

Dreams, hope and future

An anthropological study about poverty and future plans among of vulnerable youth in Cape Town

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Abstract

This thesis is a result of Minor Field Studies (MFS) carried out in Cape Town, South Africa and funded by the Swedish public authority SIDA - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. South Africa struggles with poverty and has the greatest inequality in the world. The overall aim is to investigate life opportunities and conditions for vulnerable young people in today's South Africa, examining the hopes, dreams and plans for the future among young people from economically and socially deprived areas. The intention is to contribute to a deeper understanding of underlying factors that may contribute to young people ending up or remaining in poverty. The thesis is based on participant observation in Wingfield Primary school in Kensington and the suburb of Khayelitsha, an informal settlement, to discuss and understand South Africa today. Interaction and discussions with various youth will be analyzed through theoretical terms such as social mobility and structural violence. Ethnography reveals that vulnerable young people have aspirations and willingness to engage in upward social mobility at an early age. Young people also experience difficulties in reaching their goals, and express how their social class background has impacted their future plan. Political structures and unequal power relations have a central role in youth's aspiration to a better life.

Keywords: Hope, Social mobility, Capital, Social suffering, Temporality, Potentiality

Preface

I want to thank SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) for the financial support that made this fieldwork in Cape town, South Africa possible, the new experiences and knowledge that I have gained will be carried with me for the rest of my life. I would like to give many thanks to my supervisor Anna Bohlin for all the valuable advice and support before and during the process of my research studies. A great appreciation to my abroad supervisor and friend Jeremy Wyngaard for the help and support. You have been a lifesaver for my studies.

Before leaving for my fieldwork destination, I felt uncertain about the trip. After returning home I felt appreciation and joy for having met fantastic people who have helped me with open arms. Working and getting to know everyone at Wingfield Primary school has been a real pleasure. To the principal of the school, Grant Poole, I want to say thank you for letting me do my studies at your school and for all the help you have given me. To my co-trainers, Kian and Chad, thank you for all the joyful moments and conversation we shared. Brian, whom I met by chance and has been a contributor to my studies and a good friend. Thank you for giving me an insight into your home area Khayelitha.

In conclusion, I would like to say a big thank you to all the participants in my studies. This journey has not only been an educational journey but also a personal memory.

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1. Introduction

Several organizations, such as Unicef, help vulnerable people, who live in extreme poverty, to an improved existence. Approximately 690 million people live in extreme poverty, which corresponds to 9 percent of the world's population. Poverty is everywhere and it is in developing countries, such as parts of Africa, that the vulnerability is greatest. The reasons for the existence of poverty are several, such as high unemployment and low wages, widespread corruption and underdeveloped infrastructure. About 385 million children live in extreme poverty and risk ending up in a negative spiral in terms of conditions, such as physical, intellectual and emotional development. Difficulties, such as lack of resources for education, mean that young people's lives as poor continue into adulthood. Because poverty is passed down through generations, it reproduces societal problems with social and economic inequalities (Unicef, 2020). The intention behind this study is to investigate how young people from vulnerable areas experience their living conditions in relation to their own future. How do they imagine their futures, and what are their dreams and hopes?

South Africa has the highest global inequality score with 63 indexes and it shows that the richest 10 percent have half of the country's income while the poorest 40 percent of the country share only about seven percent. About half of the South African population over the age of 18 ends up above the poverty line and based on the international measurement of the poverty line, around twenty percent of the population lives on less than 27.66 rand per day, which corresponds to 1.90 USD (The Borgen Project, 2020; Business insider, 2020). Young people are most vulnerable and 46.3 percent between the ages of 15 and 34 are considered unemployed and struggle to enter the labor market (Sats Sa, 2021a). This thesis

focuses on Cape Town, one of fastest developing cities in Africa, which still suffers from marginalization and poverty after Apartheid (De Swardt, C. et al, 2005). One aspect that is often held up as key to preventing poverty is the issue of schooling for children, since education is considered to be of great importance in effectively lifting young people out of poverty and reducing the gaps. Through education, children can later gain employment and an improved standard of living (Unicef, 2020). For this reason, an interesting aspect is how young people perceive the role of education in relation to their future.

2. Aim and research questions

The study examines how young people from economically and socially vulnerable¹ areas perceive and experience their life opportunities. Through fieldwork in two sites in Cape Town – Wingfield Primary School, run by the municipality, and the informal settlement Khayelitsha – the thesis explores how young people formulate their hopes, dreams and plans for the future. The intention is to contribute to a deeper understanding of underlying factors that may contribute to young people ending up or remaining in poverty.

The study will be aided by following questions:

- How do young people in Wingfield Primary school and Khayelitsha express their dreams and plans for the future?
- What is their perception of further education in relation to work?

¹ This thesis will use terms such as vulnerable, deprived or marginalized interchangeably. The terms refer to the areas' position as economically challenged, with high unemployment and poverty levels.

- How do young people experience their own conditions in relation to their future plans?

Background and historical context

In 2020, South Africa was named the most unequal nation in the world according to the global Human Development Index 2020, a calculation based on analysis of income distribution between individuals and households (Business insider, 2020). In order to understand how such inequality has come about, a historical perspective is needed.

2.1 A history of oppression

When first the Dutch and then the British came to Cape Town to colonize, they started wars with the Khoikhoi, Xhosa, Zulu and other ethnic groups. After the end of the South African War, when the British and Africans began to work to establish a union in South Africa in 1910, the question of the distribution of land was a central issue. In 1913 the "Natives Land Act" was passed which would deal with the "Native question" but which led to segregation and the African people would be hit hard. The legislation that made the African population suffer most was the ban, called "scheduled area", to buy or rent from 93 percent of South Africa's land surface, in 1936 it was reduced to 86.5 percent. It was forbidden to introduce land negotiations according to the law in order to reduce competition. The legislation led to livelihoods deteriorating for Africans and instead forced them to become servants or laborers to be able to take office in white areas. The Native Land Act was the first escalation of racial and spatial division in South Africa (South African history online, 2021a).

Between 1948 to 1994, the all-white government dictated that non-whites should be separated from housing, facilities, and limited contact between racial groups. Apartheid was introduced after the National Party had won in 1948 and introduced laws that would disadvantage the non-white population. It became illegal to have relationships between different groups and places would classify by race, which means that places like the beach and public toilets were not allowed for non-whites. Millions of black citizens were thrown out of their homes by force and had no right to vote or be involved in politics, while whites occupied cities and were at the top of the hierarchy (African union, u.å.). Khayelitsha is one of the townships² black groups were forced to segregate (South African history online, 2018c). With the age of discrimination, resistance came from several quarters and countries outside that supported the resistance (including Sweden). The African National Congress (ANC) was one of the organizations that fought against Apartheid, in 1949 started non-violent demonstrations and in 1952 the ANC had the Defiance Campaign where people would break apartheid laws to be arrested. It was hoped that the increase in incarceration would lead to a collapse in systems and increased outside support (South African history online, 2022b). One of the leaders in the Defiance Campaign was Nelson Mandela who would later be sentenced to nine months hard labor. In 1960, on March 21, sixty-nine demonstrators were killed by the South African police, leading the all-white government to act, forcing Mandela and other opponents to go underground. When Mandela returned to South Africa after seeking support for the conflict against the regime, he was charged with illegally leaving the nation and seeking support for demonstrations. Mandela was sentenced to five years in prison. In 1963 Mandela was charged again for attempted sabotage in the so-called Rivonia trial and sentenced to twenty seven years in prison. He was released in 1991 and then elected president of the ANC. Mandela was then

² There exists no formal definition to the term “township”, but generally refers to underdeveloped areas (National Treasury, u.å.).

democratically elected as president of South Africa and fought for fairer governance then resigned after his first term as president. Nelson Mandela has been a symbol of ideals of equality and the fight against oppression (Förenta Nationerna, 2013).

2.2 Recent political development

The ANC managed to win a second consecutive term in 1999 with President Thabo Mbeki who succeeded Nelson Mandela and would lead until 2008. Kgalema would become the next president of the ANC on 25 September 2008 and then replacement Jacob Zuma came to power on 9 May 2009 (The Presidency Republic of South Africa, u.å.). Zuma has received several corruption allegations during his presidency between 2009 to 2018. Zuma faces multiple charges of extortion, corruption, fraud, tax evasion and money laundering (BBC News, 2021a). Cyril Ramaphosa took office on February 15, 2018 after Jacob Zuma resigned from the presidency and promised to fix the corruption problem in the nation. But instead, like Zuma, Ramaphosa has received corruption charges against him. Ramaphosa has been accused of stealing 4 million dollars while South Africa is in a difficult economic situation and Ramaphosa risks going to court for breaking the law. In 2022, South Africa received 43 points out of 100 in an corruption index report (Dpme, u.å.; BBC News, 2022b; Trading economics, 2023).

2.3 Criminality & violence

As poverty and inequality have become a major social problem, crime and danger have also become one. A report by the Mexican Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice ranked Cape Town as the eleventh most dangerous city in the world. Recently it has been reported that 7000

people were murdered between July and September 2022 compared to 6163 the same period last year. Gang crime is one of the reasons for the murders. Rape and assault increased 11 percent with 10,000 cases opened across the country and kidnappings doubled during this period to 4,000 (Aljazeera, 2022; BizNews, 2022). Household burglary is one of the most common crimes in South Africa and 1.4 million house burglaries are estimated to have occurred which increased by 3.1 percentage points compared to last year, 116,000 were made in the Western Cape which is the third largest number in South Africa. People aged 16 and older who felt safe walking around the neighborhood alone during the day had decreased from 84.8 percent last year to 81.3 percent. In general, the feeling of security has decreased since 2019/2020, the feeling of insecurity is greatest in urban areas during the evening (Stats Sa, 2022b).

3. Previous research and theoretical framework

In what follows a summary will be given of some previous research that is of relevance for the study. While discussing previous studies I will highlight concepts that are of particular interest and which will be used as theoretical starting points.

3.1 Research on poverty and social mobility

To understand people's aspirations from poverty, we also need to look more closely at young people's social mobility. Between August 2003 and April 2004, Hedda H. Askland (2007) conducted field research in Sydney and Melbourne with young East Timorese asylum seekers. The informants had fled war and been forcibly displaced during the 90s, the study has been able to show that despite unfavorable conditions, people

have been able to move up in social status (Askland, 2007). Equivalent studies have been able to show in Maurice Crul et al (2017) research that descendants of low immigrants travel towards upward social mobility and hold to successful occupations (Crul, M. et al, 2017). At the same time, studies such as Michelle J. Bellino (2021) have also shown young refugees in Kenya difficulty in upward mobility (Bellino, 2021). All three studies use Bourdieu's (1986) theory of three forms of capital: cultural, economic and social, all three of which are significant in social mobility. Cultural capital exists in three forms: the embodied state in the form of long-term dispositions of the mind and body, the objectified state in the form of cultural objects (exp. books or instruments) and the institutionalized state is the form of objectification in educational qualifications such as a degree or certificate (1986, p.17). Economic capital is money and property ownership. Social capital is membership in a group – actual or potential possession of resources via networks and social relationships (1986, p.19). We also need to look deeply into their lack of opportunities for social mobility and why young people end up in poverty. Research on poverty has shown that political power and structures play a significant role. An example of such a political structure can be a political system maintaining inequality between rich and poor. Given the background of South Africa with inequality through the Apartheid policy, it has been taken up as an example in several research studies. The anthropologists Camilla Hansen and Washeila Sait (2011) speak about the political problems and disadvantages with, for example, the distribution of grants to persons with disabilities. The focus is on people with socio-economic difficulties and who themselves have, or are in a close relationship with, someone who has a disability. It is discussed whether the bureaucratic structure in the classification and definition of "disability" creates barriers and disadvantages left over from apartheid (Hansen & Sait, 2011).). Another anthropologist, Akhil Gupta (2012), gives an insight into the relationship between state and the bureaucracy in areas such as corruption. He argues that programs to provide

employment, housing and education have failed because of the systematic creation of social suffering. Akhil Gupta conducted his fieldwork over a one-year period working among officials in charge of the development program in rural Uttar Pradesh (Gupta, 2012).

In both studies, authors use the theory and concept of social suffering and structural violence to describe the bureaucratic power over people in a situation of poverty. Arthur Kleinman et al (1996) address social suffering as not a result of the individual's condition but that economic and political structures lead to human suffering such as hunger and disease. By that it means that social suffering is not a result of the relationship with the individual but of the relationship with structure, culture and history. Social structures create a disadvantage in the social life of people living in poverty and create suffering (Kleinman et al, 1996). Other previous research that has used the concept of social suffering of people in poverty is anthropologist Paul Farmer (2004), who has done ethnographic studies in Haiti. In the article, Farmer works with the concept of structural violence where he works in medical anthropology and as a doctor. Farmer informs us that we need to have an understanding of the political power rule and inequality in the country. From a historical perspective, Haiti has had dictatorial rule, which indirectly harmed people, and even though the dictatorship has disappeared in recent times, structural indirect violence still exists against economically vulnerable people, such as a lack of local health care centers, a lack of trained healthcare personnel and medical equipment. According to Farmer, it is invisible historical narratives that are the origin of how the structural violence is indirectly carried out today and therefore he addresses the importance of historical understanding (Farmer, 2004). The theory in this thesis used to examine what the young people's future looks like in terms of

economic vulnerability. From the discussion above, it is clear that there is solid ethnographic evidence that people remain in extreme poverty due to the indirect structure of political power.

3.2 Anthropological research on the future

From previous research, Rebecca Bryant and Daniel M. Knight (2019) has made the monograph to describe time and temporality in relation to the past, present and future. Bryant has done ethnographic work in the Eastern Mediterranean on displacement and conflict. During her research work she collaborated with Knight, who did research work in Greece during the period of the financial crisis, on people in socio-economic crises. Bryant has taken part in the work of other anthropologists on austerity, energy and the financial crisis. for example, people who live exposed in conflicts and have feelings such as worry, anxiety and fear. They discuss the temporality of people's future energy with connections to the past and the present. The image of the future embodied in everyday behavior and action to achieve one's future vision. The authors explain the theories of anticipation and temporality. The activities and actions of the present are evoked by the notion of the future "self" which is called temporality. The argument is that we should not only focus on people's everyday lives in the present, but see what people strive for in the future. Our representation of the future "self" creates an orientation to the person's expectations. The person's expectation of future events is important in that it permeates everyday life in our behavior and actions. Our actions have the effect of our painted picture of the future and make us try, step by step, to realize it. In the explanation of the theory, it is also explained that thickness (high expectations) has an effect depending on past experiences and the present.

The authors also address potentiality and hope where potential is defined as virtual that does not exist but can become real. A soccer player who goes out on the field has opportunities to make different decisions and act in various situations. Players scan the field for opportunities, while potential can become dormant if not discovered or executed. A person may have the potential to become a good violinist but may become dormant if the person does not realize it or has the interest to perform it. The potential is the possibility of an alternative existence in the future. But when the direction of a potential future is considered small or unlikely, it is oriented to hope. Theory of hope is based more on the possibilities of an alternative reality than the probability of it. The gap between potentiality and actuality makes hope play out more of a positive feeling and energy towards something than rational thought (Bryant & Knight, 2019). There have previously been studies on young people's aspirations to the future. Jessica Bok (2010) did a study in a primary school with students 11 to 12 years olds who have low socio-economic status on the outskirts of the Australian capital to see their ambitions and strive for further education. The study has been able to show that young people have ambitions and an aspiration for further education in university life (Bok, 2010). Another study that has been done is Kate Hoskins and Bernard Barker (2017) who have done the qualitative study with 32 students from the age of 15 - 18 years old in two highly presented academy schools about their future desire for social mobility in relation to the parents' background (Hoskins & Barker, 2017). Both previous researches make use of Bourdieu's capital theory presented earlier, and showed that it has a significant part in youth conditions to achieve their ambitions. These studies have also used the Bourdieu theoretical concept of habitus in order to understand social position and mobility, something that is helpful for this thesis. Habitus is the embodiment of cultural capital, such as skills or dispositions within the individual's life

experiences (Costa, C., & Murphy, 2015). Theoretical about the future has made the interest of the study to be not solely based on the informants' future visions and choices, but the investigation will also look in relation to young people's present and/or past experiences of vulnerability. That's why research will be useful when studying young people's future hopes, dreams and aspirations to a better life.

4. Methodology

4.1 Field site

Cape Town has been familiar to me since before this study as I have previously volunteered as a coach for the organization *Lifezone*³ during the spring of 2017 at the municipal school, *Wingfield Primary school* in Kensington⁴, where most of this study has been carried out. Since I already worked for the organization at the school, it made it easier to be able to carry out fieldwork there. For the ethnographer, it takes time to adapt to the new environment, especially if fieldwork takes place abroad. Challenges for the ethnographer do not only exist within research-related situations, but also in the environment outside the research. Jeremy Wyngaard,⁵ who I have worked with before and trust, was my overseas supervisor and helped me on site. The principal has also been a great help at the school with, for example, the interviews. During the study, I also had the opportunity to visit Khayelitsha during my leave, an informal settlement dive deeper into vulnerable young people's home environment,

³ *Lifezone* is a "non profit", politically and religiously non-affiliated, organization that uses football as a tool for personal and social transformation in school and various vulnerable areas, townships. The organization has been active since 1996 and Life Zone school was launched 2006 in Maitland school's sport cluster (Lifezone, u.å).

⁴ Around the area in Kensington there was accommodation similar to in Khayelitsha with one story-house which often looked worn and had high walls and fences. Some distance away from school, there were several living informal settlements that I passed to and from school.

⁵ Jeremy was a professional footballer for Hellenic and Santos during the 90s, previously working at Stellenbosch University. He is active in Lifezone as events coordinator (Lifezone, u.å).

together with Brian⁶, to get an inside perspective to their everyday life. The study was conducted for eight weeks, from the first of September to the twenty-seventh of October.

4.2 Participant observation

Out on the field I volunteered as a coach with two other coaches, Kian and Chad, and was in charge of the physical activities at the school. The activities could contain, for example, various children's games or football matches. This turned out to be an effective way to meet young people and access their experiences and thinking. It gave me the opportunity to create close relationships with the young people, which has led to creating a sense of security in them and allowed spontaneity to exist. A good relationship means that the people can feel more open towards the ethnographer and give access to a deeper understanding. Participant observation can be seen as a "contamination" to help understand the informants' social world and perspective, such as the emotional one. Being part of activities is a way for the ethnographer not only to understand the other party's perspective, but also to bring out feelings, "behind the silence," that are not easy to describe (Emerson et al., 2011. page. 1-3; Musante, K., & DeWalt, B.R. page. 23-24).

The field work at Wingfield Primary included five classes per day, Monday to Thursday, 8 am to 2 pm. A major part of the studies were held on the school football field where, during lessons and breaks, I could spend time with the learners. I also had informal conversations with the other coaches and the teachers in school during the lessons and breaks. The time at the school gave me an insight into the school itself and a holistic

⁶ Brian grew up in Khayelitsha and works part-time at *Khayelitsha visitor information center*.

perspective in the field of education. In Khayelitsha, I visited one of the informants, who were closely related to Brian, who lived in the same household as the interviews were conducted and where I received insights into how their home looked. Out in the field I created a relationship with Brian who gave me tours around the area and had deep conversations about life in Khayelitsha with.

4.3 Field notes

Out in the field, I recorded daily notes, and since field notes are recorded together with ongoing participation. Notes were captured in "main notes" - short written impressions and events that are more for describing specific scenes, observed actions and dialogues than for making evaluations or interpretations. Bits of talk and actions help the ethnographer as a prelude to being able to sketch social scenes. The art of being able to write in detail from the field can contribute to a more vivid and thicker description later. The notes were kept in a joint document in order to facilitate analysis and the selection of significant descriptions in order to rewrite a more detailed and descriptive process. Notes have provided reflections to new insights and perspectives that have been brought up during the interview sessions (Emerson et al., 2011. page. 21-43).

Since the study was done abroad, I also decided to write a diary during my time in Cape Town. *The diary* was there to get my feelings and perspective on events and experiences out. Diary provides random thoughts and hidden feelings that otherwise would not have been preserved. There was also a *method note* to be able to analyze the ongoing process of the method and evaluate the difficulties that have occurred.

4.4 Interview and selection of participant

During my fieldwork, interviews were conducted with around ten young people from twelve to twenty-five years of age, as well as five adults in the field of education. The young informants were conducted in group interviews of two to five people and interviews were semi-structured with follow-up questions from interview forms adapted to the situation. In Khayelitsha, a group interview⁷ was conducted with five informants. As mentioned, interviews were also conducted with the staff at the school as well as outsiders who have connections to the field of education. The interviews have been both semi-structured from an interview form with follow-up questions and unstructured with deep conversations. The interviews were informal, which means minimal impact on the interview and conversation during participation so as not to influence the subjects and integration (Musante, K., & DeWalt, B.R. page. 150-152). Audio recordings have been made during the occasions after consent from the informant, the transcription made during the holidays to analyze potential directions and hypotheses.

Inside the school, a total of three interviews were conducted with five different learners at Wingfield Primary school. The principal, Grand Poole, had recommended learners who would be suitable for the interview. It is possible that the principal selected pupils that were likely to provide positive and uncritical answers.

⁷ Interviews were done with Samantha, Tyron, Zeke and André.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Since the study mostly took place in the school area, the greatest consideration has been given to ethical guidelines and the Swedish Research Council's (2017) ethical principles in guidelines have been followed. Research ethics is focused on protecting patients and research subjects' intrusion into the scientific field and finding a reasonable balance between different legitimate interests (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Throughout this fieldwork, I have taken great care to be perceptive to signs of discomfort and at all times tried to contribute to making sure informants felt at ease. I have also been careful not to raise unrealistic expectations of my own role. One could ask whether it is ethically defensible to study children and young persons from disadvantaged backgrounds, since they are in a sense doubly vulnerable. However, an answer could be that it would be unfortunate if research on these categories of people was not conducted at all, which, in the long run, would make them even more powerless. By listening to the views of people that are not often heard in debate on poverty I hope to provide a nuanced perspective of how the world looks from their viewpoint. The study has taken into account the rules of the school and the anthropological framework of correct performance. Emphasis has been placed on participant confidentiality with anonymity in the ethnographic discussion, the informants have been given fictitious names to protect their identity. Fictive names were also used for people in spontaneous conversations and events outside the interview room. Only gender and age were addressed – everything else, such as sexuality, religion and ethnicity do not appear in the study. Conversations with the principal took place before the interview started to go through the ethical considerations. The interviews have been conducted with the consent of the parents of the informants, both in writing and verbally. I have received help from staff at the school in creating the agreement paper form to be able to clearly explain to the parents the purpose of the study and their ethical rights. Before the interviews with

the informant started, instructions were given and questions about their consent to the audio recording from the phone were asked. For young people to talk about their background can be a sensitive issue for many, and therefore the questions were adapted with the informant's comfort in mind. During the interviews, informants always had the opportunity to cancel the interview or not to answer the questions.

4.6 Positionality

The position⁸ as an anthropological researcher from a privileged western society likely had an impact on the relationships in the study and likely affected my ethnographic work. As a researcher from Sweden, visiting economically deprived areas such as Khayelitsha can give the ethnographer a position of power in meetings. I tried to be aware of such power dynamics and tried to distance myself from leading too much during the interview opportunities. I also tried to show respect, be adaptable to the situation and be open to the informants, who could ask questions, like if they wondered about me. The majority of the learners at the school have shown great respect and showed interest in my background as a Swede. Lifezone has for several years had good relations with Sweden as the organization has been to football tournaments in Sweden and created good relations there. The school has previously had foreign students, which has made it easier to accept my admission. Yet, while my Swedish identity bestowed some advantages, it also meant that I had to be careful not to raise expectations that my position or my study could somehow directly help people. This was particularly important to communicate when arranging interviews in order to avoid people giving me access in the belief that they would materially gain from it.

⁸ From a conversation with one of informants, Mark, it emerged that the positioning as a white South African citizen had made my work as a researcher difficult due to the historical background of Apartheid

5. Ethnographic discussion

The following section contains ethnographic descriptions from my fieldwork, which are discussed and analyzed according to my theoretical framework. Most of my data comes from interactions, interviews and conversations with children and young adults, but I also include conversations with teachers and staff at Wingfield Primary in order to provide broader perspectives on some of the issues raised.

5.1 Dreams and hope of a high status profession

Towards the beginning of my fieldwork, during a late evening before bedtime, I wrote in my diary and tried to come up with ideas for how to conduct interviews with the younger children. Previous experiences working with children have taught me that the method needs to be adapted to their level, and make sure any task is easy to understand and fun, in order to get their attention. When thinking back to my own childhood memories, drawing was the first thing that came to mind from both kindergarten and preschool. When that memory came, so did the idea of letting the children draw their visions of the future. Some time later, on a sunny day, I decided to try this out. When the children, who were between eight and nine years old, during lessons were playing outside on the football field, I hung out with one of the kids, Zelda, and then took her aside to see if she wanted to draw. As I went to fetch my bag and took out paper and pencil, I heard screams on the football field and was happily surprised to see all the kids running up to me to get paper and pencil. Some of the children shared papers because the number of papers was limited to seven. I sat on a chair and helped with spelling, among other things, while the children sat in a semi-circle in front of me and drew. The children began to draw sentences that began “my dream is” with figures such as a balloon and had big smiles on their faces. Zelda

wrote: “my dream is to be a social worker. They help us a lot. I love them.” When I chatted with her about this, she explained that she saw social workers as an opportunity to help and make a difference in people's lives. For another girl, Heidi, who sat next to Zelda, one of her dreams was to become a doctor. This was also Edrich’s dream, who wrote in his paper “I want to be a doctor. A doctor to help children.” Rameez wanted to be a lawyer, just like Suzette and Cyril did. Based on the drawings that were made on the football field, it seemed clear that the children dreamt of pursuing a life of upward social mobility. The drawings showed that the dreams of the children did not lie merely in achieving a "normal" life such as having a regular job, or being independent, but in achieving a high-ranking profession that is socially aspired to and requires an academic degree.

5.2 Reaching one's goal: the role of education

After three weeks at the school, I was able to perform my first interview with Patricia and Amahle⁹ in the teachers' cafeteria. During the interview, Patricia expressed her ambition for the future. “I want to be an entrepreneur and part time actor. My motto in life is just keep on trying until you get things right and I think I will succeed in all of my dreams because I take great pride in what I do.” Patricia expresses also an interest in further education. “I want to go to university, while I have a good imagination so I might become a storyteller.” GC: "How do you feel about school?" Patricia with a big broad smile: “I love school. This is the school of perfection, I do my best in everything and the teachers are truly inspiring.” Patricia had a great fondness for school and the academic field. Amahle showed like-minded ambitions, like her sister, and aims for the academic path.

⁹ Patricia and Amahle are sisters and come from Langa. Langa, like Khayelitsha, are characterized by a high level of areas marked by social and economic inequalities.

I want to become a psychologist, because I want to know how your mentality works and also want to be a part-time actress. Some people talk about their problems and I give aspects that help them feel better. I would love to go to university to do psychology and be a bit of an entrepreneur because I love school. I focus on my studies and hope my goals are achieved one day, because you can only live up in *hope* and I feel motivated because my mother always tells us that: "my children your goals will be achieved, you will succeed in life, just because I didn't succeed doesn't mean you won't."

During the interview, both of the sisters had a big smile on his face and had an energy of positivity that was contagious. Amahle expresses the support of her mother to continue towards upward social mobility and sees the potential to success. Potentiality represents what is not real but can become reality in the future and provides an expectation that drives one forward (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 114-116). Although potentially to enter further education are small, Amahle expresses her *hope* for the future. Hope arises between the gap of potential and actual, and lies more in believing the possibility than the probability. It can be seen as a surge swell of positive emotions that crowds you towards a better future (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 134). Hope gives temporality to having a future, "not yet defeated, but also not yet won" (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 137). Hope is equivalent to expectation which gives a "vague, viscous and virtual vision" that we can be aware of only when it is realized or not (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 141). Even if the possibilities of achieving higher social mobility are probably small, reflecting on the future is open because young people are not feeling "defeated yet" (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 139-141). This reflects previous studies that young people in early ages are optimistic about the future and therefore create a high expectation of goals (Bok, 2010; Bryant & Knight, 2019). Stephné's, how I did an interview last week on my fieldwork together with Ané, Stephné showed the same optimism.

Stephné said: “I want to be a photographer, if that doesn't work out for me I would like to study to become a lawyer. My goal is to focus on my school work right now before anything else. I see that it will be tough [to enter university] but I think that if I put my focus, I might be able to get through it.” Ane expressed the same optimism and had aspiration, like Amahle, to take the academic path to reach her dream. Ané expresses: “I want to be an architect. My goal is to focus on the present and what I am doing. I want to make other people happy about what I'm doing, because people's reaction to my work will make me feel better. So it's to be the best.” During the interview, I later asked about her feelings about school. Ané: “I'm not saying I'm self-centered, but I really don't have time to focus on other people because I'm thinking that I'm going to make it this year. So for me the school is fine. I'm not really worried about that but I'm worried about my education. GC: “Why do you feel that way?” Ané: "Because that's what matters. That's what's going to help me in the future." After I did an interview with informants in school, I felt a sense of satiety. It was clear that the learners did not see their class background as an obstacle for the future. Ané expresses, like Amahle and Patricia, that hard work should lead to the goal in the future. Their vision for upward social mobility embodies positive energy and work focus at school. Aspirations mirror the individual drive for current behavior and future actions and choices (Hoskins & Barker, 2017, page. 6). Ané was in her last year of primary school and her focus was on achieving good grades. Ané expresses a view that could be interpreted as seeing education as an asset for her to move upwards in social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986). Education is often considered as a key to the form of capital needed in order to have the opportunity for social mobility and a powerful field for the development of habitus (Askland, 2007, page. 8; Bourdieu, 1986). That is why most of the youngsters I interviewed regarded further education as a goal to achieve a high-status profession.

5.3 Obstacles to the university path

I was sitting on the sofa in the living room, a small space shared with the kitchen behind, and on the other side sat grandma making salad while the TV was on. There were also two bedrooms next to the living room and next to the house there were two informal dwelling structures. The house I visited was a worn down yellow one-story house and we decided to do the interview¹⁰ in one of the informal houses. Inside the yellow house, I met Samatha who was currently looking for work and lived in the household with her grandmother, who was making salad in front of the TV, and her youngest sister. Earlier, she too wanted further education and to become a doctor.

I am done with schooling. I actually did my matric and passed it very well, but then it has been very hard to get a place in universities. So that has been something that is off my mind already. I lost both my parents so now I live with my grandmother, and I cannot depend on her to do stuff for me. I need to get something to do to help out. It was actually a dream to go to university and start like any other child, but now I'm seeing that the situation is just getting worse by the day so that dream has just vanished away.

¹⁰ Interviews were done with five young people aged 14 to 25. Xhosa are first languages in Khayelitsha and translators, Briain, were needed in some cases.

A large percentage of the youth in Khayelitsha live on family grants¹¹, which are barely enough for basics, such as food. The grant is the provision for the entire household, meaning that the possibility of entering university life is seen as an impossibility. Principal, Grand Poole:

University is expensive and the parents are not educated. If you have educated parents your parents say “when you're finished school, you need to go to university.” Our parents don't tell us that you need to travel the world or go to university because they are already struggling to get the food for the day. So university is the last thing on their mind, they don't even think of it.

Although Samantha had the opportunity to succeed in the academic world, educational fees¹² were obstacles for her to achieve it. In Khayelitsha, unemployment is high and makes it difficult for young people to depend on parents' financial support. Therefore, young people have the goal of acquiring a bursary to be able to enter university life. Tyron, who was a high school student in Khayelitsha, sees his current financial access as limited and sees scholarship as an opportunity for further education to be able to get greater socio-economic access (Bourdieu, 1986.)

I want to do graphic design in the near future. To make money and have a big income. So I want to pass my matric with a good maximum so that I can get a bursary, because I don't think I will have enough money for the universities. My mother doesn't work

¹¹ According to Brian, the allowance for people over 60 is 1600 rand per month, while people on unemployment receive 350. According to Sassa Grants, the child support grant can be a total of 750 per (Sassa Grants, 2022).

¹² According to Businessstech (2023), the normal cost of bringing in is 55,900 rand and will increase in the next year (Businessstech, 2023).

anymore and in my home I live with my two grandmothers that received grants, they can only afford food. I am depending on my grandmother's grants.

In order to receive a scholarship, it is necessary to achieve criteria such as getting the maximum score on the matric, which is difficult to achieve while at the same time having to cope with everyday challenges with hunger and fatigue. Hunger is one of the common problems faced by young people with low socio economics. At the school, they try to offer both breakfast¹³ and lunch for free in order for the learners to be well and perform well in school, which could be seen in the lessons where the learners were full of energy. Young people with low socioeconomics have also difficulty taking the long distance transport to school because of the costs. After my work at school had finished, I could see both taxis and buses parked behind the school yard where the children had gathered. The majority¹⁴ of the kids at school live outside Kensington and need transport to get to school. During the exam week, before the holiday, fewer and fewer learners came to classes per day. On Wednesday during exam week, no learners showed up before eleven o'clock, which meant that I had to wait unknowingly for 3 hours. When the first class came, more than half of the learners were gone, and after the work day was over, one of the coaches told me I could stay home on Thursday because no learners were likely to show up. On the same day, when I went on the tour with the principal, who showed me around the school, he explained the reason why the students did not come to school. The principal, Grant Poole said: "Normally there are twice as many of us in the classroom,

¹³ Porridge is ready at seven, so when the students arrive the food is ready. They also get milk to drink and on Wednesdays and Fridays they also get an apple. What we have left over, we give away.

¹⁴ According to the Principal, approximately 80 percent of learners are from outside.

but as you can see, most of them are at home. It is because the parents cannot pay to send their children to school. Once they graduate, they're gone.”

Zeke experienced difficulty in taking transportation because of the cost and had to walk a long distance to school which made him feel tired even before school had started. During an interview with him, Zeke had a low tone with low energy and at times it could happen that he looked down at the ground. It is possible that they felt shy or presumptuous speaking about their future dreams, but it could also be for the simple reason that he were tired. Zeke, like Tyron, was a high school student in Khayelitsha and has a dream of becoming a doctor in the future, just like Samantha had before. Zeke said: “Within five years I wanted to become a doctor and enter the university (of Cape Town). I don't have a plan for how to get there, but I hope to get there. I hope to come out with a good maximum score so that I can go to university and study to become a doctor.” Zeke, like Tyron, hoped to do well in exams in order to be able to apply for a scholarship to the universities. Samantha was one of the people waiting for a bursary, for her she felt that even if she got a bursary it would not be enough to cover everyday life.

I did apply for it [bursary]. I'm still waiting for the feedback but I'm thinking now that even if I do get it and I go to universities, you want to live like other children. You need money for toiletries, you need money to buy your own stuff, because the money you get is not enough to supply you with everything that you need. So I've just let go of that dream for now, because I feel like I need

something that's going to bring an income, like today, because it's quite urgent now with the life that I'm living. My grandmother is not like she was, not very well, she gets sick at times. She also needs our help back to help in funds and things.

Samantha's focus lay on taking care of her grandmother's health. The standard of living in Khayelitsha is low and it leads to suffering (Kleinman et al, 1996) which means that young people tend to focus on getting a direct income instead of further education to be able to support the household. Most members of the household in Khayelitsha tried to make it through the day by being able to put food on the table. Zeke and Tyron had the hope of getting into university for upward social mobility. Samantha's feeling of hope can transform into realization after graduation from high school. "Hope exists in everyday activity, often only to tantalizingly slip away as life returns to normal" (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 155). High university costs and lack of support from financial aid can be seen as a structure for young people's lost opportunities for social mobility and risk to end up in a vicious circle. As Rylko-Bauer and Paul Farmer argue, "systematic exclusion of a group from the resources needed to develop their full human potential" (2016, page. 56). For young people in Khayelitsha, the opportunity for further education is small and means that many choose to stay at home to be able to find work instead.

5.4 The pursuit of income: Challenges for youth in the labor market

Young people without a higher university education as capital (Bourdieu, 1986) have less possibility of holding jobs that can generate higher socio-economic access. The standard of living in vulnerable areas makes young teens start searching for money. Amahle, for example, said:

“There are things that make you want to stop along the way, like the financial situation at our home. You just feel like you want to stop school and start working to earn some money.” Similarly to Amahle, André feels the need to acquire money immediately to cope with current life. André is a job seeker, just like Samantha, and during conversations with him his energy was low with blank stares. He said:

For me it's been difficult. I've been unemployed for two years now, so I've done my matric and I got my certificate but there's nothing. Trying to apply for bursaries because I can't afford to travel between the city and I can't afford all of those things. So I'm still trying to apply and look for something to do, I don't know. Something at least to have money to buy food.

For André, the two years of being unemployed have taken a big toll on him and made the thickness of his *anticipation* for a better life low (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 23-28) and therefore he has a pessimistic view on his future. André lives like Tyron and Samantha on his grandparents' contribution. Like Samantha, the focus is on getting income or something that can be converted into money to make life easier because they find their current socio-economics to be stressful. He said: “I'm depending on my grandmother's current situation. It is not enough for me to buy my toiletries, to buy clothes. If I want to enjoy it with friends, maybe go out but I can't afford that, so for me it is too difficult.” A small amount of the grant makes suffering for people in everyday life (Kleinman et al, 1996). Cape Town have current load shedding¹⁵ crisis which makes it tougher for the household. For André, socio-economic difficulties have limited him in everyday life, such as being able to afford

¹⁵ Load Shedding is a method to reduce energy production by temporarily switching off in certain geographical areas (West Cape Government, 2019). This meant that during the field I lived in, power was shut off for 2 hours before power came back on. There are different stages of how long you save energy.

food and transport. For some, suffering leads to turning to crime. André: “Some of the guys end up doing wrong things, like crime. They need money to support their families. Most of us are living with our grandparents and getting paid grants. Grant money is too little for all families.” Young after the high school years choose to look for work in order to receive a direct income. Work experience is considered a valuable asset to show their proficiency and a requirement from the employer. Samantha explained it the following way:

Most jobs now require people who have experience and as youngsters we are just from school, we don't have any experience so it's kind of difficult to get places. You might find that there's a space in a company, then you go and there are maybe 4-5 girls there. When you get interviewed, sometimes the people that actually interview you want to take advantage of you. If they see that you're OK but you don't have experience, they start asking for something more and you cannot offer that. That is a very big difficulty that I'm facing at the moment.

André was of a similar opinion: “We don't have experience using that so for us it's difficult because there is no job even though there are jobs.” Work experience is a dilemma for young people because they have just graduated high school therefore lack experience. The informants also expressed that social contacts (Bourdieu, 1986) is important to applicants and Samantha feels the lack of access to it. Samantha said: “To get a job you must actually know someone. Problem is that I don't really know most of the people working there's companies where I'm applying to. They're going to take relatives and people they know or people who have experience. So I'm just praying that it gets better.” When school was

closed due to holidays I visited a friend at a training facility and met Mark who taught Afrikaans at the school Hope in Cape town. The school was responsible for helping young people who have dropped out or have difficulties to complete their education to get a second chance. Mark expressed it like Samantha that social networks have a significant role in the labor market. Mark explained:

Nepotism is becoming a big problem in this country in politics and in business where you can come with a master's degree, but because the boss's nephew comes in off the street. He gets the job, and you don't do so because of nepotism. Everybody's demotivated and especially for the work opportunities after high school it's very minimal so most people just give up on the future.

Both André and Samantha saw the difficulties in the labor market due to a lack of capital. Exclusion of academic degrees leads to the need to rely on the capital (Costa, C., & Murphy, 2015, 64). The shortcomings of cultural and social capital can reproduce inequality in society (Crul, M. et al, 2017). Age discrimination in the labor market is also present and this gave André difficulties because of his age. André: "As you get older the chances are slim, for example I don't qualify to be a policeman anymore because of age and anytime soon I will not be able to qualify to be a soldier. Older you get, the chances are getting more slim." The age spectrum has also affected Zeke's future plan. Zeke: "Here in South Africa when you reach a certain age you cannot work anymore. I don't want to be 25 years old and unemployed, I want to be 23 and in my second year at university." Factors such as lack of work experience, social contacts and age discrimination make it difficult for young people to hold down a job. Both André and Samantha see that their background has an influence on their choices and opportunities. Both refer to the political sector

with corruption having an effect on labor offer and feel powerlessness over possibility to get solid work. Corruption can seem to be inextricably linked to the violence of poverty (Gupta, 2012, page.112). André said: “Our government, our country, there's too much corruption and the job opportunities are small.” Samantha address: “It is very difficult for now to get a good job because job opportunities are various in our country, and there is a lot of corruption being done.” Even if Samantha met with challenges out in the working life, there was still hope to be able to find a job. She said:

We only hope for positivity because right now we are seeing the environment that we're living in is not getting better, things are just getting worse. I have put in my CV's in most companies. Some are still under renovation, some are under construction and we've been promised good feedback. I am hoping that by December because they're saying that most of the time when it's the festive season it gets really busy so they need help. I'm hoping I get a call by the time we reach November and December. If I get a casual position there, I will show how well I want to work and how determined I am and then I'm hoping that I can get a permanent place. Getting a job that can give you a better salary to help at home and try to have hands in the whole situation could help.

When the principal showed me around the school, we passed classrooms and I met both teachers and assistants in their classrooms. During discussion with the principal, it turned out that the assistant had received a temporary contract from the state. Grand Poole said: “Assistants have

a contract of 11 months, almost a year. But the government stopped it and now it's ending on Friday. Terrible!” When I interviewed him the next day, he brought up his view of young people's future opportunities. Grand Poole said:

They have a contract with the government for 11 months because these are people that are not in university and don't have a job. They're like 19, 20, 21, that's the age. Government gave them a contract to work in the schools for only 11 months. So tomorrow it is the contract done. What are the people going to do when they're going back into the communities? It's December, the holidays are coming, Christmas is coming, no money.

During my time at the school I got to know Kian who was one of the coaches. Kian is from the tracts in Kensington and has a background of living in an unstable household. Through work for Lifezone organizations, he received small income and for him, organizations have given him a glimpse of the future. Kian: “I have been working as a coach for 3 years since I was 19 years old in 2018 and I come from this area. I don't know my dream yet, but I do know that that's what I'm doing now with the coaching. I would like to still continue purchasing a little bit further. I put in the effort, hard work and changed my ways to be better in coaching. I want to take courses to get my license.” Kian expressed his will to find a profession. For him, lifezone has been able to provide him with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) with football and provide opportunities for Kian to develop his habitus (Costa, C., & Murphy, 2015). Kian sees a potentiality (Bryant & Knight, 2019, page. 105-132) for a better future. “Without potentiality there would only be actuality, thus no possibility of a future” (Bryant & Knight, 2019, Page. 107).

6. Conclusion

The study, based on ethnographic fieldwork, shows that the informants at Wingfield Primary have an aspiration for upward social mobility and that many also have an optimistic outlook for their future, meaning that high expectation and dreams are created. Several of them saw their “future self” in the profession as doctors and lawyers which meant the goal of entering university life. Informants like Ané saw further education as a valuable asset to be able to achieve their future goals. Tyron sees further education as an opportunity to gain greater financial access (Bourdieu, 1986). The learners embody their future *anticipation* by showing positive energy and strategically focusing on the school to get good grades. For Zeke and Tyron, who are in high school, socio-economics are seen as a limitation to further education and a scholarship is seen as an opportunity to be able to pay off high university fees. Even if the probability of young people achieving their goal is small, there is still *hope*. Theoretical hope is based more on positive feelings about the future than on the probability of it. Therefore, a certain expectation and dreams of being able to succeed in the future are created.

Samantha, who came out with good results at matric, experienced difficulties in being able to enter into the education of her dreams due to the high fees. At the same time, she felt that the current life in Khayelitsha with social suffering is stressful in the household to the point that the focus shifts to getting quick income to improve life situations. Unemployment is high in Khayelitsha and causes the household to live on benefits that are not sufficient for subsistence. Samantha lived together with his sister Natasha and grandmother, and expressed that she wanted to bring in money to get away from becoming dependent on grandmother's contribution and being able to help with support in the household. For young

people, there are difficulties in getting work due to lack of capital, position of power and discrimination. André lived like other young people in Khayelitsha on his grandparents' contribution, with little money to be able to cope with everyday life. André has been unemployed for two years and felt, like Samantha, a powerlessness with respect to being able to move away from the poverty situation, expectation for a better life is low. In other words, we have seen how temporality, involving the present and the past, is important in young people's dreams, hopes and plans. These, in turn, are related to broader social and political structures, as they create opportunities for accumulating capital and developing habitus, as when Samantha and André felt that their parents' class background had an impact on their future opportunities. These are some of the reasons why young people after high school risk continuing living in poverty, despite being full of hope at younger ages. Due to the limited time, further research is needed which looks into which forms of support are most likely to prevent such dreams from becoming left behind as the children grow up, and instead being transformed into reality.

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