of gambling that is played in most townships. It has a long standing history in townships, where black women have played it as a way to make money for themselves. With the rise in unemployment of black men, these men have also joined *Fahfee/Mochina* as a survival strategy; they are using it as an avenue for them to make money. The rules are simple in *Fahfee/Mochina* you pick a number/s, each number is significant because it represents something; the number can represent what you dreamt about, what you see, they are used as guides to place a bet in *Fahfee/Mochina*. Players try to predict a draw, they spend time building a record of winning numbers, and most players keep these numbers in a notebook. They circle numbers that are likely to be repeated in the next draw. *Mochina* is a game of chance, where people use the power of their dreams to try and crack they *Fahfee* code¹² (See figure 6). *Sangomas* in South Africa can interpret dreams and their symbolic meanings, Chinese and African people are said to share

¹⁰ CheckPoint eNCA *Fahfee*

¹¹ CheckPoint eNCA *Fahfee*

¹² CheckPoint eNCA *Fahfee*

similar superstitions beliefs ¹³(See figure 6). Leanne Scott and Graham Barr (2012:719) also note that ‘in Fahfee the reliance on dreams to guide choice of numbers appears to eradicate any interest in the odds or of playing strategically’. Betting price starts at 50 cents and you can place bets on multiple numbers, to increase your chances of winning. Similarly to the lottery if your number/s matches the number drawn you win money. This is how it is typically played: players will take the numbers along with the amount of money they want to place a bet to a *Fahfee/Mochina* wallet (see figure 7) owner like my father, he will then write on a *Fahfee/Mochina* form (see figure 7) how much money you played on each number. It is important to note that the wallet and the forms are an important part of *Fahfee/Mochina* it is what makes your bet legitimate in this game, without these two things your bet is seen as invalid. You can only place a bet with someone who owns this wallet and has this form; they get it from the Chinese who runs this game. It is only gotten through years of loyally playing the game or if you have connections with people who know the Chinese well. After you have placed a bet with the wallet owner he or she will then write all the information down on the *Fahfee/Mochina* form and wait for two Chinese men who drive a Ford bakkie with tinted windows to arrive; the Chinese men come twice a day in the morning and evening. *Fahfee/Mochina* draws at different times in different regions in Mamelodi West and East. *Fahfee/Mochina* takes place at either a specific house or a vacant piece of land (there is no clear explanation on how these places are chosen, other than that players gather around these places to place bets). It runs from the morning around 09h00am until around 08h00pm, so players will go to these different regions to place a bet so that they can increase their chances of winning. As soon as the two Chinese men arrive, they do not get out of their car, while a point man/woman appointed by the two men will take all the *Fahfee/Mochina* wallets from their owners and place them in a big brown bag and hand it to the Chinese men through their window. The point man/woman will be given the number drawn for the day (the Chinese are the ones who pick which number is drawn that day and it is always one number, it cannot be more than one) the point man/woman will then write the number given to them on either the pavement or a piece of plywood using white chalk for everyone to see. If the number written is the one you place a bet on you have won. The Chinese men never communicate or interact with the players except with the point man/woman; the men will go through the wallets and see who are the winners and pay each winner the amount due to them.

¹³ CheckPoint eNCA *Fahfee*

That money along with the wallets is then given back to the point man/woman that will call out each wallet by number or name so its owners can collect them. The owners are then responsible for distributing the money to the winners if they are any. The wallet owners will get a commission when people who have placed a bet with them win. The winners collect their money from the wallet owners. The two Chinese men immediately leave after having handed the point man/woman the big brown bag, and move on to other areas in Mamelodi to do the same process again. The majority of hostel dwellers and house dwellers who play *Fahfee/Mochina* are unemployed. According to Leanne Scott and Graham Barr (2012:719) state the lottery and Casino were perceived by township participants as being rigged and unfair, while township dice and cards are regarded as fairer and allowing the player to be in control compared to Casino. One of the reasons why *Fahfee/Mochina* is a popular gambling game is that people trust it, mainly because it relies on dreams. Scott and Barr (2012:726) elaborate on this by saying that there is a clear strong case of trust in the ability of the Chinaman and an investment in the metaphysical (dreams) in the way in which individuals place their bets in *Fahfee/Mochina*. The relationship between dream symbols and numbers is important.

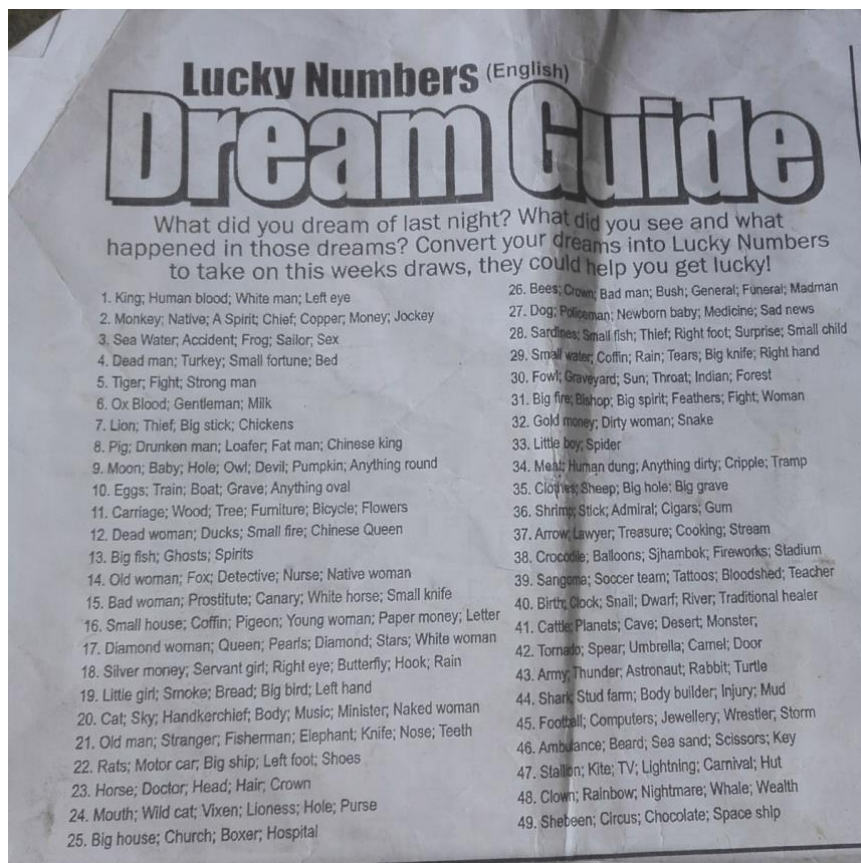


Figure 6 Dream guide used in *Fahfee/Mochina*



Figure 7 The wallet and form used in Fahfee/Mochina to place bets

(2) *Ludo*; (3) *Lottery*; (4) *Madice*. Hostel dwellers as well as house dwellers have found an informal way to make money and survive. Some of the residents of Mamelodi West frown upon gambling like *Ludo* and *Madice*. *Ludo* and *Madice* are board games; they both involve using dice and require more than two players to play the game. In the hostel both game boards are hand drawn with a permanent marker a big plasterboard or a piece of wood table. Players bet against each other, and whoever wins the game get money. Money is a key component involved in both games, both house and hostel dwellers will spend the entire day playing these game so they can win money. The betting price starts at R10; the player decides what amount he bets on a game as long as it is R10 and above. Most of the players are unemployed, and playing this game is how they make a living. These types of gambling are seen as illegal and a dirty way of making money. These two types of gambling have long been associated with dangerous criminals and as such the community regards it as a dangerous and an immoral way to make money. Others believe that gambling actually does the opposite; it builds relations. Dennis Webster (2014:254) for instance wrote an article on how men who gamble in a park were able to forge bonds with each other through everyday communalism¹⁴. The park is where they would hang out, and socialise share news and stories and joke with each other (Webster 2014:254). Hanging out in the

¹⁴ David Graeber (2010:4) termed “*communism*” as human relationship that operates on the principal of “from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs”. “*Everyday communism*” is when action proceeds “from each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs”, it is the collaborating on a common project.

park was very informal; they would gamble, discuss with each other, tease each other, share cigarettes, advice and help one another (Webster 2014:254). An informant of his spoke about how life at the park allowed him to build relationships with other men, for instance through a game of dice; noting that relationships are often formed and negotiated in the context of gambling (Webster 2014:256). These acts between the men in the park were mundane but were significant in building relationships (Webster 2014:254).

Even though the Mamelodi community associates *Madice* and *Ludo* with criminal acts, gambling in the community has forged bonds and trust between the men; where they can share a beer, a cigarette and laugh and joke together and they are able to warn each other when a police van approaches, seeing as this type of gambling is illegal. House dwellers will often play this game and hostel dwellers enjoy playing against them, especially if it is a house dweller that has a job. According to Mike “I enjoy playing against house dwellers; I like beating them at *Madice* and taking their money. Just to prove to them that an unemployed person can take their money, and they hate us for it. They go to work and use their hard earned money to play with us professionals. I will take the money I won and buy you a beer if I like you”. Mike is uttering a sentiment that many hostel dwellers have, they are aware that some house dwellers dislike them; they are seen as unemployed lazy men who are living rent free and do not have any ambition. So by beating them at gambling they are proving the house dwellers wrong and taking back the power they feel was taken from them. The image painted of hostel dwellers by house dwellers is one of losers, dangerous, undignified, lazy and homeless. This painted image is how house dwellers assert their power over hostel dwellers, they are ripping the humanity from hostel dwellers by removing their identity with one that is less than human. Hostel dwellers are thus able to reclaim their power from house dwellers by taking the one thing that is used over their heads by house dwellers “money”. Money is the tool that house dwellers use to create an image of superiority over hostel dwellers, so by taking that from them they are reclaiming the power taken from them. They no longer are just unemployed, lazy men, but they are the unemployed men who find a way to take money from employed men. Male house dwellers who are employed who play *Madice* and *Ludo* are seen by some hostel dwellers (Allie and Kagiso and Thabiso) as weak men, who are foolish. They are seen as wasting money because they already have jobs, an income. Hostel dwellers see their gambling as hustling, because they regard their efforts to survive as a valid reason to gamble. House dwellers that have jobs are seen as just greedy and

foolish, because only a dumb man will take his hard earned money and loose it so easily at something he is not a professional at. These two types of gambling are gendered; it is mostly played by men. Men refuse to play with women for three reasons: (1) the hostel is a masculine space and women are seen as invading this space. (2) These types of games also represent how men make a living, how they are surviving and making ends meet, it represents their hustle and women are seen as disturbing that. (3) *Madice* and *Ludo* have always been seen as masculine games, there is an understanding that only men play this game. Because it is associated with criminals and danger and these are regarded as masculine identities. The few females who play this game are butch; they are seen as taking masculine traits and as such can play with men. *Madice* is considered as the more volatile type of gambling, because of the high stakes involved, more money is used to play and as such more money is lost here. People tend to become violent and angry when they loose and accuse each other of cheating. Many hostel dwellers have gotten hurt as a result of violence that has erupted.

Malome Chippa told me that he has witnessed many hostel dwellers who have bragged about winning, one such dweller had R2000 cash on him and decided to gamble the entire money. He used the money to play *Madice*, and he came to see *Malome Chippa* after he lost all of his money, looking extremely sad and defeated. He tells me that many hostel dwellers including house dwellers would try and borrow money from him after having lost money from *Madice*. *Malome Chippa* would refuse to help them, on the basis that they are stupid for having spent their entire money on gambling. He always says he never lends money to unemployed people, people who he does not trust, strangers and stupid people, and he definitely considers people who play *Madice* stupid. *Ludo* is a less violent game, because players can also play it without money, many hostel dwellers like *Malome Chippa*, *Malome Moholo* and others including my father play it for fun. *Ludo* is usually played by much older hostel and house dwellers who are trying to pass time; it is played while they enjoy a beer, sitting under the shade of a tree. Many of the younger hostel dwellers are the ones who play for money in *Ludo* and *Madice*, they are the ones who are mostly unemployed and are making a living by gambling. While their older counterparts are employed and just play the game to relax and have fun. The younger ones have time on their hands to hone in their skills on this game, which is why they consider themselves professionals, because they play this game all the time. House dwellers that are good at this game are mostly unemployed, and they usually spend their time in the hostel playing against hostel

dwellers. *Ludo* and *Madice* usually pull in a crowd; it is usually packed mid-month and month end, that is because most of the players have money, and house dwellers have gotten their salary. The crowd also includes spectators who will watch them play, it usually involves them drinking their beer and smoking cigarettes as the men battle it out. Figure 8 shows a *Ludo* game that was drawn by hostel dwellers.



Figure 8 Ludo Board Game

The lottery is also popular among hostel dwellers, playing the lottery has become another way in which hostel dwellers are making money. The recently has opened a new betting place called “Beta Bet” in Denlyn Mall (Mamelodi West Shopping mall); it has attracted many residents in the area to play the lottery. It offers various lotteries from different countries, France, Russia, Spain, UK, Greece and etc. It has become quite a phenomenon on its own, where people are rushing to place a bet on all kinds of things, including sports and horses. In the hostel the South African National Lottery has become the least played lottery compared to others. Hostel and House dwellers prefer to play UK 49’s lottery the most, among the two of these lotteries the UK lottery is the one that is played the most in the hostel. Hostel dwellers say that the UK lottery is much cheaper and it offers more money, your investment is higher; a lottery ticket start from R2 and your lottery winnings is R250 for that amount. UK Lottery runs twice a day; Lunchtime and

Teatime and most hostel dwellers play it every day. The UK lottery rules are simple; you need to choose between two to six numbers from 1 to 49, the numbers you have chosen need to match the ones that are drawn. The amount placed on a bet is up to you; you decide how much money you want to bet with. The South African lottery plays every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday and Saturday, its rules are also similar to that of the UK. You get different types of lotto; there is the Lotto, Lotto plus 1, Lotto plus 2, Powerball, Powerball Plus, Pick 3, Sportstake, and Rapido. The rules are that you need to pick six numbers from 1 to 52, a bonus ball is included in the draw, that will be your sixth number, if these numbers match the ones drawn you win; you can only win from matching three, four and five numbers. Powerball is the lottery that offers more money, you need to choose five main numbers from 1 to 50 and you also need to choose a single secondary number from a separate ball pool from 1 to 20; this is referred to as the Powerball. It is an integral part of the game; in order for you to win this game you need to successfully match all the five numbers as well as the Powerball.

The lottery has a very catchy slogan “*Pusha, Phanda, Play*” this means that you have to push, you have to hustle and you need to play the game. When playing the lottery in order for you to increase your chances of winning, you also have to play Lotto Plus or Powerball Plus, but it is more expensive because you spend more money on a ticket. Hostel dwellers feel that the pay-out for the S.A lottery is not enough, and so it does not make sense for them to pay so much money for a ticket, when your chances of winning it are slim. UK lottery is popular amongst hostel and house dwellers because not only is it cheaper to play, but your chances of winning are much higher. It does not have the option of having lotto plus where you need to increase your chances of winning by paying more, it only requires you R2 or R5 to play and it offers you more options for less money and a big win in the end. The observation that I made is that employed hostel dwellers who play the *lottery*; they are usually the ones who borrow money from loan sharks because they spend significant amounts of their earnings playing the lottery and drinking alcohol. Like Malome Chippa nephews who is an avid gambler.

Billie is Malome Chippa’s nephew is in his mid-thirties, is a former hostel dwellers who recently became a house dweller. He works for a Bakery (Blue Ribbon) delivering bread to Companies. He decided to move out of the hostel and rent a backroom in one of the houses in Mamelodi West. His reason for moving out is the lack of electricity and sanitation at the hostel; he had no

privacy living with his roommates (family and relatives). According to him, the condition of the hostel was not conducive for a relationship with women, the lack of privacy made it hard to bring a girlfriend at the hostel. He lives nearby the hostel and spends most of his time at the hostel. He is a 'dual dweller': identifies as a hostel dweller, even though he technically is a house dweller now. His reasoning is that the hostel is his home; it does not matter where he lives, and he will always consider the hostel his home. His attachment to the hostel is based on two reasons: Firstly, the hostel has been a home for many men in his family, being a hostel dweller is a generational thing. His grandfather was a hostel dweller who came to Pretoria in the 1960 when the hostel had just been built to work as a construction worker, his father along with his uncles ended up at the hostel as a result of his grandfather who informed them of the availability of rooms at the hostel. At the time his father and Uncles were unemployed and looking for jobs, they came to Pretoria to work in the industrial area, as well as Ford Motor Company. He also was introduced to the hostel by his father, who informed him of work opportunities in Pretoria. He tells me when he first came to hostel, it was crowded and he had to share a bed with his father, he sometimes had to sleep on the floor. Billie notes that, that is how many young hostel dwellers came to live at the hostel, through their fathers, brothers, Uncles. Hostel life is generational, it is passed down from one generation to another, and you become a hostel dweller because you know someone who lives at the hostel. The hostel is home to some of his family and relatives, so it makes sense that he spends time there.

Secondly, Billie identifies with hostel life more than house dweller life, so the hostel becomes a natural space for him to gravitate towards. It is where people who speak his language reside, it is where people who have the same values and traditions that he has are present, and it is where people who come from the same community as him back home reside. These are the reason why he feels more at home at the hostel than where he is renting. He notes that the only advantage of being a house dweller is the access to electricity and proper running water, having your own space, being able to buy groceries when you want and having a refrigerator and a TV. Billie says those are the only useful things house dweller life has, other than that he says that he cannot relate to house dweller life. One of Billie's favourite things to do is gamble, he enjoys playing the lottery (UK 49'S lottery), he is a dedicated lottery fan. His Uncle believes that he is addicted to gambling, he is constantly trying to set Billie up with women, in order to try and stop him from gambling so much. His Uncle believes that because he is single and has no responsibilities

like children or a wife or girlfriend to take care of, he believes it has made his gambling addiction worse. Billie plays the lottery twice a day, because he works from 4am to 11am delivering bread, he has time to play lottery when he wants. Around 12:30 pm he has already bought a ticket for the lunchtime lottery draw, which draws at 14:00 pm he will return later to buy a ticket for the Teatime lottery draw. I asked him what the highest amount of money he has spent playing the lottery, he told me that it was about R8000.

His Uncle dramatically relays the story of how he got to lose the R8000. It was month end and Billie had just gotten paid, he decided that he was going to go to Silverton to play the lottery. He had R3000 cash with him; he buys lunchtime lottery (UK 49's lottery) tickets worth R1500 and while he is there waiting for the lottery to draw he decides to place bets on sports and horses, he spends R1000 on that. As he waits for the results he loses on both bets but wins the UK 49'S lottery. He then receives the pay-out, instead of leaving and going home Billie continue playing. He buys Teatime tickets worth R2000, this time he not only plays the UK 49's, he also tries his luck playing the Russia, Greece and France lottery. He loses the bet, not defeated by this, he continues to play Russia and Greece and Spain including betting on sports again, he ends up having to use his bank card to pay for these tickets. He continues to lose that night until all he had in his bank card was R200 his Uncle tells me. Billie was so stressed that he decided to walk home and when he got to his Uncle's shop he looked haggard and so sad that his Uncle thought someone had died. When Billie told his Uncle what had actually happened his Uncle laughed until he had tears running down his face. Billie was so stressed, he asked for five bubble-gums, when his Uncle asked why he needed five bubble-gums, his response was that he needed to chew his stress away. Hostel and house dwellers are very superstitious about money, especially gambling. I am told that when you win money through gambling, it will not last because it nobody just wins such a big amount without consequences. Both dwellers explain to me that "you will be lured back slowly until that money accumulates back through the losses you will have. Any gambling will lure its players back, it will force you to bet with the money you have won and you will lose it all, by continuously betting until you have used all your winnings". They further note that it will either happen in one day like it did with Billie, or it will happen over a couple of days or months; either way the rules of gambling stands, you will lose all your winnings by being lured by the game, it takes its money back through your losses. In that sense the game always wins, and you always lose because you continue to go back in the hopes you

will get luck again. Billie recently won the lottery, he won R15000 and with the money he was able to buy a plasma TV, everyone laughs and teases him about it. They say that he is going to return all that money back to the lottery, by continuing to gamble he will lose, his losses will eventually accumulate to R15000 and more. Billie does not disagree with them, saying that professional gamblers like him accept loss because it is part of the game; he continues to say “you have to bet big to win big, the risk is worth it.” Malome Chippa’s spaza shop is also the place where house and hostel dwellers gather around the table together, their books in hand and will discuss lottery numbers as well as *Fahfee/Mochina* numbers in detail.

Here we are able to see the significance of global connections, where the hostel dwellers are able to use the internet as tools to access worlds they normally would not. Globalisation is a key component, because it allows the dwellers to play the lottery in real time in the comfort of their own homes. It allows hostel dwellers to engage with other countries on a global scale; It is interesting to see how migrant men are entering the global market (the lottery is globally played) to make an impact in their small scale lives. Globalisation has an impact on this small hostel, where hostel dwellers are using the lotteries in these different countries so they can benefit financially. The hostel dwellers are solely interested in how much money they can get out of playing the lottery, most of them have no idea where Russia, Greece or France is. Though they do mention England and France in relation to soccer, other than that their sole purpose for choosing to play the lottery in these countries are monetary.

IV. Formal work: A 9am to 5pm

Hostel dwellers do have jobs despite house dwellers assumptions that they are lazy unemployed men. They are employed not only in the industrial sectors but construction; they are also cleaners, security guards and gardeners, police officers. The Watloo and Silverton area is mostly industrial, so many of the hostel dwellers work there; like Gift a former hostel dweller who works at Ford Motor Company. He recently bought a car and moved out of the hostel after working at this company for 4 years. Having saved money by staying at the hostel he decided to move out when his girlfriend from back home decided to move to Pretoria to stay with him while she looked for a job. She refused to live at the hostel with him, and that forced him to look for a room to rent. He also mentioned that he did not want his women living in such a space, a space filled with men, where she can easily fall prey to predators. The lack of privacy forced him to get

out of the hostel and to rent a room. Like many other former hostel dwellers, he hangs out at the hostel and just goes home to sleep. He says that the hostel is still his home; he gets along with hostel dwellers more than house dwellers despite being one now. He says that he does not get along with house dwellers because they underestimate him, they look down on him and assume that he is naïve and dumb because he is a Bapedi man. Many other employed hostel dwellers do not have the same pressures as Gift; Jerry for instance works as a security guard and still lives at the hostel.

Me: When did you first arrive at the hostel?

Jerry: I arrived at the hostel in 1999; I lived in Block S of the hostel

Me: Oh really, what brought you to the hostel? How did you come to hear of this place?

Jerry: My father; at the time was working for Escort and had just retired; he was waiting for his pension package to be released.

Me: Your dad, while he was working, was he living here at the hostel?

Jerry: No he lived at the flats provided by his employer; he had to move out when he was on pension. He had to find his own accommodation while he was waiting for his money, before he went back home

Me: Where do you call home?

Jerry: Limpopo

Me: How did your father find out about the hostel?

Jerry: From his friends, he knew people who stayed at the hostel. He needed a place to stay while waiting for his money and chose the Mamelodi West hostel; he was living at Block S, room number 8.

Me: How did you find out about the hostel?

Jerry: I was a young man who had just finished high school in Sebokeng. My father had called to tell me that I needed to come see him in Pretoria.

Me: What was your first reaction when you first got here?

Jerry: When I arrived at the hostel, everything was ok, the building was nice. There was electricity, there was proper sanitation. You got a bed and a locker, hostel life was good back then.

Me: Did you have to share a room with anyone?

Jerry: Yes I slept in my father's room on the floor, and sometimes on the bed if one of his roommates was not there.

Me: What was your plan when you got here?

Jerry: My plan really was to go to school. I wanted to get an N3 certificate in fitter and turner. I enjoy working with my hands and creating stuff.

Me: What happened to that dream?

Jerry: My father told me that the reason why he wanted me to come to Pretoria was to tell me that I could not go to school anymore, because he did not have the money to pay for my fees. He could no longer afford to pay my fees. He said that in Pretoria there are opportunities where I can get a job, and I could stay at the hostel in his room and take his bed because he is returning back home soon.

Me: Did you find one, a job I mean?

Jerry: Yeah I got one eventually, my Uncle told me that there is job opportunity available, working as a construction worker. I was excited; I went for the job interview and failed miserably, because I did not know construction work at all. So I got a job as a cooker at a construction site. I was told to cook for the workers, I used wood to make fire and I would cook with a *drie foot* (a big black pot).

Me: Did you enjoy the work?

Jerry: No, I only lasted for two weeks. I had to fight to be paid for those two weeks. Eventually they paid me,

Me: What did you do for work afterwards?

Jerry: My sister decide to help me, I went to school to become a security guard. She paid for that. She knew people who could help me get in, and she helped me with that and paid the fees. It was R400 at the time to get a certificate. She worked at Fidelity and said that if I went to school and got this certificate she would help me find a job.

Me: Is that how you became a security guard?

Jerry: Yes, I got a job at Fidelity, worked there for five years and resigned

Me: Why did you resign?

Jerry: I had the proper qualifications and they were paying me peanuts

Me: Where did you work afterwards?

Jerry: I worked for seven years for another security company until my contract ended.

Me: Where do you work currently?

Jerry: I work as a security guard for a factory.

Jerry is also a heavy drinker, known by most female house dweller as a big spender on alcohol in taverns. He always has a female companion and likes to splurge on alcohol. Jerry tells me that he bought expensive brandy (Hennessy) and brought it to a tavern he likes going to, there he

bragged about having money. He offered everyone his brandy, and also bought most of the females there alcohol. He is also constantly in need of money to keep up his drinking habit. He is a big client of *Malome* Chippa, as he borrows money from him almost every month. Jerry admits that he has a drinking problem and he is aware that females use him, but he says that he is just a nice guy and likes having a good time.

V. Self employed

Hostel dwellers have found various ways to make money like *Malome* Chippa, many other hostel dwellers also own a spaza shop as a way to make a living.

VI. Street Cooks

Street Cooks, as I have hinted at in previous chapters, are also quite common in the hostel; these are mostly men who cook traditional food in the hostel at a very reasonable price. Streets cooks usually offer traditional or African food like tripe, trotters, sheep head, African chicken, pap, chicken feet and intestines. It has become quite popular to eat at these food establishments. For many black people it has become a way to make money, to earn a living by cooking food that many have grown up eating. Mostly women are the ones who are street cooks,¹⁵ but just outside the hostel there are a couple of men as well who are hostel dwellers who cook. Their target both house and hostel dwellers who enjoy eating African food. I am told that hostel dwellers often buy food from male streets cooks because they do not put *muti* in one's food. They are saying that women are more likely to put some form of *muti* (poison/ love potion) in your food to either kill you for not wanting to date them or love potion to force you into loving them. Hostel dwellers further note that women who are not your family are not to be trusted with your food at all. Hostel dwellers specifically choose male street cooks because of fear of *muti* in their food; also street cooks sell food at a cheap price. The food is regarded by dwellers as not only cheap (R30 a plate), but it is also said to be filling; it is described as comfort food, it reminds hostel

¹⁵Leslie Bank (1999:398) notes that domestic division of labor has always been sharply defined along gender lines; women are responsible for cooking, cleaning and housekeeping. Bank also notes that migrant men have a history of cooking; daily domestic routines were part of migrant culture. There were social rules and routines that surrounded male migrant rooms, cooking was communal and as such everyone contributed. It is no surprise then that we see men cooks in today's society, because domesticity was embedded in migrant culture.

dwellers of home. It brings about nostalgic memories, fond memories of food cooked back home by loved ones. The street cooks usually work in two or three other people, to help prepare the meals.



Figure 9 Street Cook

VII. Crime

Crime is also another way in which hostel dwellers have found an avenue to money and a living from, they call it “*o yo gereza*” hustling. Crime has enabling hostel dwellers to make money. They are able to make money in and outside the hostel; hostel dwellers who commit crime admit that they steal from white suburbs, and sell the stolen goods to people in and outside the hostel, dwellers buy from criminals. Many hostel dwellers I spoke to noted that they do not steal from people in the township, they rather go to the suburbs and steal valuable items and come sell them in the townships. It is how they make their money, they scout suburbs for potential targets and find the perfect time to rob the places and come and sell the goods to the community. Unemployment and poverty has increased the crime rate in townships as well, where nice looking and renovated houses in townships, are targeted because they are seem as exuding wealth. Since nyaope has become so popular among the youth of this township, residents are

becoming victims of crime at high increasing rates. The hostel is associated with criminals and drug users. Crime within the hostel seems to have its own form of live. When I asked an informant of mine what happens when someone commits a crime in the hostel? He simply looked at me and laughed, he answered “what is crime really?” This I found really interesting, he was pointing out that crime to one person, is not a crime to another. The perception of crime is different for different people. He is saying that his hustle is about earning money and surviving, you might call it a crime but he does not. Michel Foucault’s (1975) *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* will be potentially useful here in explaining how crime is defined. It analyzes punishment in its social context, how changing power relations affect punishment (Foucault 1975). He notes that prison is where an individual is forced to reform and also is deprived of his freedom. And discipline is all about “widely controlling whole populations” (Foucault 1975). Those in power are the ones who define what is normal or abnormal, and those people who do not conform to social norms are seen as abnormal (Foucault 1975). For instance the term prisoner is replaced by delinquent on purpose because it publicly shames one, because it literally means hardened criminal, part of a lower class and abnormal (Foucault 1975). This is how the other is created.

Michel Foucault essentially looks at how crime, deviance and punishment is defined according to western standards (Foucault1975). Focusing mainly on four parts: torture; punishment; discipline and prison, how at the core of all this is power. He thinks through these issues in terms of an analysis of the directionality of power dynamics, discourse and counter discourse. This he regards as the Western society essentially asserting its power over people, using these four things (Foucault1975). The Mamelodi community or house dwellers seem to have the power to define hostel dwellers as generally deviant from moral norms of community. Power here plays out in two forms: one is that some house dwellers seems to in a way dictate what crime is, in that they will blame most crimes, if not all, on hostel dwellers and this increases the tension and hatred between the two. The hostel dwellers will try to prove them wrong by having their own form of justice, where they beat the perpetrator. Another way in which power is displayed is that the hostel seems to have its own rules.

There has been a rise in violence in hostels in Jeppestown downtown Johannesburg, the Glebelands hostel in Durban and in Mamelodi: mostly because the hostel residents are angry at

how the police and state have treated them. The hostels in downtown Johannesburg experience police brutality when some of the hostel dwellers were forced out of their rooms while others were beaten for not cooperating with the police. Police officers came to the hostel to raid the place because, according to police reports they were tipped off by an anonymous source that the hostel housed illegal goods. Many of the hostel residents are foreigners, and at the time the xenophobic attacks throughout South Africa had just occurred. Hostel residents were furious with the police officers, stating that they were stripped naked and that police took everything, leaving them with nothing. Feeling embarrassed and emasculated by both the state and police, people who are supposedly tasked with protecting the public. Earlier in June of this year the hostel in Mamelodi West also experienced a police raid: the army and the police gathered in the Mamelodi area with huge military tanks and blue police vehicles in an attempt to get rid of crime in townships but especially in hostels. There was an overwhelming presence of police and military officers, they covered all the entrances and exits of hostels to prevent anyone from leaving and searched each roomed thoroughly for anything they regarded as suspicious and illegal. An informant of mine was allegedly assaulted by a police officer who was searching their room. He asked the officers if they had the proper paperwork to search these premises and rooms: he mostly asked this because he sells alcohol out of his room and does not have an alcohol permit. This infuriated the officers and resulted in him being slapped and order to lie on the floor with his hands above his head. This was a huge spectacle according to the hostel residents, the police officers walked away with tons of money belonging to tuck shop owners like *Malome* Chippa, gamblers and drug sellers. The money is seen as illegal funds and as such it was confiscated. The hostel residents claim that the money will never see the light of a police station, because the police officers are going to take it; “they are ‘crooks’ who are in it for themselves” said one hostel dweller. Such comments from the hostel dwellers clearly state the mistrust and anger they hold against the police but also the government. This raid plays to the community’s fear and mistrust of the hostel itself and its occupants. It plays into the stigma that the community puts on the hostel. The mere fact that the police and the army came to Mamelodi West to rid the township of crime, and only raiding hostels sends a huge message to the community, and it most definitely plays a crucial part in how the community perceives this hostel. The fact that it is said by some community members that it houses illegal goods implies

that unsavoury characters live in the hostel. It is perceived by house dwellers as housing dangerous and violent men, nyaope users and women who sell their bodies for drugs.

VIII. Transactional Sex

Sex for money – as I described in the previous chapter - is another way both female hostel dwellers and house dwellers are making money for themselves by sleeping with male hostel dwellers. They use sex as a weapon to get money from men (hostel dwellers), as a way to survive and make a living. They see relationships such as *Mavuso* (upliftment) as important. *Mavuso* is a type of relationship where a woman enters into a relationship with a man for the pure purpose of money. These women are mostly house dwellers who engage in sex for exchange relations with male hostel dwellers, both are aware what the relationship is; there is no romance or emotional attachments. It is an unwritten, most of the time nonverbal agreement that the man and the woman will engage in sex and afterwards the man will pay her out of his kindness. He is helping uplift her by giving her a certain amount of money after their engagement. The relationship is not always sexual, there are other forms of services she can provide like, she will sometimes do his laundry; he never specifically asks for this, but out of the kindness of her heart she will do it. The women are not committed to the men, and vice versa and as such she can be in multiple relations at the same time. It is purely financial and the aim of the relationship is not emotional or romantic entanglement. *Mavuso* means to uplift, the meaning here is that the money that these women get from men are somehow uplifting them financially; they are able to survive and make a living with the money they get from these hostel dwellers. *Mavuso* describes the type of relationship that the women and men have with each other, and it also describes the man who is responsible for uplifting the women.

Conclusion

The hostel is a place of opportunity, where its residents have come to stay because they seek employment or already are employed. They came to the hostel because they seek a better future for themselves. And as such it is a lifeline for the following reasons: The hostel is a lifeline because it is a place where hostel dwellers make money for themselves to survive. The place that is stigmatized by house dwellers (the hostel is referred to as the sickness in the community, as I argued in Chapter 2), it provides some form of fruition to hostel dwellers. It is not a place for the

weary or weak, it requires perseverance and strength because of the poor conditions they live in, these are all qualities which house dwellers apparently lack. The lives of hostel dwellers are in a poor state, but they have found various ways to survive in their state of dilapidation. It has thus become a place where making money is the norm. The fact that they do not pay rent allows them to conduct any kind of business without worry of putting money into the pockets of a landlord. It also provides freedom to conduct illegal activities. The hostel in the beginning was a place where people came to stay at, in order to be close to their jobs; it represented the migrant labor system at its best. Now it has become a place where money is made, it is still a representation of a capitalist world, but it is money controlled by the hostel dwellers. In its state of dilapidation, it has become a very fruitful avenue to make money.

One of the ways in which they point this out is through making referencing to the fact that there are more employed hostel dwellers than there are house dwellers. This implies that house dwellers, who stigmatize hostel dwellers, are unemployed angry people, who are jealous because hostel dwellers are employed and live rent free. Another reference that was made is that the hostel even though it houses so called “uneducated rural people”; its inhabitants are smart enough to find various ways to make money. Loan sharks, spaza shop owners, gamblers, drug dealers, street cooks, employed men, thieves and sex workers: these are all the economic activities that occur in the hostel, and are central to the stigmatization ‘from outside’. What we see here, then is that the stereotypical representation of hostel residents ‘from outside’ is actually inaccurate. My ethnographic evidence as presented in this chapter allows me to argue that Mamelodi West hostel is actually a hub of economic activities, in which ‘the hustle’ is alive, and people make money through various means, inspite of – or perhaps because of – the marginal economic spaces that they occupy in society.

Much of this economic activity demonstrates a point I have made in previous chapters, that the hostel can only be understood in terms of the dynamics of movement to and from, inside and outside, fluctuating dynamics that define what it is to be a ‘hostel resident’. As we will see in the final ethnographic chapter below, the hostel Committee plays an important role as the mediator between the outside and the inside of the hostel. All activities that occur in the hostel, the hostel committee is aware of, and I will now proceed to an ethnographic exploration of this committee.

CHAPTER SIX

The Mamelodi Hostel Committee

1. Introduction

Although this chapter is the last ethnographic one of this dissertation, it is a very important one; it is the chapter that really ties all the chapters together by explaining how the hostel is able to function well, through negotiated discussions between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’, despite what seems on the surface to be a somewhat chaotic environment. It compares the hostel committee to the heartbeat or central nervous system of an organism (the metaphorical organism being the hostel), that ensures that all parts of this organism are able to function efficiently. It analyses how the hostel committee emerges as a key thread that keeps the hostel intact. The chapter looks at who exactly the hostel committee is? What it does for the hostel? What significant role it plays? I also explain how the hostel can be seen as an organism that has various parts; the hostel committee can thus be seen as the nervous system of the hostel. Without its presence the hostel would collapse into chaos and dysfunction. As such, I am borrowing directly from Durkheim’s notion of ‘functionalism’.

The hostel committee is the backbone of the hostel; it represents political power in the hostel. It is through the hostel committee that the hostel is able to legitimize itself. My honours research showed that even though all of the hostel residents do not acknowledge the hostel committee as an authority figure in the hostel, it emerges as one. Even though it is not recognized as a leadership structure in the hostel, it does take the role of one. The hostel committee is the nervous system of this functioning organism. Its role ensures that the hostel does not collapse.

The Hostel Committee represents hostel residents in all spheres of the wider community; it is a mediator between the hostel dwellers and the outside community including representing them at the municipality. From the research I did for my dissertation last year, the residents made it clear to me that the Hostel Committee does not dictate to them nor does it have any leadership role in the hostel. To them it only functions to represent them outside the hostel, other than that, it really does not have any power within the hostel or any leadership role. It initially appeared that the hostel has no form of leadership authority or governance. This is contradictory to what I actually

observed; some hostel residents rely on the Hostel Committee to gain access to things. Why is it then that the hostel residents do not perceive this as a form of power and authority? This got me thinking that in the absence of a leader of some form, the hostel must have some form of political organization. By this I mean that politically the members are able to organize themselves and as such represent the hostel in places such as the municipality and other political institutions, for example political rallies or block meetings. The Hostel committee seems to tell us a broader social perspective with its functioning role outside the hostel, as well as the role dynamics that happen inside the hostel. So now my question is, does it really have any authority within the hostel, or is this power just an illusion?

The hostel committee plays a critical role, the ways in which it functions, how it mediates relations of a political nature between the outside world and the hostel is crucial. They represent the hostel in all spheres of the outside world, whether it is the Mamelodi municipality or the Mamelodi police, talking to lawyers on behalf of the hostel dwellers. As well as addressing complaints or issues that Mamelodi West community has with the hostel. One of their roles is to find solutions to the problems that arise in the hostel, from lack of services such as water and sanitation, crimes that occur in the hostel, conflict that arises between hostel dwellers and handing out proof of residence to dwellers who need it. They in a way legitimize the hostel.

The committee is made out of a group of men who are long standing residents of the hostel, who have generational ties to it. Their fathers, uncles and brothers were and are hostel dwellers. The idea of how the hostel is supposed to be is very much tied to their nostalgic memories of how the hostel was back then and how it is currently. They are dealing with emerging problems that were not necessarily an issue 'back in the day'. For instance like dealing with women who are now living in the hostel. How do they go about dealing with a male hostel dweller that has a problem with sharing a space with a roommate who is living with his woman? They are encountering younger hostel dwellers who do not respect them and their position in the hostel. They also have to deal with the increase in numbers of house dwellers who use the hostel to sell drugs, drug addicts who use the hostel as their drug den, and hostel dwellers who buy stolen goods from these drug addicts. On top of that they have to deal with hostel problems such as fighting the municipality from evicting them, political clashes. They also engage with the community about issues that arise in the community, issues relating to hostel dwellers. For instance the constant

blaming for all the chaos and crime in the community, they need to go to these engagements and defend hostel dwellers and find ways to coexist with house dwellers.

2. How Did The Hostel Committee Come About?

The hostel committee at the Mamelodi West hostel was formed in the early onset of the hostel, in the late 1970s. At the time hostel dwellers needed someone or people to represent them when it came to issues relating to accommodation, rent, grievances with overcrowding, crime and etc. Mamphela Ramphele (1993: 89) writes in her book, *A bed called home*, that “the Western Cape Men’s Hostel Association was formed in 1983 with the goal of working for the general welfare of all who reside in the hostels.” The Hostel Dwellers Association among other things aimed to ensure that hostel dwellers were able to “live with their families near their places of work; to campaign for the provision of family housing and special married quarters; to work for full residence and employment rights and an end to the present contract system; to work for the upgrading of facilities and amenities; to encourage and provide opportunities for adult education and cultural activities” (Ramphele 1993:89-90). In the mid-1980s violence was increasing in South Africa, committees were established in various townships by yard, by streets and by block. They were established to manage the residents’ affairs, the consensus was amongst black people that they needed to take – in as much as ‘the system’ allowed them - their destiny into their own hands and show that they are able to live as human beings and as a community; the people introduced conflict management and were building relations as a community.

Similarly the Hostel Committee at this hostel, it too aimed to ensure that the needs of the hostel dwellers were represented and attended to. At the beginning, the hostel was represented by an individual; the hostel dwellers appointed a spokesperson at the time, an individual who would speak on their behalf to the councillor. The councillor would then report to the municipality to discuss the complaints or request hostel dwellers had. The spokesperson appointed is a hostel dweller; the councillor for the Mamelodi West area (Block C) where the hostel is situated, is a house dweller, so this became problematic because the councillor was seen as not having the best interest of the hostel. The councillor was seen as not understanding the urgency of hostel dwellers. As well as not prioritizing the complaints and request of the hostel dwellers because he was an outsider and as such he lacked the urgency needed for this position of being the middleperson.

The spokesperson was also sometimes blamed for not portraying and explaining the issues the hostel dwellers had properly. It angered hostel dwellers because he was seen as not representing them with the urgency this position required, they needed to be heard and taken seriously. The spokesperson took to issue with the fact that he was accused of not representing the hostel dwellers well. It was then agreed that he would be accompanied by another hostel dweller who could help with relaying the concerns of the hostel dwellers to the councillor. It was not long until the councillor was seen as the main problem and a hindrance to hostel dwellers' progress, they saw the councillor as someone who prioritized the needs of house dwellers and neglected the hostel dwellers. It was then decided that the councillor will no longer be part of the equation of dealing with the Municipality, but that hostel dwellers will represent themselves and negotiate deals themselves. They believed that no one can speak clearly and better on their behalf than another hostel dweller.

A group of hostel dwellers were then appointed to form the hostel committee, they would become responsible for relaying the concerns of hostel dwellers to relevant stakeholders. They would mediate inside the hostel and outside the hostel. They would help maintain some form of order in the hostel, handle all issues regarding criminal activities inside the hostel, protect hostel dwellers from house dwellers and to some extent thus protect the image of the hostel. The forming of the hostel committee came with a lot of struggles; distrust arose because the people appointed to the committee started forming alliances with house dwellers at the expense and progress of the hostel. This created a lot of anger and resentment for hostel dwellers, because they started to notice that slowly one by one the hostel committee members were moving out of the hostel and they were buying houses. *Malome* Chippa and *Malome* Moholo tell me that the hostel committee in the late 1970s late 1980, their intention was good, they had the right motivation. According to them the needs of the hostel dwellers were prioritized and they made a huge difference. It was only later that things changed for the worse, as time passed by, hostel committee members became corrupt, greed got the better of them.

House dwellers are blamed for influencing the hostel committee members, specifically the councillors as well as workers for the Mamelodi municipality. They are accused of having formed an alliance with the hostel committee members, an alliance that will ensure that they all get money from the state that is meant for the hostel. It is alleged that the hostel committee

members are supposed to agree with all the decisions that are made by the officials of the municipality and the councillors, in order to have a piece of the pie. They are supposed to calm hostel dwellers down, by ensuring that they do not revolt. They must promise them that all is taken care of and things take time to fix. It is alleged that it became the job of the hostel committee to keep the hostel dwellers quiet, to keep making promises until the members got their money and were able to move out of the hostel. Every year the government allocates money to the hostel, the money is given to the municipality, and in this case the Mamelodi municipality receives the money from the government. This money is meant for hostel upgrades, electricity, water and sanitation, and repairs. According to *Ntate Sello* the money is millions and millions of Rands that has been looted by municipality officials, along with the councillors and hostel committee members. The money is split amongst the councillors, the municipality staff and the hostel committee, and the hostel dwellers get nothing but empty promises. Political alliances also played a huge role in creating distrust between the hostel committee and hostel dwellers. Initially it was designed that the hostel committee members were all of the same political party, at the time, they all belong to the African National Congress (ANC), the councillor was also an ANC member and the Municipality was run by the ANC.

Ntate Sello, who is the current chairperson for the hostel committee tells me that this political alliance was supposed to benefit the hostel dwellers; they were supposed to work together without any political differences, or clashes hindering the progress of the hostel. This strategy was designed to make it easier for hostel dwellers to have access to services from the state, with the municipality being run by the same political party these members were part of. This was supposed to ensure that hostel dwellers were helped easily, this alliance was supposed to work to their advantage. A good relationship forged between these three parties, would make things uncomplicated for them to work together, and hostel dwellers would gain from this. They wanted to capitalize on this good political alliance. What started as a great plan turned into a disaster; because what hostel dwellers did not foresee, was that the Mamelodi municipality officials and the councillor would succeed in convincing the hostel committee members to abandon their responsibilities as the hostel committee, similarly to the former hostel committee. Hostel dwellers I interviewed alleged that the hostel committee members were bribed, *Malome Moholo* was one of the many who said the following:

“I know for a fact that the committee was bribed, they were promised money in return for their cooperation to screw us over. They think we are stupid, that we do not know that they are in cahoots with the municipality and the councillor. How can all of these men who were working for an *umlungu* (white people) for years, all of a sudden afford to buy a house or car now? All along they could not afford to buy those beautiful things, but as soon as they are made hostel committee members they can afford to buy them. *Hah no* (an expression of disbelief) the only thing this shows is that they are corrupt. They are making fools of us, they get to live in nice houses and drive nice cars with our money. That is why I do not trust the committee, I do not even go to their meetings; it is just a waste of time. All they are good for is making empty promises and spending our money.”

Hostel dwellers like Moholo strongly believe that the committee is there to serve their own agenda. He believes that it is there to enrich itself, and make empty promises to naive hostel dwellers, while the committee members walk away with a lot of money. Other hostel dwellers note that the focus for the hostel committee members has become obtaining financial freedom for themselves, ensuring that they get compensated for their role in this scheme at the expense of the hostel dwellers. Aubrey, a hostel dweller in his early thirties who has been staying at the hostel for the last seven years, noted the following:

“These people (municipality and councillor) were able to get the committee members to do what they want, because they have what everyone wants, money. Money is the key to everything. Do you think if someone offered me a lot of money I would say no? Of course not! We are talking about millions here; I would take it and get out of here. Look at where I am living; the hostel is a horrible place to live in, no one actually loves living at the hostel. The committee is corrupt, but who is not? I do not like them, but I cannot blame them for being selfish. Here at the hostel, it is everyone for themselves, no one is here for the good of others. That is just how it is.”

It is no wonder hostel dwellers like *Ntate Sello* and Aubrey believe that the municipality officials, as well as the councillor were able to capitalize on the hostel committee members' desperation to have adequate accommodation; exploiting their need to own property. Dubiously finding ways to get the hostel committee members to agree to their bidding. They found a better way to do this, by offering them money to become property owners. The hostel committee members, it is alleged, lied to the hostel dwellers by saying that they were working together with

the councillor and municipality to ensure that hostel dwellers get permanent housing, getting access to water and sanitation. These empty promises were them stalling time, in order to eventually move out, and no longer be bothered by the hostel. This would mean that soon after they leave the hostel, they will no longer be part of the hostel committee and the hostel is no longer their responsibility.

The hostel dwellers would then have to appoint new members in the committee, specifically ANC members, with the hopes that the political alliance might save them. Only to be disappointed again when these newly appointed members abandoned their responsibilities, and were convinced by the municipality officials to work with them, repeating the cycle of corruption. In 2015 the hostel dwellers became fed up by the empty promises that were made to them by the committee members, municipality and councillors. They no longer trusted the committee members to represent their interests; things escalated when a physical altercation occurred, a couple of hostel dwellers beat up committee members accusing them of colluding with the outsiders (the municipality and councillor). Allegations of corruptions were thrown; the hostel dwellers said that the committee members were traitors and were allied with the *fat cats* (municipality and councillor) at the expense of their own people, which were the hostel dwellers.

The hostel dwellers' action was also brought by the fact that they started noticing that hostel committee members were all leaving the hostel a couple of years in the job. They would either serve the entire term of three years or leave before having served their entire term. It angered them that their living conditions were not getting better; in actual fact everything seems to be getting worse, while the lives of the committee members were flourish with the money that is meant for their progress. It was no surprise then when in 2016 the municipal elections were held, that the ANC lost to the DA, taking over the Tshwane municipality. The DA was able to win the Tshwane/Mamelodi municipality easily, because the ANC was suffering from the Jacob Zuma's Nkandla scandal as well as the Gupta scandal. These scandals made a lot of ANC supporters angry; people were tired of empty promises and they were looking at their unstable and uncertain lives and feeling frustrated. They felt that the ANC has failed them; it has not kept their promises. The ANC top officials were getting richer and richer as evident by the President at the time Jacob Zuma, who had just renovated his lavish house in Nkandla, KwaZulu-Natal, using tax payer's money. Hostel dwellers were disheartened and took action by changing political parties.

The DA won not necessarily because they campaigned well but rather that hostel dwellers were sick and tired of the ANC's false promises, they were exhausted by the lack of change occurring in the hostel. The DA did not have to do much to convince the hostel dwellers to vote for them, the hostel dwellers were already changing political parties in anyway. The hostel dwellers had a general accord that the DA will be their new political party, they will vote for it. Hostel dwellers went so far as to campaign for the DA outside the hostel and the DA was able to win because of the large number of votes it got from the hostel dwellers.

Tshori and Aubrey are both young male hostel dwellers, they tell me that they made the political change because they realised that if they continued voting for the ANC they lives will never change. They will continue to be made fools. Tshori works as a security guard; he says he was disgusted by the opulent lifestyle led by politicians, especially the ANC members that were flaunting their wealth in the community. The councillor along with her children are said to be enjoying the money meant for the hostel dwellers, driving luxurious cars and having recently renovated their house with money that belongs to the hostel dwellers. Even though both hostel residents have changed political parties, they do not trust the hostel committee. They note that the hostel committee is important sometimes, because it helps provide paperwork that recognises you as a hostel dweller. For instance you are registered at the municipality as hostel dweller through the hostel committee. They are in charge of the registry, if you do not appear in the registry, you are not a hostel dweller. Those not on the registry will not be included in the new hostels that are going to be built. The hostel committee is also responsible for providing proof of residence to hostel dwellers who want to for instance open bank accounts, buy a bed, and buy a cellphone. These two men recognise the services that the hostel committee provides, but it does not recognise their authority.

3. How Are Members Appointed?

Every three years the hostel dwellers appoint individuals who will form the committee and will become mediators to the outside world. They will ensure that the hostel is legitimized by having lawyers at hand. They will deal with the municipality and councillor, and they represent the hostel at community engagements and working alongside South Africa Police Service (SAPS) and Community Police Forum (CPF). Each hostel dweller has to contribute R10 in order to pay the lawyers' fees; this money is contributed every week and falls under the services the

committee ensures are received at the hostel. Each hostel dweller has the chance to nominate a candidate of their choosing, and it is then voted on. A meeting is held, attended by all hostel dwellers, each candidate makes their way to the front. There they will be voted for by people through raising of hands. The candidates who get the most votes will fill in the 7 member positions that form the hostel committee. The positions are: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Spokesperson and Security Liaison officers. Each person is filled by one person except the security liaison officer positions that is filled by two people.

The positions again are voted for by the hostel dwellers themselves, each position requires a certain skill sets. The spokesperson position needs someone who can speak more than one South African language fluently. Hostel dwellers are of different ethnic groups, and all speak different languages he needs to be able to communicate with all of them. He thus needs to be a people's person, while the Chairperson position requires someone who is a leader, someone much older and highly respected in the hostel. Someone who can speak English and has been living in the hostel for more than 15 years, he has to know the history of the hostel. The Vice Chairperson also has to have similar traits to the Chairperson, a long time hostel resident, highly respect, older and gets along with people. The Security Liaisons positions are filled by younger hostel dwellers, who also have lived at the hostel for a long time, who are street smart and know their way around the township. They are responsible for identifying weak spots at the hostel, places in the hostels that attract unsavoury characters and are susceptible to crime. *Malome* Moholo noted that:

“Hostel dwellers choose committee members who have lived at the hostel for a long period of time, who have history with the place. You cannot have lived at the hostel for three or four years and think you can be a hostel committee member. It is not going to happen; you are still a newbie at the hostel. Trust needs to be built with the people you live with; they need to get to know you more. Know what kind of person they are dealing with, your character. You need to have endured the harshness of the hostel for you to be chosen. People might like you but that does not mean you will be voted for and become a committee member.

The hostel committee is able to legitimize the hostel by emerging as an authority figure and providing some form of stability in the hostel. For instance the hostel committee members made sure that all hostel dwellers are registered with the municipality. Each hostel room had to provide

a list of one's name and Identity number to the hostel committee; they would then take it to the municipality to register the hostel dwellers. If you are not on that list you are not regarded as a hostel dweller. The register is used when proving proof of address when dwellers want to open a bank account. You will first go to the hostel committee to ask for the letter, they will then ask for your name and room number. If you appear on the list, you are sent to the municipality. The hostel holds the power to legitimize one's stay or not. They have also noted that if you are not on the registry, you will not get a house or room in the new housing units; you also will not get a title deed. The attendance of meetings is also critical; they take a register. If you do not attend meetings, they remove your name from the registry because you are regarded as not a hostel dweller anymore.

4. Who Are The Current Hostel Committee Members?

Ntate Sello is the Chairperson of the of the hostel committee. Born in Limpopo, speaks more than three languages and is educated. He is a hostel elder, who is highly respected, and has lived at the hostel for the last twenty years. He is a big Democratic Alliance (DA) supporter and fully-fledged member. He is a well-spoken older man and is trusted by the hostel dwellers. He is incredibly intelligent, he studied medicine when he was younger but due to health reason could not further his studies.

Ntate Leeto is the spokesperson for the hostel committee; he has lived at the hostel for the last 16 years. He speaks fluent Zulu, Sepedi and English. He works as a security guard at Ford Motor Company. He is a people's person.

Ntate Mahlangu is the secretary of the hostel committee, has lived at the hostel for more than twenty years. He is from Burgersfort Limpopo and he is also a highly respected hostel dweller. He is a quiet man, who keeps to himself and is very strict; he is the assistant to the chairperson.

Ntate Mogae is the Vice Chairperson and *Ntate Maluleka* is the Treasurer of the hostel committee; both men have lived at the hostel for longer than twenty five years. They both ensure that the hostel committee have the correct paperwork and that any financial transactions have a paper trail. *Ntate Alfred* and *Ntate Johnny* are responsible for the security of the hostel. They are both young men, in their mid-thirties; both have lived at the hostel for more than ten years. *Ntate Johnny* is a taxi driver and *Ntate Alfred* is a baker in a Bakery. They got the positions as security

liaisons because they are very familiar with the township; they have many house dweller friends and are street smart.

5. What Have They Done So Far?

The current projects that are underway include installing of new plumbing, the hostel now has new working toilets; they received new taps, they now can get clean running water. It has been arranged with the municipality for them to come every week to pick up the rubbish that is piling outside the hostel. I am told by *Ntate* Leeto (the spokesperson) that the Committee ensured employment preference was first hostel dwellers; these were unemployed qualified hostel dwellers that had experience in construction, who would be the hired hands. According to him, they were given these jobs first, because the upgrades after all are for them, so employing them is beneficial for everyone. *Ntate* Sello (Chairperson) says they are awaiting the Tshwane MEC of housing to get back to them, they had agreed with the municipality and councillors to build new housing for hostel dwellers. Family housing is a key necessity for most hostel dwellers; they want to be able to share their rooms with their families. The provision of electricity and title deeds are imperative for hostel dwellers. They demand electricity; other dwellers do not mind paying for electricity whilst others blatantly refuse to pay for it. They argue that they have the right to have electricity, to live in a dignified place, even if they cannot afford to pay for it because they are unemployed. The MEC of housing, I am told by *Ntate* Sello has promised to meet the demands of the hostel dwellers, to cooperate with them. This is despite having missed two meetings that I attend where the agenda was talking about the new housing for hostel dwellers. A representative (secretary) was sent at the first meeting, the hostel dwellers were displeased with this, but accepted the apology and listened to the representative make promises of providing new housing (family units) to hostel dwellers. The second meeting the MEC of housing did not show up at all, this angered hostel dwellers who attended the meeting. They said that they were again not being taken seriously and are given empty promises. The chairperson calmed them down by promising to following up on the matter.

Ntate Sello: “*Bagagetso* (my fellow people) I hear your complaints; I will follow up on the matter of why our MEC did not show up today. The DA must remember that it was put into office by us; we voted in our numbers for change and made them win. We can easily remove them from office as well. The DA is mistaken, if it thinks we can be fooled, that it can use us to serve their agenda,

they are wrong. We are no one's' puppets. They forget that we changed political parties before; we can easily do it again. They must ask the ANC what happened the last time; we will go to the EFF next, if they do not do as we say.”

His speech was met with applause and laughter, hostel dwellers agreeing that they will switch political parties if they do not get what they want. The hostel committee came about because of a need to represent the demands of hostel dwellers. Political relationships were already an integral part of making the hostel and its outside relationships work. The difference in the agendas led to a political clash that resulted in the switch of political parties, change in relationships as well; this then disrupted the cohesion that was formed with the outside world. Failed promises led to political change that formed a new hostel committee: A hostel committee that no longer served at the will of the municipality and councillor; a committee that did not get along with the councillor who is an ANC member; a committee that threatens to change political parties if they do not get their way.

6. Hostel Committee and Their Relationship with ‘The Outside’

The hostel committee is a mediator for the hostel, against the outside world. It also interestingly builds and destroys relationship with the outside world, according to the benefit it gets from the parties. *Ntate Sello* tells me that the committee and the outside world need to have a symbiotic relationship, where both benefit from each other, it has to be mutual. If the other party is benefitting more than the other party, it starts being controlling, arrogant and exploits the other party. He explains how the ANC alliance ended, because the municipality officials and councillor were getting greedy, arrogant and wanted to dictate the terms to the committee members. This did not end well, because the committee members grew tired and were sloppy. Their sloppiness ended their piggy bank, and everyone lost; especially the municipality officials and councillor. They now have to work with a new hostel committee of a different political party that dislikes them and will not be bribed. Things are different now he tells me; crime in the hostel is being taken care of. We now have an office right at the hostel block where crime is occurring, so that we can make a statement that we are different and we are not scared of drug dealers and their police officer friends. We will defend the hostel from outsiders who are trying to ruin it, with their dirty dealings. Our job as the committee is to make sure that we do not lose deals because of house dwellers that are rotten and making this place dirty.

The hostel committee as I mentioned earlier has access to a lawyer. The idea of a lawyer came about when the hostel dwellers took the municipality to court, because the municipality wanted to evict hostel dwellers. They wanted to sell the land where the hostel is situated to a private buyer who wanted to build a shopping mall on it. *Ntate Mogae* (Vice Chairperson) tells me that the hostel dwellers gathered money together to hire a lawyer who would defend them in court. The municipality argued that the hostel belongs to the state and as such it can do whatever it wants with it, including selling it and evicting the hostel dwellers. The lawyer the hostel dwellers hired argued that the municipality cannot evict residents from their current home without offering them alternative housing. He further argued that the municipality neglected and abandoned the hostel for years, without care as to what actually happens to it. The court ruled in favour of the hostel dwellers, making it unlawful for the municipality to evict the hostel dwellers. The hostel dwellers have had multiple lawyers represent them throughout the years.

Throughout my interviews and conversations both male and female hostel dwellers kept insinuating that the local ward councillor is corrupt. There seems to be this distinct anger directed at her. She is blamed for the demise of the hostel, the decrepit state of the hostel is said to be her fault. The reason for this is that she and the municipality are seen as colluding together to pocket the funds made available for the development of the hostel. It is alleged that they are pocketing the money themselves and are sponsoring their families with it. Ms X says that the councillor's children are being raised by hostel dwellers, because the money that is meant to improve their living conditions is now feeding the councillor's children. She says that essentially the hostel has become a feeding scheme for the councillor's family and friends. The councillor is demonized both by hostel dwellers and house dwellers; she is painted as the ANC patsy and an evil witch who does not want to share the money that the ANC gives her. The stories I am told about the councillor are totally contradictory of the things she told me during my interview with her. She is painted as a money hungry woman with no values, she is said to be blinded and corrupted by the position and power she holds.

The image painted of her is one of a woman who cannot handle power and is greedy. The reality here is that many of the male community members seem to have an issue with the councillor, because she is a woman. They refuse to be led by a female, or so it seems. Some male hostel dwellers said that they will not be made fools of, by a woman who is stealing their money. As

can be seen, the hostel committee and the councillor have a very sour relationship; the hostel committee is made up entirely of males. To add salt to the wound, the hostel committee are all DA members while the councillor is an ANC member, so they absolutely dislike each other. Hostel dwellers told me a story about how they marched to the councillor's house in their numbers, to demand that she explain why she is building a crèche on the land that is supposed to be building new hostels for them. I am told that old hostels were demolished, and in their place they were promised by both the MEC of housing, Municipality and the councillor to build new hostels. These new hostels were going to house the hostel dwellers and their families, they are called family units. They were surprised when a crèche started being built, they hostel dwellers were so angry that they stopped the construction workers from finishing the project. A fight between the construction workers and hostel dwellers ensued, it resulted in the construction workers fleeing for their lives and leaving behind their work tools. The work tools were then stolen by drug users, and sold to community members at a low price, in order to buy themselves drugs. The councillor is thus very much painted as a villain who wants to get rid of the hostels and pocket the money.

Crime exists in the hostel, it takes place and is understood by hostel dwellers in various ways. According to some hostel dwellers I spoke to, crime mostly occurs outside the hostel, and hostel dwellers are the ones who benefit from it. They note that hostel dwellers are less likely to steal from each other, because there is an understanding that you cannot steal from a fellow brother. There seems to be an understanding or an agreement that hostel dwellers do not steal from each other. Either because they recognize that they are in the same economic status so stealing from each other would not be useful. Hostel dwellers that are unemployed are mostly the ones who commit crime, and house dwellers that are drug addicts will steal anything from other house dwellers, and sell the stolen goods to hostel dwellers at a cheaper price so that they can use the money to pay for their drugs. The hostel is used by house dwellers not only as a drug den, but as a hideout place as well. They conduct their business in the hostel, but do not actually live in the hostel. Recently in 'Record' (a local newspaper) an article was written, it spoke about crime at hostels and how the police are not doing their jobs, but instead are taking bribes from drug dealers. Hostel dwellers were complaining about the police, how they are taking bribes from drug dealers instead of protecting the community. The article further mentions that hostel dwellers are sick and tired of the police not doing their jobs, they initially took matters into their

owns hands, but were told by the police that it was against the law. Now the police are the ones who are taking bribes from drug dealers, and failing the community. In the article, hostel dwellers are saying that the drug problem will never end because the police are taking bribes instead of doing their jobs. Block Y is the dangerous part of the hostel; this is the block occupied by drug dealers and drug users. Residents are robbed regularly; this part of the hostel, there is a lot of crime, prostitution, robberies and burglaries. Officers patrolling the area are taking bribes. The newspaper notes that hostel dwellers have complained about drug addicts having invaded the hostel for years, but nothing has been done. *Ntate Sello* said to me, this is the reason why the hostel committee decided to have their office in this part of the hostel, so that they can spearhead crime in this part of the hostel. It was really an eye opener for me when I visited this part of the hostel with my father to meet a hostel dweller I was interviewing. I remember this day so clearly:

On the 30th of May 2017 I made my way to where the head office of the hostel committee is located. I went there to interview a long-time friend of my father, who is a hostel dweller. He has lived at this hostel; block Y for more than 20 years. Block Y is a section of the hostel that is considered very violent, because it is said to occupy criminals and drug users. Walking in this section of the hostel is scary. It is very quiet, the building is dilapidated, broken windows, and graffiti on the walls, clothes are hanging from window. The place smells of a mixture of urine, cow dung and dead rodents. This hostel also has a lot of entrances since there is no enclosure around the building; this gives people free reign to walk in and out of the hostel. Usually only those familiar with the building will walk in, and that is not a lot of people; the state of the building is enough to ensure that people stay away from it. Add to that now criminals (drug lords and thieves) and drug users are synonymous with the building especially this specific hostel. Many hostel dwellers have said that this hostel in the 1990's was extremely dangerous, because the men who lived in it would rob community residents and rape women who would pass by the hostel on their way to work. That is where its reputation of being a very dangerous hostel comes from. As I walk in I hold my father's hand, a narrow pathway, on each side of the pathway weeds are growing everywhere, and it surrounds the building, giving it an even creepier look. A group of young men sitting in a circle smoking what looks like marijuana on one end of the building, talking amongst each other while looking at us; this of course terrifies me even more as I tighten my grip on my father's hand. Walking further in the building, we stop at an end of a hallway leading to the other side of the building, where I notice another group of men gambling, they are playing a board game, betting against each other. My father recognizes one of his friends

and calls him over; the friend makes his way to us and greets us, they then proceed to chat. Two women pass by us; I am surprised by their presence and ease in the hostel. They are strolling and chatting with each other with such effortlessness, suggesting that they are familiar with the hostel. The reason I am surprised is that I was told by various people that women are not really present at this hostel, because of the danger that is associated with the place. They are afraid of going near it. My father finishes his conversation with his friend, and we continue to walk to our destination. We pass by a leaking tap, and because it smells so badly near this tap I actually thought it was the sewage system leaking. A man is busy pouring water in a bucket when we pass by the tap, looking around the hostel, I notice a garden a couple of feet away from the leaking tap, as I approach closer I recognize it is a red chilli garden. The person is growing their own chilli. We continue walking until we reach a group of men sitting, enjoying the sunshine. We greet them, and are greeted back. One of the men asks my father if I'm his daughter and he says yes. They proceed to talk amongst themselves as I stand and observe my surroundings. I notice that where the men are seated, actually used to be a room. I later am told that it was a kitchen, and was destroyed by the hostel residents when they were fighting with the municipality. This destruction has left behind its vestiges of the kitchen; the floor and the side walls. The place was so full of life, I saw people sitting with their friends gambling, and some were chatting amongst each other under trees enjoying a beer. It also felt eerie, I felt out of place. *Nyaope* users were walking around in the hostel, cars were parked in the hostel, music blaring from their speakers. The cars are said to belong to the drug dealers.

Ntate Sello tells me that the hostel committee purposely situated itself on block Y to try and curb the crime that is increasing on this hostel block. They needed to also show people that they are serious about their responsibilities to the hostel; both hostel dwellers and house dwellers need to see the committee transform this place, especially the hostel dwellers that are sceptical about the intentions and agenda of the committee. Some hostel dwellers believe that the committee members will not be any different from their predecessors; they will also fall in line and be bribed and eventually serve their own interest and take the money and move out of the hostel. The hostel committee has a lot of work to do, to try and convince some hostel dwellers that they are different, and will serve the needs of the people who appointed them. One of the first things they want to do is to stop the drug dealers and addicts that occupy the hostel. They are working with the Community Police Forum (CPF) as well as the South African Police Service (SAPS) to curb crime and drugs. They had a meeting where SAPS, CPF and the Hostel Committee agreed

that the drugs in the community were getting out of hand, and many community residents are in danger. A plan was put in motion that a raid will take place at the hostel; block Y specifically, where SAPS will arrest the dealers. When I asked *Ntate* Leeto how the raid went, his response was: “What raid? The police tipped off the dealers, we got there and there was no one, all the drug dealers and the drug addicts were nowhere to be seen”. The committee believes that the police who collect bribe money from the dealers tipped them off, telling them when the raid would take place and what time. By the time the police and CPF and the committee got there, no one was in sight. The hostel is said to have been deserted, and no raid took place. The police just looked around and left. The committee blames the police for corrupt police officers, while SAPS blames the hostel dwellers for enabling drug dealers and not reporting crime, but instead buying stolen goods from drug addicts.

The committee and SAPS have a very rocky and distrusting relationship with each other. The hostel committee as part of the many roles it plays, also bails out hostel dwellers from jail. This volatile relationship with SAPS could be attributed to that. Many hostel dwellers have tried to take matters into their own hands by beating up drug addicts and drug dealers here and there. They usually get arrested by the police; the hostel committee will step in and bail them out of jail. Hostel dwellers arrested for assaulting drug dealers and addicts is commended and accepted in the hostel, it is said to be done in the spirit of protecting the hostel from outsiders. So they will bail a hostel dweller out. If a hostel dweller is arrested for domestic violence or stealing they are not bailed out of jail, they are on their own. That is seen as reckless and stupid behaviour that they do not promote. It is behaviour that does not align with the image that they want the hostel to be portrayed as. I also asked the committee members if they get a salary for their job positions in the committee and they said no. According to them, they do the job voluntarily. This is a contradiction to the response I got when I spoke to the hostel dwellers. They believe that the committee gets paid by the municipality every month. One hostel dweller even said that no one does things for free; there is no such thing as volunteering for a job.

Conclusion

The hostel committee serves as a mediator for the hostel; it mediates inside and outside political processes. On the inside of the hostel it emerges as a leader through various processes such as being able to provide proof of residence for the hostel. It is through the hostel committee that you

are legitimized in the hostel. It acts as a form of authority, it is through the hostel committee that you are able to communicate and engage with hostel dwellers. It is interesting that whilst no one really recognises the hostel committee as a great powerful authority, it does seem to have some legitimacy. Hostel dwellers respect what they can get from the hostel committee, but at the same time nobody really respects it. The committee is seen as trying to control hostel dwellers, dwellers that refuse to be controlled by anyone.

The hostel Committee is a group of older hostel residents who are trying to legitimize the hostel space, a space that is more complicated than they make it to be. The older generation in the hostel are trying to maintain power, trying to restore the hostel to its former glory. A committee of older hostel dwellers is trying to control a younger generation that just does not care about the hostel. This is the perceived crisis of social reproduction. Older people who are trying to make sense of the world that they are in now, a hostel that is chaotic and in dysfunction; a younger generation of hostel dwellers that does not relate to the hostel in the same way. This generational gap exists. The younger generation will use the services offered by the hostel committee, but will not respect them as the authority or leader of the hostel. This is a generational thing, older men and younger men do not relate to the hostel the same. The older generation remember the hostel different; they have a desire to return the hostel to its former glory. This is seen through their attempts to legitimize and structure the hostel. They want to organize the hostel and want it to be respected and dignified again. The older generation is nostalgic about the hostel; they are trying to maintain respectability. A complexity of this hostel committee exists; it is important to note the hostel committee is trying to maintain power in a complex space, a space that is ever changing. There are generational differences evident here, that make the hostel space more complex.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

The Mamelodi West is a space that is complex, interesting and perplexing. The literature informs us that hostels were designed for the purposes of migrant labour. They were built for black migrants who would leave their homes in the rural areas to seek employment. The Mamelodi hostel was similar to that of the mine hostels because it housed black migrants; though it was different in that this township hostel was designed to house both state employed, and privately employed workers. The hostel catered for the needs of the industrial area in which Mamelodi was situated close to. It was used to enforce segregation laws which helped control the miners by using *indunas* to enforce the laws. These *indunas* were security guards and police officers who worked for the government and stayed at the hostel.

The hostels residents have different meanings attached to the hostel; it represents different things to hostel dwellers, house dwellers and dual dwellers. All three dwellers agree that the condition of the hostel today is decrepit, it is falling apart. But hostel and dual dwellers note that, even though it is falling apart, it is also their source of strength. The current dilapidated condition of the hostel is regarded by hostel dwellers as a good reflection of the governing of the ruling party; the chaos, the lack of leadership and services, everyone wants to be in control but it just leads to destruction and violence. Many of the hostel dwellers feel that the government has ruled this country into instability, where unemployment levels are as high as ever and where everyone is greedy and wants power. Thus, the chaos perceived by the older generation in the hostel is seen as stemming from the governing party. Many elder hostel dwellers see the hostel as chaos, a chaos which is echoed in wider society – for them at least. In this sense, the Mamelodi West hostel can be seen as a microcosm of older men's' perceptions of the society in which they live, mirroring the changes in politics and economics over time. The idea of freedom had consequences, these consequences led to the perceived destruction of the hostel. They further note that today, criminals occupy the building. Both house dwellers and hostel dwellers took the idea of democracy too far. The perceived lack of control and chaos, the chaos that is seen as emerging from the hostel, is where the stigma is constructed by house dwellers.

The stigma that is constructed around the hostel emerges in various ways. It tells us about the relationship between hostel dwellers and house dwellers and how they perceive each other. Hostel dwellers recognize that house dwellers dehumanize them through various processes of stigmatization. The stigmatization that occurs is a two way process: House dwellers are constructing the stigma to express their frustrations in the township. They are able to assert their authority by labelling hostel dwellers in a negative light. While hostel dwellers are able to use the stigma put upon them by outsiders to assert their masculinity and negotiate positions of power. The negotiation of power is used by making reference to notions of tradition, their engagement in intimate relationship with female house dwellers, as well as health as a way to strengthen their position. Hostel dwellers are aware of this constructed stigma against them. They react to it by using it in various ways to negotiate and assert their authority in the community. The stigma then becomes a two way process where both dwellers stigmatize each other. The presence of women in the hostel has further added to this stigma and the perceived collapse and chaos in the hostel.

The presence of women in the hostel has disrupted this space through what is regarded as unsavoury and undignified behaviour. The presence of women seems to have created resentment and anger for male hostel dwellers. Hostels tend to represent a male dominated environment, women in this hostel are seen by both hostel and house dwellers as challenging men and they are challenging men in what is considered by most to be 'their' space. They are going against the norm (historically, as mentioned in previous chapters, hostels have been spaces where women were forbidden). Women were only ever meant to be visitors in the hostel, never actual residents in the hostel. The hostel represents and reproduces a patriarchal system, and these women are perceived by some men as representing a complication to this well-established system of control. While the women in the hostel see this space as an avenue for their survival. They express their attachment to the hostel through either being romantically involved with a hostel dweller or engaging in sex for money exchange relationships. Female hostel dwellers note that they are unwanted in the hostel, but are challenging the men by insisting on staying in the hostel.

The survival strategies in the hostel are an indication of the creative and resilient spirit of hostel dwellers. They are able to make this hostel space that is stigmatized by the house dwellers, as an

avenue in which they make their money from. The various economic processes that occur in the hostel ensure the survival of the residents.

The hostel committee is a group of older hostel residents who want to ensure that the hostel and its residents are respected by trying to legitimize this space; a space that is stigmatized and has been abandoned by the municipality. The hostel committee emerges as a form of leadership, despite not being recognised as one by most hostel dwellers. The younger hostel dwellers perceive the hostel committee as trying to control them; they disregard the committee and argue that the hostel space is a place where all residents are equal. They want to use the hostel as they see fit. The perceived crisis of social reproduction is evident in the relationship between the hostel committee, who are an older generation who are trying to control a younger more rebellious generation. The committee is frustrated and angry at the state of the hostel and blame the younger generation for its poor condition.

The hostel has the older generation trying to control things, and the younger generation coming into the hostel and pushing against it; where at the same time stigmatization is occurring, and different gender roles are emerging. Things are changing over time; a changing society over time. The hostel seems to have elements of that change, and elements of resistance to that change at the same time. There are some hostel dwellers, who are trying to hold on to the essence of what the hostel was; old people are holding on to it because of the perceived crisis of reproduction. The younger hostel dwellers are coming in and are relating to the hostel space in a different way, and that is representative of the changing nature of democracy in South Africa.

Could the hostel be a microcosm of South African society at large? Could it be symbolic of what is happening in South Africa in general? Could what is happening in the hostel be happening in wider society? There is the segregation of different ethnicities, men who are frustrated with women entering their spaces, older men trying to be traditional. There are all these tensions that are going on in the hostel, and have changed overtime. It is important to understand such a hostel space. If this hostel does represent a microcosm of society, is this something we can learn from? How can we make sense of this seemingly mad space? To what extent does the hostel represent the current power struggle in South Africa? To what extent does the hostel represent South Africa in general? I have tried to demonstrate these ethnographic nuances, to show that there are

interesting things happening in this hostel space. More research has to be done here. I have only looked at one section in this hostel. There is more to look at, more work to be done.



Figure 10 A Hostel Dweller who sells goods that he finds through hustling

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