



A history of socio-economic change in Sharpeville, South Africa, 1940-2020s

LT Ledwaba

 **orcid.org 0000-0002-0482-9997**

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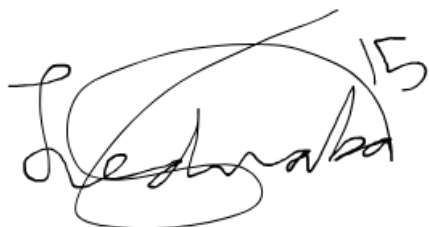
Promoter: Dr C Gouws

Co-promoter: Prof JWN Tempelhoff

Graduation: July 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted previously for the award of any degree. All significant contributions to, and quotations within, this dissertation from the works of others have been appropriately attributed, cited and referenced.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Pedraba", followed by the number "15". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end.

Date: 2025/02/21

Dedicated to the unwavering legacy of my mentor, Ntate Rammatli William Diphaphang Serobane

Rest in Power, Daddy.

Ke thelleng kele:

Mofokeng wa sefali sa kotoane oa maotoana a finyela a kaa ka linaleli

Motho ea jang sengoathoane sa bohobe a khumame ka lengole, a se ja

a ntse a shebile lireng ba ka nna ba hlaha. Ngoana khiba oa tšoana kholokoane

ea makhabane, la ikholola la ipeha khorong, la re jang! jan! kapele mantsi keo oa tla.

Ke ngoana (mora/morali) oa sefadi sa kotoane, oa ho tšoara mmutlanyana a o hlahlathe litsebe a o tlohele o tsamaee.

Phoka!!!

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ABSTRACT

Sharpeville is one of the oldest of six townships in the Vaal Triangle, located between Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging in southern Gauteng, South Africa. The construction of houses in Sharpeville began in 1942, when people were relocated from the "Top Location" to an area further removed from the central business district of Vereeniging. Famous for the massacre of civilians by the apartheid government on 19 March 1960, the Sharpeville Massacre is commemorated, remembered, and celebrated as a pivotal event in South Africa's political history.

While Sharpeville has been contextualised in national and international politics and received substantial academic attention, there remains a notable gap in historical analysis regarding its role in the development of the region. This thesis addresses this gap by incorporating contemporary history, unpacking not only how residents practised agency in making homes under the constraints of apartheid social engineering mechanisms but also how they reshaped their homes after 1994.

This thesis uses oral history methods to enunciate the histories often neglected by academics who are traditionally fixated on the massacre. Guided by a history from the below approach, the thesis traces people's social and economic experiences in Top Location and how the lengthy process of forced removals disrupted and changed resident's lives. The forced removal from the Top Location and the lengthy process of displacement disrupted and changed residents' lives. The thesis highlights how residents circumvented or mitigated the impact of apartheid in their homes and communities. Fundamentally, it focuses on ways in which music, sport, recreational activities, religion, and *ubuntu* fostered a sense of homeliness and belonging.

The ongoing development of the Vaal River City is seen as a 21st-century victory for humanity. It serves not only as a bridge construction and a post-apartheid housing scheme but also as a symbol of how Sharpeville residents, once confined to a Group Areas zone, are now able to access the former White suburbs and purchase property of their choice. Township tourism, which attracts visitors from Europe, America and Asia, is seen as a symbolic bridge or connection with Sharpeville's rich history, which encompasses tangible and intangible symbols, people, infrastructure, vibrance and culinary culture for the economic and social benefit of the residents.

The thesis contributes to the neglected historiography of Sharpeville by examining the area's post-1994 social history, which reflects continuities, discontinuities, parallels, and paradigm shifts. It further conceptualises processes embedded in Sharpeville's evolution, the reconstruction of past and present lifeways, and particularly the merging and uniting of Black and White communities and spaces following the 1994 democratic elections.

Key terms

Community, change, forced removals, home, Sharpeville, Top Location.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NWU	North-West University
ANC	African National Congress
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
NARSSA	National Archives Repository of South Africa
VTC	Vereeniging Town Council
VTMA	Vaal Teknorama Museum Archive
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party

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GASTRONOMY TERMINOLOGY IN SHARPEVILLE

Sesotho English Description

Skhambane/kota	Bunny chow	<i>Skhambane</i> or bunny chow, has a unique naming contextualised in the townships in South Africa. Whilst commonly known as <i>kota</i> in Tembisa, Mamelodi, and other parts of the country, many refer to it as bunny chow in parts of KwaZulu-Natal. <i>Skhambane</i> is a more complicated type of sandwich comprising a quarter of bread stuffed with anything ranging from polony, aachaar, potato chips, burger patty, meat, cheese, lettuce, cucumber and other ingredients. The price of the <i>skhambane</i> is determined by the stuffing preferred by the customer. <i>Skhambanes</i> are easily accessible in every section of Sharpeville; many pop-up stores are on Seiso Street. The growth of the student accommodation sector in Bedworth Park has encouraged the demand for bunny chow in the area, especially for its cost-efficiency. Many shops and vendors, especially on Cassandra Street, sell <i>Kota</i> .
Nama ya hlogo	Animal head	<i>Nama ya hlogo</i> is a Sesotho name for the meat found in the head of animals. Cow head meat is sold in many parts of Sharpeville, but mostly on weekends and in the mornings when the demand for it is high. The cow head soup is believed to improve male performance and reproduction. This is not scientifically proven, but scores of men have been seen drinking the soup combined with chilli pepper after eating pap and <i>nama ya hlogo</i> outside the Bedworth Centre in Bedworth Park. <i>Nama ya hlogo</i> is not limited to cows; it also includes heads of sheep, goats, and pigs.
Mala Mogodu	Offal/animal intestine	<i>Mala Mogodu</i> is a Sotho name for an animal's stomach, usually goat, cow, and sheep. The intestines of these animals require intensive cleaning and are stubborn to cook, requiring lengthy periods for the cooking process. Cow offal remains dominant on the vendor's list in Sharpeville and most townships in South Africa. Mostly preferred as a winter dish because of its fat, it has gained traction in becoming a meal enjoyed in clubs and Shesa Nyamas throughout the country. This is evident in establishments throughout the country marketing the Monday meal of the day as ' <i>Mogodu Monday</i> '. <i>Mala Mogodu</i> is usually served with pap, steamed bread or, in some areas, samp.
Chicken dust/runaways	Chicken dust/runaways	Chicken feet, head, intestines, necks, gizzards, and full chickens are similar to the cuisine mentioned thus far. They are served on the streets of Sharpeville and parts of Bedworth Park. These are usually marinated and spiced before braaied. They are usually sold as a low-cost snack. Chicken feet can cost between R2-R5, and gizzards are sold as kebabs, costing the customer R10 on average.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis draws inspiration from the diverse range of historical perspectives presented at the Vaal University of Technology's (VUT) inaugural commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in March 2020. Notably, Neville Felix, in his reflection on the development of Sharpeville, argued that "history should not be treated as an event."¹ In addition, Shan Bolton emphasised the importance of change, durability, longevity, and the sustenance of memories beyond the days when massacres and other historical events were remembered.² This thesis is based on a people-centred history-from-below approach, which was encouraged by the concerns expressed by Sharpeville residents during the commemoration.

Sharpeville residents used the opportunity to express their disgruntlement with the lack of service delivery from the Emfuleni Local Municipality (ELM). The massacre is a turning point in the liberation history of South Africa, but the yearly contestations over service delivery are arguably devaluing the essence of the day. Furthermore, the 2024 commemoration contestations yielded a youth perspective-laden clarion call that advocated for appreciating aspects of the community beyond the commemoration. These included the people who have historically contributed to the social and cultural transformation of the township. Furthermore, the township's physical landscape, including the Dlomo Dam, was expressed as a natural feature that accentuates and memorialises the history of place and belonging.

Essentially, the lens on Sharpeville should sharply focus on the broader contemporary, current, and everyday experiences of township residents. Against this backdrop, the thesis, however, does not strain itself on detailing the particularities of the massacre –

¹ Neville Felix, Director at the Sedibeng district Municipality, was a panellist at the commemoration event and presented a talk on the history of Sharpeville.

² Shan Bolton, chairperson of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation based in Lenasia, in addition to Neville Felix accentuated the complex and expensive process of acquiring images of the Sharpeville massacre and how the process denies the totality of the narrative of Sharpeville.

this has, as shall be shown in the discussion, been dealt with exhaustively elsewhere. In line with the community's clarion call, this thesis focuses on the history, growth, development, and change that shaped the trajectory of Sharpeville.

The thesis escalates beyond the assumption that residents were entirely satisfied or dissatisfied with the living conditions in Sharpeville. By doing so through the lens of *Ubuntu*, it investigates the experiences of Sharpeville residents in post-democratic South Africa to analyse change over time in the broader experiences of community and the making of home. Through the oral history method and a thematic approach, unexplored nuances have extensively contributed to the meta-narrative on local histories and shed light on the everyday experiences of township residents. By doing so, perceptions towards housing, community, identity, symbols of apartheid, and environments, in addition to the socio-economic factors that informed residents' perceptions, are analysed. Furthermore, the thesis situates Sharpeville's relevance amid the social and economic transformations taking place in its region because of the Vaal River City.

1.2 Orientation

Established in the 1940s, Sharpeville was constructed to accommodate Top Location's former residents and house employees of the nearby industrial areas of Vereeniging.³ The 1960 massacre received immense attention from politicians, academics, and civil organisations on a global scale.⁴ As a result, the Sharpeville region has gained popularity as the cradle of human rights. The academic focus on events of such atrociousness tends to focus on the victims and perpetrators of the shootings rather than on the macro-contextual dynamics affecting victims' lives and their communities.⁵ In preserving the life

³ J.M. Ngoaketsi, "An Introduction to the History of Sharpeville 1942-1996" (Honours diss., Potchefstroom University for CHE, 1998), 8.

⁴ See K. Beavon, *Johannesburg the Making and Shaping of the City* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2005), 77; D.M. Scher, "The Consolidation of the Apartheid State, 1948-1966," in *A History of South Africa from the Distant Past to the Present day I*, ed. F. Pretorius (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2014), 329; R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 131.

⁵ T. Lodge, *Sharpeville, a Massacre and its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74-75; and C. Nicholson, "Nothing Really Gets Better: Reflections on the Twenty-Five Years between Sharpeville and Uitenhage", *Human Rights Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (1986): 512.

stories of victims, academics are increasingly becoming mindful of the broader histories of people and communities indirectly affected by massacres and apartheid legislation.⁶

Historians have increasingly focused academic attention on regions' social and economic conditions to understand broader dynamics often neglected in regional histories.⁷ This tendency became accentuated when Sharpeville residents used the 60th-anniversary commemoration on 21 March 2020 to amplify their dissatisfaction with their living conditions, service delivery, and lack of agency in decision-making processes. Residents attending the commemoration furthermore expressed that they become relevant only during the annual commemorations in March. The community subsequently loses importance after the commemoration. Community members also alluded to broader societal problems in Sharpeville that the local government does not address.

Against this backdrop, this thesis unpacks the mechanisms that Sharpeville residents implemented to challenge, comprehend, survive, and succeed since the 1940s. Therefore, a socio-economic perspective is critical in unpacking the everyday experiences that shape the township landscape, particularly Sharpeville, to provide a rich history of place and memory.

1.3 Background

Since the Union of South Africa (1910), legislation has separated the population according to race and ethnicity. This led to apartheid legislation (1948 - 1990) and social engineering endeavours, which increasingly became fixated towards maintaining geographical spaces between people. The study of Top Location and the subsequent move to Sharpeville, provides a unique vantage point for understanding the living conditions under segregation and apartheid. Further, it provides access to the adaptation

⁶ P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien, *Alexandra a History* (Johannesburg: WITS University Press, 2008), 20.

⁷ E. Van Young, "Doing Regional History: A Theoretical Discussion and some Mexican Cases," *Yearbook Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers* 20, no number (1994): 22; K. Hering, "That Food of the Memory Which Gives Life the Clue to Profitable Research: Oral History as a Source for Local, Regional, and Family History in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," *The Oral History Review* 34, no. 2 (2007): 29; E.S. Van Eeden, "Regional, Local, Urban and Rural History as Nearby Spaces and Places: Historiographical and Methodological Reflections", *New Contree* 63, Special Edition (2012): 20; E.S. Van Eeden, "Challenging Traditional Ways of Constructing Local/Regional History Research in South Africa: Some Global Learning and Sharing," *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 9, no. 1 (2014): 34.

processes endeavoured by people in an ever-expanding capitalistic South Africa. The discourse on the history of Vereeniging traditionally articulates the town's economy and the importance of its African populace as labour.⁸ Revisionist discourse, influenced by a Marxist class-oriented perspective, acknowledges Top Location as the inception of some of the townships in the region. This helps trace the shifts, paradigms, and consequences of forced removals and relocations in the region beyond Sharpeville.

Vally's interrogation of the concept of 'model location' in Sharpeville points to the demand for labour in Vereeniging's expanding iron and steel industry as an impetus for a cosmopolitan town in the 1940s.⁹ Chaskalson's analysis of labour movements in the Vanderbijlpark area highlights industries' preference for migrant labour traditionally accommodated in compounds. Similarly to Vally, Chaskalson attributes the presence of migrant labour as a critical consequence of developing a freehold Top Location that provided labour for the nearby industries.¹⁰ This is further emphasised by the stellar works of Clark and Worger's *Voices of Sharpeville*, which reference the expanding industrial region's origins within the framework of *Company Town*.¹¹ This supplements the industry's dovetail nature in bringing to life communities and other relevant structures, such as governance and administration.

The thesis demonstrates how moving from Top Location to Sharpeville, whether coerced or by choice, increased the distances between workplaces and homes. Chaskalson notes the economic benefits enjoyed by employees housed on compounds during the 1940s, usually on factory property, compared to those who found shelter in shanty structures administered by landlords.¹² This thesis accentuates the changes that have taken place

⁸ S. Trapido, "Putting a Plough to the Ground, a History of Tenant Production on the Vereeniging Estates 1896-1920," In *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 33 (1984): 59-81.

⁹ N.T. Vally, "The 'Model Township' of Sharpeville: The Absence of Political Action and Organisation, 1960-1984" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2010), 39.

¹⁰ M. Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville: A History of South African Townships in the 1950s" (Honours diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 6.

¹¹ N.L. Clark and W.H. Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville: The Long History of Racial Injustice* (New York: Routledge, 2024), 21.

¹² Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 5.

in the region and how, especially after 1994, Sharpeville arguably transformed from a group area to a self-determined community.

The thesis also elaborates on the socio-economic consequences of removals and adaptation processes endeavoured by the community members. The existing historical scholarship on the generational impact of forced removals on the socio-economic well-being of the victims of removals, in both global and national historiography,¹³ does not until recently include Sharpeville (see Clark and Worger's *Voices of Sharpeville*).¹⁴ A people-centred approach¹⁵ used in oral research will enhance the discourse on the region and contribute nuances to the existing literature.

Malenga's case study on the development of Daveyton emphasises the importance of ethnic tension before and after the relocation of forcefully removed communities.¹⁶ This analysis is applied to Top Location and Sharpeville in assessing the social distances between relocated people, as emphasised by Chaskalson, and how they played out in Sharpeville over time.¹⁷ The thesis contributes to the body of knowledge by investigating societal divisions as a consequence of social engineering, or the lack thereof, within

¹³ R. Hallett, "Desolation on the Veld: Forced Removals in South Africa," *African Affairs* 83 (1984): 301–320; K Henrard, "Post-Apartheid South Africa: Transformation and Reconciliation," *World Affairs* 166, no. 1 (2003): 37–55; D. Newton, "Forced removals in South Africa," *South African Review – SARS* 5 (1990): 403–414; L. Platzky and C. Walker, *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985); C. Landman, "Telling Sacred Stories Eersterust and the Forced Removals of the 1960s," *Religion and Theology* 6, no. 3 (1999): 415–427; I. Hofmeyr, "Gender, Patterns of Story-telling and Forced Removals: A Transvaal Perspective," *Collected Seminar Papers Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 44 (1992): 39–53; K. Gopalan, "Forced Relocations, Memory and Nostalgia Amongst Indian South Africans in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Alternation Journal* 24, no. 1 (2017): 270–93; W. Beinart, P. Delius, and S. Trapido eds., *Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa, 1850-1930 (New History of Southern Africa Series)* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986); W. Beinart and S. Dubow, *Segregation and Apartheid in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁴ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 5.

¹⁵ B. Bozzoli and M. Nkotsie, *Women of Phokeng, Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1991), 148, placed an overwhelming emphasis on people's experiences which shed light on the interconnections between space, authority and agency.

¹⁶ S.S. Malinga, "The Establishment of Black Townships in South Africa with Particular Reference to the Establishment of Daveyton Township on the East Rand" (MA diss., University of Johannesburg, 1997), 57–59.

¹⁷ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 24.

Sharpeville. Divisions were noticeably exacerbated by the nature of the removals and the absence of social mechanisms to induct new community members.

Mindful of the dynamics of forced removals and relocation elsewhere in South Africa, most freehold townships' histories have pondered the processes that led to removals and relocation in townships such as Sophiatown,¹⁸ District 6,¹⁹ and Cato Manor.²⁰ In doing so, leading academic thought has increasingly emphasised the ambiguous relationships between national and local governments in implementing removals and relocations.²¹ In some instances, the ambitions of separate development²² were envisaged and implemented by the Apartheid government since 1948. This instilled social, economic, and political separateness between races.²³ Fundamentally, it led to instances where forced removals had taken place without relocation measures being implemented for the destitute. The outcomes were homelessness or temporary housing until the local authorities declared Group Areas for them.²⁴

The announcement of removals and relocation in Top Location triggered division. This thesis analyses the perceptions and experiences of Sharpeville residents towards the removals during the 1950s. It also discusses the municipality's methods, including coercion, and its justification for removals. Doing so broadens the discourse on the

¹⁸ T. Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1981): 124.

¹⁹ D. Jethro, "'Waar val jy uit?' District Six, sacred space, and identity in Cape Town," *Journal for the Study of Religion in South Africa* 22, no. 1 (2009): 23.

²⁰ I. Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future," *Review of African Political Economy* 21, no. 61 (1994): 416.

²¹ Compare with J. Butler, *Craddock, How Segregation and Apartheid came to a South African Township* (USA: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 124.

²² The Apartheid government developed a separate development policy, whereby each of the nine African (Bantu) groups was to become a nation with its own homeland, or Bantustan. They had rights and freedoms only within the confines of the designated homeland, while outside the reserves they were to be classed as foreigners.

²³ Butler, *Craddock*, 124.

²⁴ Indian people were temporarily placed in a military camp during the 1950s after the removals of Sophiatown due to lack of accommodation. See L.T. Leta, "'It was no different to a prison camp': Oral Accounts of Adaptations, Transitions and Surviving an 'Emergency Camp'; from Sophiatown to Ammunition Depot 91, 1955-1960s," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 2 (2021). 4.

processes that shaped perceptions of their new environment during different stages of their lives. These experiences also shaped the preconceptions of an apartheid township transitioning into a democratic dispensation after 1994.

1.4 Problem statement

Political and legislative measures designed to ensure spatial segregation have profoundly shaped South Africa's socio-economic and historical landscape.²⁵ The enactment of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Urban Areas Act of 1923 triggered widespread forced removals that uprooted several communities across the country.²⁶ While much scholarly attention has been devoted to relocations in places such as Sophiatown, District Six, and Cato Manor, there remains a significant gap in the historiography of Sharpeville as a 'model location' and the long-term consequences of its development. The relocation from Top Location to Sharpeville was characterised by administrative and political hiccups that prolonged the relocation and the issuing of houses.²⁷ Housing was developed and allocated slowly, exacerbating social divisions and creating territorial rivalry. For example, people who arrived much earlier in Sharpeville were often hostile towards those arriving later, particularly in Sharpeville Extension 1.²⁸ Rivalry manifested in the arts, sports, and the development of gang activity, caused by youth unemployment and industry's preference for Basotho migrant labourers instead of the Sharpeville youth.²⁹

Existing literature has insufficiently explored the impact of apartheid-era removals on perceptions of home and community in Sharpeville and the broader socio-economic transformation of the township post-1994. This thesis investigates how Sharpeville evolved from a state-imposed 'model location' into a self-determined community following the end of apartheid. It examines how studies on home perceptions have opened avenues

²⁵ C. Rasool, "The rise of heritage and the reconstitution of history in South Africa," *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 26, no. 1 (2000): 1.

²⁶ Platzky and Walker, *The Surplus People*, 67.

²⁷ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 4.

²⁸ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943–1985" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 68.

²⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends," 71.

for robust research on the meaning and importance of community, home, homelessness, and 'homeliness'.³⁰ The thesis considers the mechanism of apartheid legislation and its influence on the perceptions of 'home' in South African townships before and after forced removals. It explores the extent to which houses built by the state have played a role in forming community relations and possibly social cohesion. In her study of hostel dwellers, Ramphela transcends the politics of Group Areas by analysing the experiences of residents living in apartheid architecture designed for temporary dwellers.³¹ Sulevi interrogates the evolving meaning of home and how people perceive and construct home.³²

The thesis is not solely concerned with physical structures but with how the individual and collective shape the nature and meaning of home. It examines how meaning changes over time and differs from one house to another in different political contexts. It interrogates the nature of homes/houses, as articulated by those who dwell in such houses, to determine the factors that make a house a home.³³ The home/house exists within an immediate context and, therefore, collaborates with external factors to shape a community. This includes museums, sports, culture, service delivery, politics, massacres, and political unrest, especially in South Africa. Symbiotically, all these factors, especially under apartheid rule, contributed to identity formation processes and experiences worth analysing to reflect change over time.

Sharpeville's history is incomplete without a deeper understanding of its socio-economic and cultural transformations from the 1940s to the present. This study seeks to fill a critical gap in the historiography of Sharpeville, providing new insights into forced removals, relocation experiences, and the changing meanings of home and community over time.

³⁰ S. Riukulehto and K. Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home* (UK: Cambridge: 2016), 25.

³¹ M. Ramphela, *A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1993), 41.

³² Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House*, 25.

³³ I first encountered the concept of home and homeliness in *A House a Home*. The authors interrogated the diverse meaning of home, which I applied to Sharpeville to determine how residents redefine their spaces amid political influences and control.

1.4.1 Research questions

The overarching question guiding this study is:

How did the socio-economic history of change take shape in Sharpeville, South Africa, between 1940 and 2020s?

To unpack this question, the following specific questions were pursued:

1.4.2 Specific research questions

- a. What were the social, economic and political nature and the broader repercussions of removals from Top Location during the 1950s?
- b. How can oral history strategies reveal the processes of housing allocation in Sharpeville and residents' perceptions of community, home, identity, and space?
- c. To what extent has Sharpeville society changed since the 1950s, and how have residents 'decolonised' or deconstructed the landscape of former Group Areas during the 1990s?
- d. How did the Sharpeville community transcend political epochs, particularly from the 1960 massacre to a democratic South Africa?
- e. What roles do symbolism, constraints, contestations and opportunities play in extending Sharpeville beyond its apartheid social borders?

1.4.3 Aim of the study

The study aims to analyse socio-economic changes in Sharpeville from the 1940s to the 2020s to provide a comprehensive and community-focused history that transcends the singular political narrative of the 1960 massacre. The research seeks to illuminate the agency of residents in shaping the township's evolution and identity. To achieve this aim, the study pursued the following objectives namely to:

- a. Examine Top Location's social, political, and economic nature and the broader repercussions of the move from Top Location to the 'model location' Sharpeville during the 1950s.
- b. Analyse the housing allocation process in Sharpeville and people's perceptions of community, home, identity, and space from 1940 to the 2020s.

- c. c. Assess the mechanisms and agency used by Sharpeville residents to reshape and redesign the township's tangible and non-tangible characteristics.
- d. Investigate how the Sharpeville community navigated political epochs, focusing on their perceptions of the Sharpeville massacre and a township in a democratic South Africa.
- e. Identify and assess old and new symbols, constraints, contestations and opportunities in place-making and their influence on Sharpeville's socio-spatial transformation.

1.4.4 Central theoretical statement

The bedrock of the thesis is the analysis of the home making strategies used by residents to make sense of place and to mediate socioeconomic changes in their contexts.. This analysis will inform the complex approach to determining the socio-economic history of Sharpeville and the impact of social engineering mechanisms. This includes how literature critiques cause-effect relationships concerning apartheid, forced removals, inequality, and general critiques of race, particularly the history of Sharpeville and the changes in the community and homes.

The overarching theoretical framework used to understand the evolution of the region is the theory of socio-economic change. This theory can be understood from diverse disciplinary standpoints. The economic positionality, amongst others, analyses economic changes within a community, region, country or at the global level to fathom economic changes over time. The social aspects, on the other hand, are much broader and complex, and require specific focus on the evolution of broader phenomena in society's transformation. This thesis considers change to be an impactful phenomenon on societies. In the context of Top Location, change is considered to have been a consequence of economic development that stimulated in-migration and eventually population growth. The thesis also considers people's agency in opposing or embracing everyday changes in their lives, which is regarded as a strategy implemented, at times using Ubuntu, to manage political, economic, and social changes. Whilst the manufacturing industry experienced a growth trajectory in the 1940s, this was an opportune moment for changes in employment and settlement patterns of vast areas in

the Johannesburg region.³⁴ However, whilst this thesis can provide accounts of change management strategies in Top Location and Sharpeville (during and after apartheid), the enormity and complexity of change are difficult, if not impossible, to measure. People's experiences shed light on how ubuntu assisted in designing community and home in unfamiliar contexts. Furthermore, change can be characterised or enforced by violence thus contributing to the destruction of the community. In addition, change may create, generally, instability whilst the lack of change may in turn contribute to instability.³⁵ Yet, these moments, this thesis contends, have provided opportunities for nation building, solidarity and the redevelopment of the community through ubuntu.

1.5 Research method

This study employed a qualitative research approach, integrating oral history and semi-structured interviews to explore Sharpeville's socio-economic evolution from the 1940s to the 2020s. The historical inquiry foregrounds residents' perceptions concerning legislative changes, forced removals, and the socio-political landscape under apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa.

Oral history is central to this methodology, offering rich, subjective narratives that complement traditional documentary sources. The approach adopts a multidisciplinary lens, drawing from regional, cultural, public, and national histories and economic and social history. Semi-structured interviews were employed to capture the lived experiences of Sharpeville residents. Open-ended questions enabled participants to articulate their memories, life stories, and perceptions, particularly those from older generations who witnessed critical socio-political changes.

1.5.1 Sample

The initial interviewee process comprised informal conversations with more than fifty (50) people in Sharpeville, Tshepiso, and Boipatong townships. The reference list consists of twenty-seven (27) interviewees whose articulations have shaped the thesis. The

³⁴ D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid 1948-1961 Conflict and Compromise*, (Clarendon Press, 1997), 27.

³⁵ A. Lauterbach, "Socio-Economic Instability and Personal Insecurity," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 12, no. 1 (1952): 37.

curtailment in the sample size was caused by inconsistent and questionable romanticised narratives that were nullified by consultations with archival information and secondary sources. Evidently, incorrect names of the facilities were often provided, aspersions were cast on famous people in Sharpeville who were politically active during apartheid, and affiliations to political parties, which could not be proven, amongst others, were some of the conundrums that reduced the sample size. Another factor, a conversation for another day, was potential respondents' hesitance to participate in the research because of the lack of compensation for their histories and time. The researcher has coined this experience "the commercialisation of history".

The sample comprises the youth who were generally 18-35 years of age. This age gap had contemporary and modern views of Sharpeville that embraced the historical significance of the Sharpeville Massacre but advocated for representation and voice in the community issues that affect them. Also, they are prone to oscillate between the various townships and suburbs in the region because of the networks made in schools, sporting fields, and other social events in the townships. Multilocality was a key aspect in their socialisation with space. A significant number of responses ranged from 36-55 year olds, and a smaller number of the sample were over 60 years of age. These respondents were pivotal in tracing change over time in Sharpeville and the making of place. Gender representation, as shall be seen, skewed more towards male interviewees; a small percentage of the sample were women whose histories and domestic experiences shaped experiences within and outside the household.

Though the majority of interviewees spoke Sesotho, some of the respondents who inhabited the backrooms in Sharpeville were from Zimbabwe. They opted to reside in Sharpeville's backrooms because of cost containment strategies, accessibility to places of employment, and friendly neighbours. The sample, furthermore, comprised a smaller proportion of university students, employed and self-employed individuals (mainly in the informal sector), pensioners, and unemployed people.

1.6.1 Oral history

As acknowledged in literature, “history evokes a narrative of the past, and oral history a medium of expression”.³⁶ The study of history concerns the critical and objective presentation of the past. Oral historians create environments in which respondents recall and express their narratives. Portelli describes the relationship shared by oral narratives and history as intrinsically intertwined and beneficial for historical inquiry.³⁷ Furthermore, Scobie’s *Family and Community History through Oral History* positions interviewees as rich sources of historical information that are “even more critical as the principal historical source.”³⁸

Oral history offers nuanced perspectives on the unexplored histories of people’s experiences in varied times. In addition, oral history enhances a bottom-up approach that accentuates the experiences of communities. Given the historical nature of the study, the research design follows a historical structure for source collection and analysis, integrating qualitative methods, including a literature review and interviews. This multidisciplinary approach engages regional, cultural, public, and national histories in South Africa and economic and social history domains.

1.6.1.1 Immersion in place: research diary reflections and oral history

This thesis focuses on a single location comprising people who arguably share collective memories and experiences due to their proximity. The interconnectedness of township residents has inevitably facilitated a snowball effect, contributing to recollections of the past and enriching the research focus. Before the academic decision to research Sharpeville, the researcher had social and economic interactions with its residents that created opportune moments to meet the people of Sharpeville. These engagements varied in form, including sporadic conversations with acquaintances who resided in Sharpeville or had long-standing economic and social ties to the township.

³⁶ A. Portelli, “Oral History as Genre,” in M. Chamberlain and P. Thompson, *Narrative and Genre* (UK: Routledge, 1997), 23.

³⁷ Portelli, “Oral History as Genre,” 23.

³⁸ I.W. Scobie, “Family and Community History through Oral History,” *The Public Historian* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 38.

Academic interest in the township was further stimulated by discourse at VUT's inaugural commemoration and informal Sunday conversations with acquaintances at a car wash on Seiso Street. Beyond offering impeccable services and affordable prices compared to neighbouring Vanderbijlpark, the car wash became a space for cultural engagement. Culinary experiences, including the Shisa nyama at Rhythm Lounge and the *skhambane* (bunny chow) sold by entrepreneurs, were pivotal avenues for immersion in Sharpeville's cultural spaces. The enticing aroma of charcoal smoke infused with spices and marinade provided sensory experiences that vividly marked these moments as memorable. Like many former residents of South African townships, as detailed in Chapter 7, the researcher oscillated between Vanderbijlpark and Sharpeville to access township experiences and cuisine.

Immersion was essential for gaining a first-hand understanding of place. The vibrant ambience of Sharpeville was defined by melodic whistles from township youth communicating in hidden codes, the leisurely walks of elderly churchgoers, and the disapproving glances from teetotallers directed at inebriated youths near the Sharpeville Memorial Precinct. The occasional sight of Dlomo Dam, the flamboyant display of Italian fashion, and the echoes of "beke le beke" (week after week) reflecting loyalty to Italian clothing brands added to the township's unique character. This lively atmosphere and the covert appreciation for the beauty of township life offered much-needed relief from the monotony, quiet, and social isolation of Vanderbijlpark's SE7 suburb. The escape from this suburb, with its ambivalent blend of privilege, class, and Whiteness, also invoked childhood memories of growing up in Ekurhuleni's township of Tembisa.

It was an opportunity to reconnect with the ambience, cuisine, music, latest fashion trends, and people in townships. These heuristic-laden sensory occasions are constant reminders of the similarities between the physical layout of township streets and houses in townships of South Africa. Still, the interactions with township people highlighted the social peculiarities and particularities that made them distinct and only accessible through immersion of self with place. This was pivotal in shaping a historical narrative that is not distant from people's experiences. Dunaway posits that "empathy and detailed research into an event or period allow us to view events approximately as participants did in their

own time”.³⁹ The immersion of self in the community, without any research inclination, as experienced in Sharpeville, was eye-opening. It formed a pathway to the sensitivities that a researcher with recording technologies and a note pen would have been oblivious to. Furthermore, informal and unregulated conversations with locals tended to eradicate the outsider syndrome more efficiently than entering a community as a researcher. Locals were more concerned about the ‘outsiders’ upbringing, township affiliation, sports preference, clothing, religious background, cuisine, etc. They shared experiences and life histories spontaneously, without speaking in a relevant tone to the academic researcher and his/her recording devices. At the precise moment when the researcher enters a community imbued with research methods and university-approved determinations of ethical conduct, the outsider syndrome kicks in, and interviewees possibly construct bulwarks.⁴⁰

In this instance, bulwarks were constructed for many reasons, varying from language proficiency and accent to appearance and, among other things, material possessions. Language proficiency is worth consideration. Brooke’s study of language usage in Ekurhuleni’s township of Vosloorus accentuates the contextual complexities of language.⁴¹ The youth has arguably continued the historical legacy of informal language that is often categorised as *tsotsitaal* or urban slang.⁴² The presence of a variety of languages often results in the mixture of languages and cultures to form informal ways of speaking:

The main languages of communication in Vosloorus are urban varieties of Zulu and South Sotho. In contrast to rural varieties, these urban varieties borrow more extensively from other languages—particularly English, but also Afrikaans and other Bantu languages,

³⁹ D.K. Dunaway. "Field Recording Oral History" *The Oral History Review* 15, no. 1 (1987): 25.

⁴⁰ These recollections are taken from my personal research diary from interviews conducted in Johannesburg South.

⁴¹ H. Brookes, "Urban Youth Languages in South Africa: A Case Study of Tsotsitaal in a South African Township," *Anthropological linguistics* 56, no. 3 (2014): 360.

⁴² Brookes, "Urban Youth Languages," 360.

depending on the history of the speakers in the area and with whom they came into contact.⁴³

Language “plays an important role in defining who we are and makes us instantly recognisable to other members of our particular speech community”.⁴⁴ Language creates opportune moments for acculturation and assimilation into communities. Still, in some instances, language has been noted to create stereotypes, the labelling of others, and “boundary creation” between people.⁴⁵ The researcher brings into the participants’ locality cultures drawn from their broader social spaces, which are inevitably transmitted by the spoken language. This was instantly recognised by respondents in Sharpeville, particularly the younger generations who preferred to converse in a combination of Sesotho and a bit of Afrikaans. In most instances, the elderly interplayed between Afrikaans and Sesotho, whilst the younger participants’ responses borrowed from Sesotho and, surprisingly, from Afrikaans. The transmission of township language has arguably bequeathed language styles and a selection of words from Afrikaans and the older generation to the younger sector of the community.⁴⁶ This has been evidenced as a strategy to induce belonging and familiarity with space and people.

Being a regular in Sharpeville beyond the Sunday car wash conversations had benefits. Familiarity with the place and people created an awareness of social and cultural dynamics and a sense of belonging that gradually obliterated the ‘outsider syndrome’. Anyone older was addressed as a ‘grootman’ (derived from the Afrikaans word big brother). Being constantly called ‘grootman’ or ‘swaer’ (also taken from the Afrikaans language meaning brother-in-law) was a respectful demeanour of affirmation, recognition and respect that Sharpeville residents gradually attached in the refinement and contextualisation of Sesotho and Afrikaans when referencing the township folk. Also, knowledge of community-sensitive issues became clandestine conversations whose

⁴³ Brookes, "Urban Youth Languages," 360.

⁴⁴ C. Dyers, "Language Shift or Maintenance? Factors Determining the Use of Afrikaans Among Some Township Youth in South Africa." *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics* 38 (2008): 51.

⁴⁵ S. Rudwick, "Coconuts" and "Oreos": English-speaking Zulu People in a South African township," *World Englishes* 27, no. 1 (2008): 112.

⁴⁶ Researcher observations during conversations with some of the youth in Sharpeville.

sensitivities were often communicated in non-verbal expressions (a complex form of language) pointing to objects of memory. For instance, even when imbibed with alcoholic beverages, following social occasions, some of the acquaintances timidly, with a unique nod occasionally and clandestinely pointed to sensitive places.

These nods were towards a seemingly neglected house that belonged to a councillor who was allegedly murdered following the turmoil that characterised Sharpeville in the 1980s and 1990s. Chapter 7 discusses this house as a monument for dark tourism in the region. Outsiders pursuing research interests should immerse themselves in the complex dynamics of communication patterns unique to each township. The inability to do so, as experience in Sharpeville has shown, could lead to a missed opportunity in the cultural knowledge embedded in non-verbal communication. This is usually expressed through nods, hand-signings, eyes, and silences.

An analysis of the minutiae's non-verbal display towards the monumental meaning of the house was quickly tamed by snippets of fear. It was accentuated supposedly through childhood tales that shaped nuanced mythology, ambiguities, taboo, and respect around the house. Worthy of consideration is the *o se ke wa pimpa* ('do not snitch', a *mpimpi* is a person that snitches) normality that is engrained in young African children and township folk. This normality may have contributed to the fear of ostracisation, distrust from community members, victimisation and violent repercussions from those involved in the incident related to the house. Woldoff and Weis contend that:

While there are many reasons why individuals choose not to report crimes to police, the potential of being stigmatized as a snitch can certainly influence reporting decisions. The snitch is a despised character, and being labelled as a snitch can potentially place individuals at risk of social stigma and physical harm. Within specific social groups, the snitch is a traitor who reveals group secrets or cooperates with a group's enemies, whether they are peer rivals, outsiders, or formal authority figures, such as the police. Though the snitch's motives for informing can be altruistic, he or she is mostly seen as betraying the group.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ R. Woldoff and K.G. Weiss, "Stop Snitchin': Exploring Definitions of the Snitch and Implications for Urban Black Communities," *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture* 17, no. 1 (2010): 185.

Snitches or informants declared guilty by the kangaroo courts assembled by apartheid township community members were subjected to harsh sentences. Punishment often included petrol bombing of properties belonging to the 'snitch' or the infamous inhumane 'necklacing' of 'snitches'. Mbongeni Ngema and William Nicholson's *Sarafina* exposed the latter to the broader South Africa. In the movie, *Sabelo*, played by Mbongeni Ngema, a police official, is seen fleeing a mob of protesters after the torching of his house. Upon arrest, one of the protesters poured petrol on his mercy-begging body as he looked staringly into the eyes of *Sarafina*, played by Lelethi Khumalo. At least temporarily, the scene of his flaming body was liberatory; one less snitch in the township.⁴⁸ Snitches are despised. In the context of township research, speaking to journalists, researchers, and other parties of interest is evident to by-passers, neighbours, and gossipmongers.⁴⁹ The township has limited privacy, see-through fences, busy streets, and loitering, and the close proximity of houses to the streets and each other makes for easy surveillance. The presence of a researcher is even more apparent, and in some cases, communities become concerned with the discussions taking place and the potential for 'snitching' on community affairs.⁵⁰

Let us return to Sharpeville and the 'house'. When asked about the house in a formal interview, most interviewees refused to discuss it. Respondents sometimes attempted to redirect the conversation to another topic strategically. The physically onerous but mentally stimulating and informative walk of Sharpeville under the banner of 'get to know the township' accentuates complexities. Mr Ncala's admirable recollections of the township were stimulated by trees, old buildings, roads, schools, etc. Mr Ncala, having walked more than 10 kilometres, was articulate and immaculately projected his voice without a hint of short breath and swallowing of words. We had not consumed water or any other beverage for more than two hours. Albeit suggesting we take a break and buy cooldrink from the Indian (often referred to as *Makuleng*, a derogatory term used by the locals to describe Indian-owned shops) shop in Vuka. He objected to the offer because

⁴⁸ Researchers observations.

⁴⁹ Researchers observations.

⁵⁰ Researchers' diary on research conducted in Sophiatown and Lenasia. These observations have also been noted on tourist excursions in Soweto and Sharpeville.

of the distrust the community, in general, has against the counterfeit foods and products allegedly sold by the Indian-owned shops in the region. The township's discontent with foreign-owned spaza shops became vivid in October 2024. Counterfeit goods sold by spaza shops allegedly caused the death of children in some parts of South African townships; this contributed to efforts to drive out foreign-owned shops in Sharpeville.⁵¹

Returning to the streets near the Mohlodi Maritime School, using non-verbal communication learnt previously, Mr Ncala Senior was asked, with a nod towards the house, if he had any recollections. He responded with a familiar, sombre, and almost silent whisper, delivered cautiously with an inspectional gaze and heightened awareness of potential nearby listeners. Once again, it was seemingly taboo to talk about it. It was also challenging to make sense of his drowning voice. It seemed from his broken, sunken delivery that the house belonged to a 'councillor' who died a painful but usual death associated with political turmoil in townships. The man in question was Jacob Dlamini, deputy mayor in the apartheid era, Lekoa Town Council. It was the traumatic violence supposedly committed by some residents of Sharpeville that increasingly complicated the township's framing of the discourse on the event. A group of protesters allegedly stoned Dlamini's house when the township was engulfed with violence following rent increments that, amongst other issues, led to a state of emergency under the presidency of PW Botha in the 1980s. Dlamini arguably embodied state demeanour and was a representative of a regime that protesters detested; it was for this reason that protesters allegedly attacked his house. The similarities between Dlamini and Sabelo's incident in *Sarafina* are strikingly similar. To deter the protesters, Dlamini, it is reported, shot at the protesters, injuring a lady.⁵² Although Sabelo did not shoot at the protesters, upon his escape from the premises, a mob managed, after chasing him, to detain and inflict a formidable attack on him. Dlamini experienced a similar ordeal:

They wrestled him to the ground outside Maile's kitchen door, disarmed him and began assaulting him. Other residents, also unidentified, joined in. They stoned Dlamini around

⁵¹ M. Koka, Sunday World, "Why Sharpeville is driving out foreign spaza shop owners", 21 October 2024, <https://sundayworld.co.za/news/why-sharpeville-is-driving-out-foreign-spaza-shop-owners/>.

⁵² J. Dlamini, "Embittered Histories: the other Sharpeville and the Making of South African Pasts", 14 March 2011 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/embittered-histories-other-sharpeville-and-making-of-south-african-pasts-0/>

the head, knocking him out. As Dlamini lay unconscious outside Maile's door, some residents pushed his car out of the garage and onto Nhlapo Street. They turned the car on its side and set it alight. As the flames consumed the car, two or three people, also never identified, dragged Dlamini's limp body to his burning car. They set him alight. He was alive but unconscious.⁵³

The objective of the analysis of Dlamini's incident is not to ponder or provide a deep historical analysis of the event but to accentuate the complexities and limitations of conducting oral histories without having immersed oneself in the intricacies of place. Immersion was an opportunity to frame and understand the community's complex positionality on violence, its history, and its articulation in a post-democratic dispensation. The violence broadly associated with forced removals, relocations, massacres, and protest action in South Africa has arguably normalised violence in townships. Violence in the context of apartheid South Africa's townships had, to a large extent, political underpinnings.⁵⁴ To eradicate what was deemed as alleged *askaris* in apartheid South Africa, communities, in their rage, executed government operators, spies, informants, snitches or 'dipimpi' in an extremely violent and excruciating form known as necklacing.⁵⁵ The incident in Sharpeville's Vuka section is but one of the many incidents in South African townships that contributed to violent eruptions that remain, in some contexts, sensitive and controversial issues amongst township residents.

Walking the streets, hanging out with the locals, eating their food, drinking their beer, and talking their language - without the framework of an ethnographer or interviewer - proved more beneficial than formal interviews. Ethnographical approaches, especially in works like Charles Van Onselen's *The Seed is Mine*,⁵⁶ Delius's work on the Transvaal and

⁵³ Dlamini, "Embittered Histories".

⁵⁴ S. Mbuqe. "Political Violence in South Africa: A Case Study of" Necklacing" in Colesberg," (PhD dissertation., Duquesne University (2010), 11.

⁵⁵ M. Riedwaan, "A Prose of Ambivalence: Liberation Struggle Discourse on Necklacing", *Kronos* 36. no. 1 (2010): 137.

⁵⁶ C. Van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*, (New York, Hill and Wang 1997).

Bozzoli's *Women of Phokeng*⁵⁷, along with other revisionists' work involving extensive fieldwork and interviews, highlight the value of people-oriented historical methods. These works broadly emphasise understanding the experiences of the participants/interviewees through their narratives and perspectives. These were moments of undoing and unlearning pivotal for acclimatisation and, arguably, acculturation into the social context. Fundamentally, the academic cap, worn typically by researchers entering the field with the primary objective of attaining information, was, unfortunately, limiting. "The historical interviewer does not apply standards of his/her own time or of his/her subculture to historical testimony; s/he is in the business of eliciting witnessed facts and constructing a historical frame of reference that is neutral, as much as possible, for these facts."⁵⁸

The interviewer's elitist (class, education, and material wealth displayed by recording devices, clothes, perfume/cologne, vehicle, etc.) positionality has been observed to prohibit access to a binary process of establishing commonalities and linkages between the interviewer and participants. The interviewer is purposed to extract knowledge but give back knowledge to the symbiotic process. The transaction is the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, in essence, partners in knowledge production. This knowledge can be used as a panacea to many societal issues engulfing South African communities or to expand epistemic and pedagogical frameworks. Drawing from suggestions by community members, *Chapter 7* provides recommendations to address the dilapidation of heritage sites in Sharpeville as a viable solution to infrastructure inequality in the region. Rehabilitating these sites within the Vaal River City project context could contribute to poverty alleviation in the area.

The researcher is the essential determinant of the impact of the knowledge systems derived from the community or interviewee process. In Dunaway's situation analysis, the researcher is positioned as a representative of an organisation and its stereotypes, and less concern or interest is placed on the individual outside their organisation.⁵⁹ The interviewer is also cautious and empathetic of the community dynamics and thus has

⁵⁷ B. Bozzoli and M. Nkotsie, *Women of Phokeng, Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1991).

⁵⁸ Dunaway, "Field Recording Oral," 24.

⁵⁹ Dunaway, "Field Recording Oral," 24

preconceived notions from prior research. Blee, who worked on the USA's Klu Klux Klan, recalls:

In my interviews with former Klan members, however, I made few efforts to establish such rapport or to shy away from controversial topics. Indeed, I was prepared to hate and fear my informants, to find them repellent and, more importantly, strange. I expected no rapport, shared assumptions, or commonality of thought or experience. Moreover, I expected them to be wary of me and reluctant to express their true attitudes. But this was not the case. Instead of participating reluctantly in the interviews, these former Klan members seemed quite at ease.⁶⁰

Before the interview stages, researchers' perceptions are shaped by many factors, including but not limited to secondary sources, archival material, news publications, and word of mouth. The immersion in the community is an additional opportunity to gain familiarity with the context in which respondents/participants navigate daily. The academic cap was a hindrance in the discourse of Dlamini's death. The views expressed by the participants may be published or shared with the broader community, and the respondents could be accused of gossip, fabrication, or even snitching.

Immersion in the community was an opportunity to learn the Sharpeville community's broader cultural norms and values. The respondents were predominantly Sesotho speakers and inevitably adhered to the patterns of the Basotho people. The township has become a cosmopolitan and vibrant space where the cultures of the Ndebele, BaPedi, Tsonga, and Zulu speakers, amongst others, interact in shaping the social landscape of Sharpeville. The immersion in the place was a vantage point to gender dynamics in the township. Social norms somewhat prohibited conversations between opposite sexes without the presence of their partners. Sometimes, when male interviewees were approached in their homes, women would leave before the conversation began. It is believed that in some cultural spaces when men speak, women should remove themselves from the conversation as a sign of respect. This limited knowledge acquisition, especially on homemaking, a practice designated for women in many cultures in South Africa. In instances where the interview process could take place with older

⁶⁰ K.M. Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics: Lessons from Oral Histories of the Klan" *The Journal of American History* 80, no. 2 (1993): 604.

married women, the presence of a female gatekeeper cushioned the potential contradictions to cultural practices. However, it was almost intolerable and dishonourable to visit a man's house in their absence and to interact with his spouse. These visitations could become the talk of the town and may lead to the spread of rumours from gossipmongers.

1.6.2 Interviews

The socio-economic history of Sharpeville is deconstructed by conducting semi-structured interviews with the residents of Sharpeville. Semi-structured interviews are preferred because the method enhances the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, allowing for recollection. Open-ended questions are crucial in retrieving information and life stories of interviewees. The open-ended questions prepared for the interviews have been constructed in the context of the socio-economic environment of South Africa. They are designed to probe the articulation of memory particularly with older citizens. The dynamics of the history of South Africa, as demonstrated by *Oral History in a Wounded Country*, have informed the methods and approaches taken by the researcher.⁶¹

The lived realities of Sharpeville residents are diverse. For this reason, oral interviews were conducted with adults of varying ages and backgrounds. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the research process was mindful of the broader issues that may limit communication between the interviewer and interviewee. Issues such as class, gender, identity, language, race, and culture, amongst others, are typical examples. Acknowledging potential memory issues, such as nostalgia, the study adopts a reflexive

⁶¹ B. Carton and L. Vis, "Doing Oral History," in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane, *Doing Oral History in a Wounded Country Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2008), 66; See in addition E. Jessee, "The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology amid Highly Politicized Research Settings," *The Oral History Review* 38, no. 2 (Summer/fall 2011): 292 interrogates the political dynamics that may hinder effective responses from interviewees that oral historians must be cognisant of during the interviews.

and critical approach to oral narratives.⁶² Despite these challenges, oral interviews provided crucial access to untold stories and offered a textured understanding of Sharpeville's evolving socio-economic landscape.

1.6.3 Research ethics

The research adhered to North-West University's BaSSREC ethical guidelines, requiring participants to sign informed consent forms before the interview. Classified as a low to medium-risk study, it involved interviewing residents in Sharpeville without including vulnerable groups. Ethical considerations included clearly outlining the study's aim, background, and significance to participants and ensuring their rights and welfare were protected throughout the research process. The researcher, as the sole investigator with the necessary academic qualifications, conducted all interviews and data analysis to maintain confidentiality and integrity.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are thoroughly discussed in the BaSSREC information and consent leaflet (see Annexure A). These include the selection of participants appropriate for the questions being asked. The inclusion process required, for example, a resident of Sharpeville who is knowledgeable about the socio-economic development and history of Sharpeville because they had lived there during apartheid. Furthermore, inclusion entailed that they had experienced social, political, and economic changes that shaped the landscape of the township post-1994. The rights and welfare of all participants were respected at all times. Steps were undertaken to ensure that the participant's decision to enrol would not be influenced by their potential relationship with the researcher, that is, if any potential participants were in a dependent relationship with the researcher.

Regardless of the acquaintances made in the township, the researcher contacted leaders in Sharpeville, who then referred the researcher to interview elderly acquaintances, family, relatives, and colleagues who experienced the development of Sharpeville between 1950 and 2020. Some of the interviewees from Sharpeville suggested

⁶² The study used the suggested anthropology of mentality (through methodology) to do this study as explained by J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and New Directions in the Study of History*, 6th ed. (London: Routledge, 2015), 221–224.

respondents who reside in Bedworth Park. The students interviewed were randomly selected in Bedworth Park. The interviewees' privacy and anonymity were prioritised, and if they contributed to the snowball effect, interviewees were required to obtain permission from potential participants before issuing contacts. A snowball effect, a popular sampling method for collecting and analysing information in the Social Sciences, generated a unique type of social knowledge — knowledge which is emergent, political, and interactional. Participants were not compensated for their participation. Interviews were conducted at the interviewees' homes. It was found that the interviewees' homes and memories associated with place and identity pivotally interrogated some of the critical research questions. The duration of the interviews was generally an hour, with a short comfort break when necessary.

The potential risks and benefits associated with the study (e.g., physical, psychological, social, economic, etc.) were minimal, if any. There was no risk to the community or a particular group of individuals (e.g., stigmatisation) as the questions were not personal. The researcher abided by the NWU ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence. The interviewees were informed of the context and objectives of the research both verbally and in writing, and written consent was issued and stored safely by the interviewer. The researcher used the prescribed BaSSREC informed consent leaflet in which clear explanations of how potential risks are minimised/managed, and the risks are notably reasonable to anticipated benefits.

Significance of the study

Historians have given substantial attention to the history of 'model locations' in the South African urban context. In the context of Sharpeville, historians and academics have predominantly focused on the processes and developments that shaped Sharpeville from segregation until the advent of democracy without interrogating the extensive changes that occurred post-1994. When they do engage with the post-apartheid era, the focus is often limited to the commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre.

This thesis diverges from that trajectory by emphasising the changes that have taken place since 1994 and how the community has actively contributed to the memory and landscape of Sharpeville through *ubuntu* and other mechanisms. Fundamentally, the thesis argues for a deeper and more critical understanding of Sharpeville beyond the Sharpeville massacre, unpacking fresh nuances of the residents' experiences.

Furthermore, it analyses Sharpeville's economic, cultural, and social relevance in a transforming region. The following chapter analyses the dominant literature on the discourse of Sharpeville, the methodology used, and the researcher's diary.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the historiography and literature on model townships, forced removals, regional history, socio-economic development in the Vereeniging region, and the Sharpeville massacre. It provides a critical literature framework and outlines the methodological groundwork that guided the research process. Additionally, reflections from the researcher's diary enrich the ideographic framing of place, offering valuable context for readers unfamiliar with Sharpeville.

2.2 Historiography and literature analysis

Literary trends stemming from the British Imperialist School, the Settler or Colonial School, and the Afrikaner Nationalist have contributed to studying the regional histories of Southern African township communities. The thesis is cognisant of the shades of nuances embedded in each school of thought. The lens focuses on revisionist and recent forms of thinking to accentuate a deeper analysis of the historiography that shaped Sharpeville and Vereeniging.

The South African War's (also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902) influence on Vereeniging is undervalued as a heritage product with tourism potential value that can benefit the community. The nationalists' writings and perceptions of the South African War are pivotal knowledge systems that may enhance the construction and articulation of tourism products in the area. Equally important is deepened research on the contributions of non-whites and other nationalities to the war effort and the histories of the concentration camps in Vereeniging's vicinity.

Afrikaner nationalists' writings on the South African War (Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902) underplayed the contributions of non-whites to the war effort on both sides. The edited publication in 1973 of Sol Plaatje's *The Boer War – Diary of Sol T. Plaatje*,

accounted for a 'non-white' perspective of the war.¹ Plaatje's attempts to shift the narrative on the war from a white-dominant perspective to a reflection of the war from non-white positionalities and agency are plausible. Though academic shifts have been made, evidently in the renaming of the war, the thesis found disconnections, disinterest, and lack of material and symbolic claims with symbols of war and memory in the region.² Furthermore, oral histories, traditional methods of communicating family histories, have watered down, if not obliterated, narratives related to the war in the region. Most interviewees displayed little knowledge of the South African War or the Second World War's (1939-1945) social and economic influence on the Vaal. Tom's reflections on his uncle's experiences in the Second World War illustrate the pivotal function of storytelling in keeping family histories alive in moments when traditional discourses lacked altruism. Tom recalls:

In the evenings, we used to sit around the fire and listen to his stories about the war. I cannot forget how he used to say, 'You, my nephews are going to fight here inside South Africa for the black man's liberation'. There is no black soldier now who will go overseas and fight. I was too young then to understand what he was saying, but it's all clear to me now.³

The Liberal School, in comparison to the British Nationalists and the Settler or Colonial schools of thought, went against the grain by attempting to accentuate the relevance of Africans in the socio-economic spaces of segregationist and apartheid South Africa. At a time when it was unfashionable and politically incorrect to do so, "what was new in their vision was their rejection of a "segregated" history and the placing of people of colour in the past as a factor of equal importance with whites".⁴ W.M. Macmillan and his pupil C.W. de Kiewet were firm believers that an accurate history must accentuate the voices of others. In essence, a history of South Africa should encapsulate the experiences of non-

¹ P.L. Bonner, "An African View of the Boer War-The Boer War, Diary of Sol T. Plaatje: an African at Mafeking", *The Journal of African History* 15, no. 2 (1974): 341.

² Researchers Observations.

³ P. Tom, *My Life Struggle* (South Africa: Ravan Worker Series, 1985), 12.

⁴ W. Visser, Trends in South African Historiography and the Present State of Historical Research. Conference paper delivered at the Nordic Africa institute, Uppsala, Sweden 23 September 2004, 6.

whites, especially those of poor Whites and Blacks whose presence is aligned with the country's economy.⁵

Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa* series used unorthodox terminology and a 'radical' tone, evident in phrases such as 'white invaders'.⁶ Liberals called for the narration of a precolonial history approach inclusive of the much-neglected histories of African communities and the inclusion of an African voice. Revisionist scholars, furthermore, critiqued liberals for their analysis of South Africa's political and economic development, especially in the 1960s, from a racial and ethnic perspective.⁷ Liberals, to their defence, set the tone by accentuating and locating a shade of history that followed historical accounts that were somewhat neglected. This gave Marxist revisionist scholars a foundation on which to build their discourse.

Steered by a Marxist class-oriented perspective, revisionist discourse vitalised a framework largely neglected by liberal scholars. Their insistence on social histories and class in a racialised and masculine-laden industrial South Africa reverberated the discourses on class in a class-based society. Edited by Bozzoli, *Class, Community and Conflict* accentuated the broader experiences of South Africans in their places of employment to encapsulate union activism and labour.⁸ Brink begins the discourse of female insubordination and abuse in the garment industry by reminding the reader of racial, sexist, and prejudiced slurs that, from the onset, uncover the unfortunate position that women experienced in the manufacturing industry.⁹ Carelessly used as a term of

⁵ C. Kros, "Farewell to the Middle Style? Reflections on The Seed is Mine," *South African Historical Journal* 37, no. 1 (1997): 181.

⁶ L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (Johannesburg and Cape Town): Jonathan Ball Publishers: 2014), 70.

⁷ F. Johnstone, "'Most painful to our hearts': South Africa through the eyes of the new school," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue Canadienne des études Africaines* 16, no. 1 (1982): 7.

⁸ E. Brink, "'Joh' burg Hotheads' and the 'Gullible Children of Cape Town': The Transvaal Garment Workers' Union's Assault on low wages in the Cape," in *Class, Community, and Conflict: South African perspectives*, ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 179.

⁹ Brink, 'Joh' burg Hotheads', 179.

endearment for domestic labourers, 'meide' is still used in many urban areas of South Africa to describe women who provide labour to the domestic spheres.¹⁰

Like the handful of historiographical interests in the Vereeniging region, this thesis has largely neglected the histories and experiences of women in the manufacturing sectors and their possible contributions to domestic labour in neighbouring suburbs. Vast academic interests have yielded seminal accounts of women's experiences and contributions to domestic labour in parts of South Africa.¹¹ These accounts are pivotal in accentuating the shifts in thinking on the positionality and relevance of Africans in White spaces. Furthermore, the implementation of apartheid legislation, notably influx control measures, gradually prohibited the accommodation of labour on their property and pressured councils to build group areas.¹²

Women's experiences and place in urban Vereeniging, like the East Rand, are relegated, conventionally, within the confines of a male-oriented discourse as producers of illicit alcohol.¹³ This thesis attempts to redirect the discourse by unpacking women's agency in making capitalists' environments home. Also, how women left a footprint, especially in Sharpeville, through establishing formal and informal societies that contributed to the community's well-being. Insubstantial academic interest has been geared towards studying women's experiences and agencies in a patriarchal and classist Vereeniging and Sharpeville. As with Women of Phokeng, Historiographical traditions enunciate women's histories and navigations in a classist society that local history scholars can use as a framework for women's studies in the region.¹⁴ Clark and Worger's recent book is a

¹⁰ Personal observations and experiences.

¹¹ R. Ginsburg, "Come in the Dark": Domestic Workers and Their Rooms in Apartheid-Era Johannesburg, South Africa." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 8 (2000): 88; See, T. Shefer, "Fraught tenderness: Narratives on domestic workers in memories of apartheid," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2012): 310.

¹² A. Chaskalson and S. Duncan, "Influx control: The pass laws." (1984).

¹³ P.L. Bonner, "Family, crime and political consciousness on the East Rand, 1939–1955," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 393-420; See also, P.L. Bonner, "Desirable or Undesirable Sotho Women? Liquor, Prostitution and the Migration of Sotho Women to the Rand, 1920-1945," *African Studies Institute* no. 1 (1988).

¹⁴ B. Bozzoli and M. Nkotshe, *Women of Phokeng, Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1991).

pivotal propeller. In their analysis of the Sharpeville Massacre, women's accounts of the massacre are echoed to reflect the holistic impact of the massacre on the family.¹⁵ This falls within Marxist revisionist thinking of history writing traditions from below.

A Marxist analysis of class in South Africa focussed not only on African communities in their endeavour for a 'history from below approach' but members of society whose histories were sidelined by the dominant discourse on political figures, political moments, and ideologies. Brink's analysis of poor white families shows the complexity of poverty in urban areas; "...in order to carve itself a niche in the urban industrial economy, the poor white family had to operate as an economic unit. All the members of the family had to seek employment, and they did so with varying degrees of success".¹⁶ Understanding the complexities of class relations, Cobley's *Class and Consciousness* analyses the urban environment as a pivotal indicator of proximity between class, race, and the shared environment.¹⁷ White suburbia represented a class and racial distinction that separated Whites from places occupied by non-Whites. For this reason, the government's measures of separating the landscape according to race, in essence, had a class concern. Johnstone, a prolific critic of the liberal school of thought, stated:

The basic problem with the liberal school, from the emerging critique perspective, was its idea that the economic system and the racial system, – capitalism and racial domination, somehow had nothing to do with each other; the idea that the "problem" in South Africa was essentially cultural and political, not economic.¹⁸

Johnstone's criticism of the liberalists for their inability to accentuate the interconnections and interdependence between capitalism and racism yielded a 1970s publication.¹⁹ He vehemently drew connections between capitalism and racism in South Africa as the

¹⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 119.

¹⁶ Brink, 'Joh' burg Hotheads', 183.

¹⁷ A.G. Cobley, *Class and Consciousness, The Black Petty Bourgeoisie in South Africa, 1924 to 1950*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990), 19.

¹⁸ Johnstone, "Most painful to," 8.

¹⁹ F.A. Johnstone, "White prosperity and white supremacy in South Africa today," *African Affairs* 69, no. 275 (1970).

propellers and sustenance of White supremacy.²⁰ The argument's premise was how Black communities' presence in urban South Africa or on its periphery became problematic. Non-whites were valued for their labour but detested along racial lines. Racism and capitalism became increasingly contradictory in the factories, mines, and freehold locations. Informal locations inhabited by Africans became an Achilles' heel for the segregationist and apartheid governments.²¹ Similar places became cornerstones for protest action because African labourers experienced stumbling blocks in voicing labour-related frustration relating to remuneration disparities based on race, working conditions and the general cost of living.²² Against this backdrop, the thesis argues that the Sharpeville Massacre had broader cardinal points well beyond the passes. It encompassed a general dissatisfaction with the absence of union representation, rental increments, and low wages, amongst other things.²³

Modikwe in *Labour Township and Protest* penned a history from below by articulating ordinary people's protest action against bus fare increments.²⁴ In addition to Dikobe's research on protests, Bradford's analysis accentuates women's agency in confronting male hegemony in the domestic sphere and the external economies. Disgruntled by male drunkenness and erroneous expedition of income on alcohol, women contested male dominance in a social arena determined by misogyny and fermented by masculinity and cultural norms.²⁵ This was also applicable to Sharpeville when women participated in the protest against passing laws and rent increments.²⁶ The History Workshop movement

²⁰ Johnstone, "White prosperity and," 126.

²¹ O. Crankshaw, "Squatting, Apartheid and Urbanisation on the Southern Witwatersrand," *African Affairs* 92, no. 366 (1993): 43.

²² P.L. Bonner, The 1920 Black Mineworkers' Strike: A Preliminary Account, in *Class and Consciousness, The Black Petty Bourgeoisie in South Africa, 1924 to 1950* (Westport, CT Greenwood Press, 1990), 274-276; See T. Lodge, "The destruction of Sophiatown," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1981): 117.

²³ A. Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville: Agony of South Africa*, (London, Littlehampton Book Services, 1960), 54

²⁴ D. Modikwe, "We shall Walk," in *Labour, Townships and Protest*, Ed. B. Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979), 107.

²⁵ H. Bradford, "'We are now the Men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside, 1929" (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987), 292.

²⁶ Author unknown, "Sharpeville Women's Rent Protest", Thursday 24 March 1960, 8. *The New Age*.

contributed significantly to the histories of the marginalised by giving space for a much-needed feminist perspective in a male-white-dominated discipline. Bozzoli's *Women of Phokeng* was instrumental in accentuating the voices of 22 women whose histories of transitions, experiences, and adaptations to urban and rural areas stimulated the urgency of narrating women's experiences from a Marxist class feminist approach.²⁷

The History Workshop and its staff members were exceptional in expounding the essence and relevance of the oral history method and approach to defining and attaining histories from below. Influenced by Shula Marks, Peter Delius wrote extensively on the histories of the Northern Transvaal.²⁸ Delius joined the University of the Witwatersrand in 1981 after leaving Oxford, reverberating what was at the time a method predominantly associated with Anthropology,²⁹ an ethnographic approach to understanding histories of the Northern Transvaal:

But all of us spent prolonged periods living in rural areas, interacting with local people and observing social processes. I spent many hours in conversation with the individuals who had taken me under their wing. These exchanges, along with the number of life history interviews I conducted, opened my eyes to historical processes in the twentieth century that were entirely absent from the established literature. I also learned the ways in which people talked about, explained, and periodised their histories and wider changes in the region often sat rather uneasily with my own analytical categories and narrative structures.³⁰

This multidisciplinary approach was quintessential in connecting revisionists with the bare realities of their subjects' experiences. It allowed them to touch the soil, breathe the same

²⁷ B. Bozzoli and M. Nkotshe, *Women of Phokeng, Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983* (Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1991), 16-25.

²⁸ Some of Delius' publications include but are not limited to *The Land Belongs To Us, The Pedi Polity, The Boers and the British in the Nineteenth Century Transvaal* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983); see also, *A Lion Amongst the Cattle, Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal* (Oxford: Curry Publishers, 1996); W. Beinart, P. Delius, S. Trapido, *Putting a plough to the ground: Accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850-1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986).

²⁹ E.J. Hobsbawm, "From social history to the history of society" *Daedalus* 100, no.1 (1971): 27.

³⁰ P. Delius, "EP Thompson, 'social history', and South African historiography, 1970-90," *The Journal of African History* 58, no. 1 (2017): 10.

air, and, to a certain extent, visualise a complex world from the perspective of the subaltern. Nieftagodien argued that:

While class formation and resistance remained central themes for the HW (History Workshop), its intellectual focus expanded to embrace social and cultural experiences of different sectors of the urban black working class, especially those who had been denizens of the inner-city slum yards and locations. As a result, researchers turned their attention to aspects of life in these localities that had previously been ignored in the academy, including the politics of liquor, gangsterism, music, dance, sports and a variety of other 'everyday' activities that made up the lives of ordinary people were brought to light in both academic and popular history publications.³¹

Though admirable and trendsetting for historians, particularly post-1994 and for this thesis, revisionist approaches were not without criticism. Legassick and Minkley's historiographical analyses of trends in South African history point not only to the dominance of White men in History as a discipline but to the possibility that "the 'academic' can masquerade as the bringer of 'objective truth' (which is in reality only an interpretation) because of her, or his claim, to inhabit a privileged 'site of knowledge'".³² The extent to which *The Seed is Mine* speaks to the broader experiences of Black Sharecroppers through Kas Maine and essentially through Onselen was not without criticism:

The Seed is Mine is not just the story of Kas Maine, but it is suggested that it is how Kas Maine himself would tell it – it is representative of his subaltern viewpoint and interpretation. Yet, because of the nature of expression and translation of that memory, Kas Maine's actual voice is silenced. Maine hardly makes it onto the 535

³¹ N. Nieftagodien, "The Place of 'The Local' in History Workshop's Local History," *African Studies* 69, no. 1 (2010): 45.

³² M. Legassick and G. Minkley, "Current Trends in the production of South African history," *Alternation* 5, no. 1 (1998): 106.

pages 'in his own voice'. i.e., in extended quotations of his own words, yet the evidence from his own memory enables a significant rewriting of the past.³³

Fundamentally, Legassick and Minkley maintained that:

The paradox that this is really Van Onselen's story, his voice, his practice of writing history involving memory as evidence, which is almost obsessively sifted, checked, ordered, referenced and cross-referenced, evaluated and processed by him – the professional historian – into the remembrance of real collective subaltern experience of structure and of agency should not be forgotten.³⁴

These historical debates are pivotal frameworks guiding historians in their objective and pursuit of narrating in-depth historical accounts of historical moments through oral history. As the title suggest, *Voices of Sharpeville* provides impeccable accounts of people's experiences and archival material to accentuate a much-needed voice in the region's history.³⁵ In the context of this thesis, the attainment of life stories and perspectives from Sharpeville residents was enhanced by the immersion of self into spaces in Sharpeville. Immersion was essential and rested on the premise that the residents constructed the township and its ambience, culture, traditions, mythologies, and the like. Familiarity with space was a fundamental precursor to understanding the residents that shaped everyday experiences.

2.3 Townships

The voice of the subaltern, a gold mine for histories from below, echoed the everyday broader life experiences in townships. Townships in the context of Group Areas were systematically administered through robust legislation. Most township housing designs, along with the physical landscape, were monotonous. Township folk counteracted this with the implantation of social and cultural complexities that gave townships a vibrant feel. The revisionist historian was most likely in a privileged situation to embrace the vibrant township, alien to their usual environment. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to attain

³³ Legassick and Minkley, "Current Trends in," 112.

³⁴ Legassick and Minkley, "Current Trends in," 112.

³⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*.

more profound, though limited, experiences with township dynamics in the claim and battle between gangs for territory. For this reason, much of the historiography of townships has been pivotal in accentuating gang activity histories.³⁶ Glaser's prolific publications on gangs in Soweto provided theoretical pathways for comprehending unemployment, poor educational backgrounds, and masculinity³⁷ as a prelude to gang formations.³⁸ Hlongwane's (now Modisane) thesis explored this phenomenon within the framework of delinquency, a feature in many apartheid townships.³⁹ Furthermore, Glaser's contextual analysis of the social, economic and political environments in which gang activity proliferated, provided a synopsis of the nature of townships as a possible stimulus for gang activity.

Kynoch's study of the Marashea gang emphasises, as with Glaser, the nonchalant and disinterest gangs had in politics, except when protest action was used as an opportunity to have advanced criminal activity.⁴⁰ Bonner associated gang activism with increased unemployment because of competition for employment.⁴¹ The unemployed youth of Sharpeville, who congregated outside beer halls, were in a similar predicament that led to questionable political activism. The industry's preference for migrant labour contributed to the youth's despondency.⁴² This thesis argues that despondency contributed to their enrolment as Task Force members entrusted with recruiting anti-pass protesters, at times

³⁶ See C. Glaser, "Swines, hazels and the dirty dozen: masculinity, territoriality and the youth gangs of Soweto, 1960–1976," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998): and G. Kynoch, "From the Ninevites to the Hard Livings gang: township gangsters and urban violence in twentieth-century South Africa," *African Studies* 58, no. 1 (1999).

³⁷ G. Kynoch, "From the Ninevites to the Hard Livings gang: township gangsters and urban violence in twentieth-century South Africa," *African Studies* 58, no. 1 (1999): 58.

³⁸ C. Glaser, "Swines, hazels and the dirty dozen: masculinity, territoriality and the youth gangs of Soweto, 1960–1976," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998): 720.

³⁹ C.T. Hlongwane, *The Making of Juvenile and Youth Delinquency in South Africa, 1910-1948* (PhD diss., University of Johannesburg, 2021).

⁴⁰ G. Kynoch, *We are fighting the world: A history of the Marashea gangs in South Africa, 1947–1999*, (USA: Ohio University Press, 2005), 8.

⁴¹ P.L. Bonner, "Family, crime and political consciousness on the East Rand, 1939–1955," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 400.

⁴² M. Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville: A History of South African Townships in the 1950s" (Honours diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 9.

allegedly through forceful measures and interrogation. The preference for migrant labour in Sharpeville contributed to the unemployment of youth who struggled to find work in the industries of a capitalist Vereeniging.⁴³

2.4 Forced removals

Mindful of youth unemployment and gangs in townships, the historiography of townships pursued by revisionist historians was arguably largely reactionary to violent episodes that placed townships on their academic radar. The academic radar needed, in turn, a holistic approach to conceptualising events such as the Sharpeville Massacre and the June 16 student uprising of Soweto's youth in 1975. These events occurred within a system that required in-depth analyses. Fundamentally, the literary works on the Vaal region have increasingly focused on the massacre; this focus, the thesis argues, is incomplete without people's histories and everyday experiences. As shown by Chaskalson, Vally, and other seminal works in the region, the experiences and histories constructed in Top Location cannot be neglected or relegated to the background.⁴⁴ As with Soweto, the social and cultural formations attributed to the vibrant township cannot neglect its historical foundations in Sophiatown. For this reason, historians have vehemently produced accounts of the legislative muscle behind the removal processes in rural and urban apartheid South Africa as one of many reasons for revolt in townships.⁴⁵ These accounts debate the processes and consequences of laws, such as the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, the Slums Act of 1934, and the Group Areas Act of 1950, as detrimental justifications for the clearance of black spots. Also, scholars have vested immense academic interest in the resistance towards the removals, and though there was minimum resistance in Top Location, some community members were frustrated about the process.

⁴³ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 9.

⁴⁴ N.T. Vally, "The 'Model Township' of Sharpeville: The Absence of Political Action and Organisation, 1960-1984" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2010); Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville".

⁴⁵ E. Unterhalter, *Forced removal: The division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1987), 61-62; See K. Henrard, "The internally displaced in South Africa: The strategy of forced removals and apartheid," *Jura Falconis* 32, no. 4 (1996): 499-503.

The histories and development of townships, informal settlements, ghettos and slums, and removals from slums to townships have received substantial consideration in South Africa⁴⁶ and internationally.⁴⁷ As Lodge⁴⁸ and Southworth⁴⁹ have articulated, forced removals in Sophiatown and Durban were met with varied resistance from local communities and political structures.⁵⁰ Southworth further argues that the years of animosity between Indians and Blacks in Durban were ignited by socio-economic disparities in which Indians monopolised trade.⁵¹ This assisted the apartheid government in sowing divisions and weakening resistance. Similarly, the removals of Sophiatown in the 1950s were opposed by the African National Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the Ratepayers Association, amongst others. As in Top Location, internal class and racial divisions often hampered resistance in freehold communities. Despite little resistance to removing Top Location's residents, the process accentuated class divisions, weakening any possibility for resistance. Those who could afford to purchase

⁴⁶ G. Mills, "Space and Power in South Africa: The Township as a Mechanism of Control," *Ekistics* 56, no. 334/335 (1989): 65.

⁴⁷ P. Hofmann, H. Taubenböck and C. Werthmann, "Monitoring and modelling of informal settlements – A review on recent developments and challenges," *Joint Urban Remote Sensing Event* (JURSE), (2015); B. Marx, T. Stoker, and T. Suri, "The Economics of Slums in the Developing World," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 27, no. 4 (2013): 187-210; E.L. Moreno, *Slums of the world: The face of urban poverty in the new millennium?* (Kenia: UN-Habitat, 2003); R. Hallett, "Desolation on the veld: Forced removals in South Africa," *African Affairs* 83, no. 332 (1984); K. Henrard, "Post-Apartheid South Africa: Transformation and Reconciliation," *World Affairs* 166, no. 1 (2003); D. Newton, "Forced removals in South Africa," *South African Review – SAR* 5 (1990): 403-414; L. Platzky and C. Walker, *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985); C. Landman, "Telling Sacred Stories Eersterust and the Forced Removals of the 1960s," *Religion and Theology* 6, no. 3 (1999): 415-427; I. Hofmeyr, "Gender, Patterns of Story-telling and Forced Removals: A Transvaal Perspective," *Institute of Commonwealth Studies* no. 44 (1992): 39-53; K. Gopalan, "Forced Relocations, Memory and Nostalgia Amongst Indian South Africans in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *Alternation Journal* 24, no. 1 (2017): 270-93; S. Trapido, "Putting a Plough to the Ground, a History of Tenant Production on the Vereeniging Estates 1896-1920," in *Collected Seminar Papers. Institute of Commonwealth Studies* 33 (1984): 59-81.

⁴⁸ Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown," 126.

⁴⁹ H. Southworth, "Strangling South Africa's Cities, Resistance to Group Areas in Durban during the 1950s," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 24, no. 1 (1991): 3.

⁵⁰ Southworth, "Strangling South Africa's Cities," 5.

⁵¹ Southworth, "Strangling South Africa's Cities," 5.

property or rent accommodation elsewhere most likely relocated to the freehold township of Evaton.⁵²

2.5 Regional history

Academics have vastly accentuated dynamics pertaining to housing development, poverty, living conditions, cultures, infrastructure, and tourism. In doing so, historians have explored historical development and conceptual frameworks of townships from a socio-economic perspective.⁵³ Thus, it contributes to the growth of regional history, focusing on the broader experiences of township residents and their environment.⁵⁴ Historians have examined the establishment of renowned townships such as Daveyton,⁵⁵ Thokoza,⁵⁶ Alexandra,⁵⁷ Soweto,⁵⁸ and Sophiatown.⁵⁹ Scholars have debated a conceptual framework for regional history, with a tendency to accept the inseparability of territories.⁶⁰

⁵² K. Vusumuzi, "Evaton and a quest for economic independence: a new dimension to entrepreneurship, 1940-1949", *New Contree* 77, no. 2 (2016): 31.

⁵³ Bonner and Nieftagodien, *Alexandra a History*, 17–25.

⁵⁴ E.S. Van Eeden, M. Liefferink, and J.F. Durand, "Legal issues concerning mine closure and social responsibility on the West Rand," *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 5 no. 1 (July 2009): 52.

⁵⁵ Mthembu, Njabulo. "Segregation and Apartheid State-funding Schemes: The Establishment of the Urban African Township of Daveyton in the East Rand, South Africa, 1950-1990." MA diss., North-West University, 2023.

⁵⁶ Nieftagodien, Noor. "The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance." PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2001.

⁵⁷ Bonner and Nieftagodien, *Alexandra a History*.

⁵⁸ W.J.P. Carr, *Soweto, its Creation, Life, and Decline* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1990).

⁵⁹ Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown," 107.

⁶⁰ W.B. Hesseltine, "The Value of Regional History," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (Spring, 1948): 13; See also E.S. Van Eeden "Regional, local, urban and rural history as nearby spaces and places: Historiographical and methodological reflections," *New Contree* 63, Special Edition (Jan., 2012): 191; E.S. Van Eeden, "Challenging traditional ways of thinking and doing local/regional history research in South Africa: Some global learning and sharing," *International Journal of Regional and Local History*, no. 1 (May 2014): 27-43.

City centres remain crucial economic hubs in South Africa. Workers, therefore, try to find accommodation as close as possible to the centres to circumvent exorbitant transport costs. Spatial and economic issues cannot be separated. Armitage identifies the “survival techniques...”⁶¹ people in specific regions adopt.⁶² Hesseltine suggests that regions are politically constructed rather than phenomena which emerge spontaneously.⁶³ Hesseltine’s argument in the American context can be adapted to South Africa. In North America, regions were constructed to control the working class. Similarly, Sharpeville was established to accommodate factory workers near Vereeniging as part of separate development (apartheid-styled) endeavours.⁶⁴ However, the thesis considers the government’s housing development strategy and the construction of group areas as an act of *ubuntu*. This concern for humanity was instrumental in circumventing harsh living conditions by constructing adequate housing in which *ubuntu* could prosper near places of employment.

Councils have often romanticised their ‘housing projects’ and the creation of Group Areas as the desire to erect ‘model townships’ suitable for non-whites. Town councils even competed to produce the ‘best’ locations. For this reason, historians have been fixated on articulating the dynamics embedded in establishing Group Areas.⁶⁵ Similarly, Du Bruyn and Oelofse contextualise the building projects of Batho location in Bloemfontein as a political project to remove Waaihoek’s presence in White Bloemfontein.⁶⁶ The same can be said for the move from Top Location to Sharpeville. Vestbro is, however, critical of the standardisation of housing and a lack of a deliberate effort by the government to build houses that speak to the cultural expectations of its inhabitants, thus the temporary

⁶¹ S.H. Armitage, “From the inside out: Rewriting Regional History,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22, no. 3 (2001): 33.

⁶² Armitage, “From the inside out,” 33.

⁶³ Hesseltine, “The Value of Regional History,” 13.

⁶⁴ Rand Daily Mail, Friday, May 23, 1947. “Industrial Site for Sale, Vereeniging”, 4.

⁶⁵ D. Du Bruyn and M. Oelofse, “A Hygienic Native Township shall be Developed”: The Founding and Development of Batho as Bloemfontein’s “Model Location,” *Historia* 64, no. 2 (2019): 53.

⁶⁶ Du Bruyn and Oelofse, “A Hygienic Native Township,” 53.

and monotonous character of the housing.⁶⁷ Regardless of the limitations, Jennings' research was cognisant of the class category amongst Black communities and their housing affordability.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the Vereeniging Town Council (VTC) initially built houses that did not reflect the class complexities in Sharpeville. Also, Calderwood's analysis of housing standards is mindful of family size and income.⁶⁹ However, for many families, the houses were both adequate and inadequate.

Residents were often enthusiastic about receiving 'adequate' housing, particularly tenants who lived in slums in their former neighbourhoods, such as Top Location. Reflecting on the decision-making agency of removed communities, Du Bruyn and Oelofse describe an 'inclusive' approach that allowed Batho residents to choose a preferred building plan from diverse plans offered by the council or provide a building plan for approval.⁷⁰ It represented the government's segregation policy up to the end of World War 2. This approach implied that the removal and relocation process would primarily be amicable and consultative. This was not the outcome for the residents of Sharpeville once the National Party came to power in 1948. The thesis continues this discourse by analysing shifting perceptions towards apartheid housing and the evolution of the township. Fundamentally, it sheds light on how community members used their agency and will to reshape their houses or maintain their structures.

2.6 Socio-economic development

The thesis also focuses on the economic development of Sharpeville and the changes that took place at the time of the transition to democracy in the 1990s. The focus juxtaposes the general economic experiences of informal economies classified as illegal, in most instances, by apartheid legislation. The economic freedom to expand business interests is inherent with democracy and free market principles. Post-1994, business interests diversified in Sharpeville and outside its borders, a phenomenon absent in the

⁶⁷ Dick Urban Vestbro, *Housing in the apartheid City*, 6-7.

⁶⁸ J.F.B. Jennings, "Housing for the Urban Bantu, a Problem in Whole Engineering," *The South African Institution of Civil Engineers*, to be presented at the Monthly General Meeting, June 22nd, 1954, 171.

⁶⁹ D.M. Calderwood, "An investigation into the Planning of Urban Native Housing in South Africa" (PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1953).

⁷⁰ Du Bruyn and Oelofse, "A Hygienic Native Township," 67.

former group areas and even the apartheid era. In articulating the business interests of Black communities under apartheid, historians and other scholars typically focus on the development of letting and subletting of property and the notorious illicit brewing of alcohol.⁷¹

2.7.1 Letting and subletting of property (shantytowns)

The Black urban proletariat conventionally acquired property in freehold townships⁷² that were, for some time, legislatively liberated from the tentacles of apartheid. This changed over time. Freehold locations and their concomitant development were under the government's scrutiny for circumventing and contradicting policies of apartheid. To this effect, scholars have exhausted the literature on the living conditions in freehold locations as a prelude to unpacking the justifications for implementing the Slums Act of 1934 and subsequent forced removals. Huddleston's *Naught for Your Comfort* and Lodge's *The Destruction of Sophiatown* robustly critiqued government's inability to provide adequate shelter for Sophiatown residents, arguably leading to the rapid development of slum-like conditions.⁷³ In addition, the slums in certain parts of Sophiatown are highlighted by Mattera's description of Sophiatown, which provides a grim analysis of the conditions that were created by rack-renting and 'slumlords':

On the other side, Sophiatown was characterised by double storey mansions and quaint cottages, with attractive, well-tended gardens, stood side by side with wood and iron shacks, locked in a fraternal embrace of filth and felony.⁷⁴

In the context of Vereeniging, leading scholars elucidated the living conditions in Top Location, but primarily as the orthodox prelude to narrating the historical development of

⁷¹ See P. Bonner, "'Desirable or Undesirable Sotho Women? Liquor, Prostitution and the Migration of Sotho Women to the Rand, 1920-1945,'" (1988) and H. Bradford, *"We are now the Men": Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside, 1929.* Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987.

⁷² D. Mattera, *Memory is the Weapon* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987), 50.

⁷³ T. Huddleston, *Naught for Your Comfort* (Johannesburg: Hardingham and Donaldson, 1956), 133; See in addition Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown," 122.

⁷⁴ Mattera, *Memory is the Weapon*, 50.

Sharpeville.⁷⁵ Chaskalson's "The Road to Sharpeville",⁷⁶ in addition to Ian Jeffrey's⁷⁷ dissertation on community formation derails conventional methods by providing impeccable scholarly accounts of living conditions in the freehold settlement of Top Location. Therefore, the frustrations of Top Location residents are now better understood.

This thesis is concerned with the historiography of subletting as a framework to fathom the economic impact of implementing Group Areas that barred sub-letting and economic endeavours of Blacks in Sharpeville. This resulted in many landlords relocating to Evaton and neighbouring townships where the tentacles of apartheid had not reached. Post-1994, the backroom economy spiralled. The changing nature of political control over the usage of space and design enabled the development of backrooms by residents occupying houses built during the apartheid era. Though documented in many townships of South Africa, little is known about this spatial/property phenomenon in Sharpeville and how this contradicts or remodels the notion of the 'model location'.

The thesis also contributes to the growing discourse of township economy by criticising model locations and township development under apartheid as a hindrance to the economic aspirations of non-whites. Furthermore, the thesis sheds light on the unexplored development of backrooms in the nearby suburb of Bedworth Park and how it has contributed to paradigm shifts in the conceptualisation of suburbs. It is also exceptional in expounding the intersectionality between Sharpeville and the suburbs on its periphery. From a contemporary perspective, the local historiography neglects the complex relationship between Sharpeville and Bedworth Park.⁷⁸ Polarisation neglects people's agency in transplanting tangible and intangible aspects and phenomena learned in Sharpeville into areas previously reserved for Whites. Post-1994, cultures, behaviours and economies normalised in townships found a place and meaning in the suburbs. The

⁷⁵ Lodge, Sharpeville, a Massacre, 280–282.

⁷⁶ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 81.

⁷⁷ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943–1985" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 45–47; See in addition J.M. Ngoaketsi, "An Introduction to the History of Sharpeville 1942–1996" (Honours diss., Potchefstroom University for CHE, 1998).

⁷⁸ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community", Vally, "The 'Model Township', and Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville".

thesis debates whether these changes deteriorated the suburb or contributed to a social revolution mirroring class contestation.

2.7.2 Illicit production and selling of alcohol

In addition to profits derived from rentals, black residents of freehold locations and shantytowns derived financial gain from the retailing of illicit alcoholic beverages in shebeens. The durability and growth of the illicit alcohol market have received immense attention from a plethora of scholars vested in the economic landscape of environments occupied by non-whites. The scholarly works have found that women experienced limited employment opportunities in addition to the broader constraints of a patriarchal system embedded in cultural and political spaces.⁷⁹ Edwards used oral history to accentuate unemployment and economic disempowerment as a stimulus for women to disregard the illegality of alcohol production in their quest for income.⁸⁰ In the Copper mining fields of Northern Rhodesia, for example, the traditional production of grain beer also became a viable occupation for women.⁸¹ In Sophiatown, similarly to their counterparts in Soweto, Cato Manor and Top Location, profits and economic emancipation justified their endeavours.⁸²

In addition to the discourse on the economic justification for illicit trade, Mager's work interrogates the politics of alcohol and masculinity and the way it shaped preconceived notions of manhood and sport.⁸³ Furthermore, Mager concurs with Rogerson,⁸⁴ the monopoly created by legislative measures that prohibited and castigated the consumption

⁷⁹ R. Ginsburg, "Come in the Dark": Domestic Workers and Their Rooms in Apartheid-Era Johannesburg, South Africa." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 8 (2000): 95.

⁸⁰ I. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens: Illicit Liquor and the Social Structure of Drinking Dens in Cato Manor," *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, Vol. unknown, no. 3 (1988): 82.

⁸¹ C. Ambler, "Alcohol, racial segregation and popular politics in Northern Rhodesia," *The Journal of African History* 31, no.2 (1990): 304.

⁸² M. Rorich, "Shebeens, Slumyards and Sophiatown Black Women, Music and Cultural Change in Urban South Africa c1920–1960," *The World of Music* 31, no. 1 (1989): 79.

⁸³ A. Mager, "'One Beer, One Goal, One Nation, One Soul': South African Breweries, Heritage, Masculinity and Nationalism 1960–1999," *Past and Present*, Vol. unknown, no. 188 (2005): 182.

⁸⁴ C.M. Rogerson, "A Strange Case of Beer: The State and Sorghum Beer Manufacture in South Africa," *The Royal Geographic Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)* 18, no. 1 (1986): 16.

of clear beer and European alcohol stimulated the economic and social relevance of shebeen queens. In direct competition with shebeen queens, the beer halls occasionally became political monuments of discontent, vandalised by disgruntled citizens.⁸⁵ Anti-beer hall protests, whether sporadic or organised, signalled moral decadence in Black communities whose bacchanalia and profligacy funded Group Areas.

The overwhelming scholarship on beer halls and shebeens in South Africa is almost entirely focused on the apartheid context. The thesis' onus is to interrogate the economic disruption caused by the obliteration of shebeens in Top Location and the inception of a beer hall in Sharpeville. Jeffrey describes Top Location as an environment that lacked the neat and well-planned streets of Sharpeville, which ostensibly controlled and monitored illicit activities.⁸⁶ Similarly, the evolution of alcohol production at a township level is unpacked. This is done to fathom how access to the market, inspired by economic and political reform, revolutionised beer halls and shebeens and introduced innovative drinking holes such as Shesanyamas and pubs in Sharpeville.

2.8 The Sharpeville Massacre

The Sharpeville Massacre has received academic attention; Scholars continue to tirelessly produce discourse on police brutality and detailed analysis of the actual event. Paul Maylam's talk given at the Faculty of Humanities Rhodes University on 23 March 2010, Lodge's *Sharpeville, a Massacre and its Consequences*, Tyler, Fourie and Duncan's *Sharpeville and After, Voices of Sharpeville* and many other authors, including Vally, Chaskalson, and Jeffrey, reiterate the Sharpeville massacre in their respective research foci.⁸⁷ This study will not disregard the massacre's broader political relevance and importance. Chaskalson, Vally, and Jeffrey brought into play the political history of the township and included pivotal details about the general conditions and restraints that

⁸⁵ A. Mager, "The First Decade of 'European Beer' in Apartheid South Africa: The State, the Brewers and the Drinking Public, 1962-72." *The Journal of African History* 40, no. 3 (1999): 372.

⁸⁶ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943-1985" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991): 55.

⁸⁷ H. Tyler, B.G. Fourie, U.N. Security Council Resolution and P. Duncan, "Sharpeville and After," *Africa Today* 7, no. 3 (1960): 5-8; T. Lodge, *Sharpeville, a Massacre and its Consequences* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*: Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community: Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville".

people endured. The discourse includes restraints experienced by residents in Sharpeville, their working environments, and interactions with neighbouring township communities such as Sebokeng, Evaton, and Boipatong.

It is within these neighbouring townships that the narrative on gruesome, violent interactions between the police and community members took place. Clark and Worger argue that academics have promulgated, incorrectly, the death toll of the Sharpeville Massacre; oral history has reiterated this fact.⁸⁸ Clark and Worger's impeccable research has found more deaths beyond the 69 mentioned in many historical accounts.⁸⁹ The numbers may exceed 300 casualties.⁹⁰

Also of value is Reeve's exceptional work on tracing disgruntlement and dissatisfaction with the town council and apartheid as determinants of protest action. Reeves provides an in-depth analysis of the experiences of the hospitalised and imprisoned as a consequence of the massacre.⁹¹ In turn, Rueedi's publications on political activism in the Vaal region explains how unrest heightened the recruitment of resistance to political oppression.⁹² It also points to the development and histories of civic organisations and their plight against overpopulation, rentals, and living conditions.⁹³ Rueedi's work is exceptional in analysing the broader township dynamics and frustrations that precluded violent eruptions. This thesis is cognisant of iconic political events in the Vaal region, but it disembarks on reiterating existing discourses on massacres.

By adhering to the framework of a history from below in articulating neglected voices that a focus on the massacre has drowned, the thesis brings to life the histories of community

⁸⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, xv.

⁸⁹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, xv.

⁹⁰ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 190-198.

⁹¹ A. Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville: The Agony of South Africa* (London: Littlehampton Book Services, 1960, 53-54 see also page 77.

⁹² F. Rueedi, "Siyayinyova!", *Patterns of Violence in the African Townships of the Vaal Triangle, South Africa, 1980-86*, *Africa* 85, no. 3 (2015): 400.

⁹³ F. Rueedi, "The Politics of Difference and the Forging of a Political 'Community': Discourses and Practices of the Charterist Civic Movement in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa, 1980-84," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, no. 6 (2015): 1187.

members that shape township life. By analysing the community's reactions towards commemoration events, especially the recent #sharpevilleisnotamassacre, the study plans to draw the hypothesis that the massacre does not define the magnum opus of Sharpeville. The thesis' positionality is that more than 60 years since the massacre, community experiences have deconstructed this perception and stimulated the growth of new research interests. The social and cultural history of Sharpeville has been exhausted by Chaskalson and Jeffrey's analysis of sports and recreation in the township. Bonner and Nieftagodien have accentuated similar works in their study of football, boxing and music in making the social landscape of Alexandra township.⁹⁴ Whilst sports, music, and other cultural interests have been used to attain a sense of belonging to townships, the thesis studies the house/home and the township as contested environments for the making of home and belonging. Bonner's study on why migrants left home, and the changing nature of migrant labour and its relations to rural areas, grounds the debate on belonging and unbelonging in urban areas.⁹⁵ Industry development was undoubtedly the precursor to the growth of most townships during segregation and apartheid; this was evident in Top Location, Sharpeville, and neighbouring Zamdela.⁹⁶

This thesis posits that employment in industrial South Africa was a gateway to the urban areas of Vereeniging, but this could not have been sufficient for many labourers to consider townships as homes in the 1940s. However, studies on home and its complexities problematise the conceptualisation of home from a multidisciplinary approach, forcing this thesis to diversify its approaches to homemaking in politically repressive environments. Sulevi's recent publication of home experiences in environments considered inhabitable because of their detriment to human health is ground-breaking. As Sulevi argued, "although we do not often say it aloud, the sense of home covers the whole spectrum of emotions from love to disgust and even hate".⁹⁷ The

⁹⁴ P. Bonner and N. Nieftagodien, *Alexandra a History* (Johannesburg: WITS University Press, 2008), 161-166.

⁹⁵ P.L. Bonner, "African Urbanisation on the Rand between the 1930s and 1960s: Its Social Character and Political Consequences," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995), 121.

⁹⁶ S.J. Sparks, "Apartheid Modern: South Africa's Oil from Coal Project and the History of a Company Town" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2012), 25.

⁹⁷ S. Riukulehto, "Dangerous, Frightening, Homely: Home Experiences of Those Living on the Goldmines of the Far West Rand," *New Contree* 89, no. 2 (2022): 105.

Far West Rand's mining dumps have contributed to the symbolism of home, shaped by the region's mining histories.⁹⁸ Mokgoatšana, on the other hand, associates home and home-making with land ownership, especially in the African context.⁹⁹ Landownership may have hindered a sense of belonging in urban areas and townships in the apartheid era.

Nevertheless, Sulevi's study veers this thesis to consider symbols within apartheid townships as markers of home and belonging in a repressive environment. Cieraad's study on the experiences of migrants and refugees considers the "reinvention of home" as critical in cushioning and circumventing harsh realities.¹⁰⁰ Fundamentally, social relations within and outside the house are intangible symbols of home that sustain homeliness and belonging to the wider society and community. Thus, as *Introduction to Geographies of Home* argues, the home is not immune to local, provincial, and international influences.¹⁰¹ This thesis unpacks attempts at making homes in repressive housing structures and townships a deliberate strategy to circumvent and cushion the hardships of apartheid. Furthermore, by opposing pass laws, low salaries, and rent increments in the 1960s and 1980s residents of Sharpeville were laying claim to place. Post-1994, claims of a sense of place took a different turn. One trend was seated with some local residents calling for a return to the appreciation of the township beyond the massacre. This was evident in the movement #sharpevilleisnotamassacre and through contestations with the local municipality to govern better. Others have left Sharpeville and made home elsewhere achieving a sense of multilocality.

2.9 Reflection

The significance of this chapter is to reflect on some of the dominant literature that has shaped the discourse on the development of Top Location and Sharpeville. The literature analysis has shown that only a handful of scholars have articulated Top Location and

⁹⁸ Riukulehto. "Dangerous, Frightening, Homely," 109.

⁹⁹ S. Mokgoatšana, "(De) Scribing home in apartheid South Africa: Locating Sepedi literature in the discourse," *South African Journal of African Languages* 41, no. 1 (2021): 41.

¹⁰⁰ I. Cieraad, "Homes from home: memories and projections," *Home cultures* 7, no. 1 (2010): 86.

¹⁰¹ A. Blunt and A. Varley, "Introduction: Geographies of Home," *Cultural Geographies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 4.

Sharpeville histories. The history of the Sharpeville massacre, however, dominates most of the literature on the region. This has left gaps and nuances. This research attempts to fill that space by approaching the history of Sharpeville from below, using approaches that characterised revisionist attempts at telling the histories of people. In summary, the literature review has not explored many themes relevant to the study; the thesis will extrapolate them in the following chapters when different themes are discussed. Furthermore, the inception of the following chapters comprises conceptual frameworks that attempt to guide the thinking in each chapter. Theoretical frameworks are specified in some of the chapters to align the reader with some of the theories that guided the socio-economic changes that gradually took place in Sharpeville. Chapter 3, provides the background to Top location and the establishment of the Sharpeville township. It includes the economic development of the region, and the residents' experiences during their transition from Top location to Sharpeville.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FOUNDATION IS LAID: TOP LOCATION'S DEVELOPMENT AND DEMISE, 1920-1950

3.1 Introduction

The growth of communities in South Africa was historically shaped by access to land, resources and minerals, and steady water supplies. The discovery of coal on the Leeuwkuil farm in 1878 led to the establishment of Vereeniging on the northern bank of the Vaal River. Coal mining stimulated the town's industrial development, gradually attracting regional investments and labour. Fast track to the 1930s, African communities were exacerbated by the growth of the manufacturing industries stimulated by the demands of the Second World War (1939-1945). Consequently, Top Location increasingly became a home for Africans, Indians, Whites, and Chinese.

This chapter concerns Top Location's social complexities as a freehold location and how its positionality influenced community relations, homeliness, and living conditions. Furthermore, the impact and consequences of forced removals and relocations are discussed in a society that contradicted segregation thinking. This chapter lays the brickwork for a deeper understanding of the discourse on model locations and their efficacy in determining ideal communities for Africans. The intent of the chapter contends that regions are not merely geographical spaces but environments constructed and determined by human agency in the form of *ubuntu*, cultural expressions, determinations, and aspirations.

3.2 Conceptual framework

This chapter uses *ubuntu* as a conceptual framework to comprehend Top Location's socio-economic dynamics. *Ubuntu/botho*, an African philosophical framework developed by the Nguni people of Africa, encompasses a naturalised 'constitution' and obligation to a moral and ethical code of conduct. *Ubuntu* is shaped by principles and value systems in African communities, regenerated through oral traditions and customs. For this reason *ubuntu* is complex, multi-layered and contextual. Chuwa's framework of conceptualising

ubuntu identifies *ubuntu* as anthropocentric, theocentric and cosmocentric.¹ In this layer, *ubuntu* materialises, as shall be discussed in the thesis, interdependence, the need and reliance on others, and unity amongst people.² *Ubuntu's* additional layer further informs the ethics of Immortality, an emphasis on maintaining connections with ancestors through libation. Thus, "it is important to note that from the perspective of sub-Saharan Africans, the *living-dead* are really present, although they have been initiated in a higher form of existence."³ Marriage and procreation sustain *ubuntu* because they "ascertain continuity of life and the community."⁴ Fundamentally, *ubuntu* emphasises the centrality of the community, guided by collective morality and ethics in collaborating towards the holistic well-being of the broader society. In essence, Cornell and Marle conceptualise an additional layer known as the "concept of governmentality under *ubuntu*".⁵ This accentuates governments and institutions of power as the determinants of moral conduct and adherence to the statutes of *ubuntu*.⁶ Dauda conceptualises *ubuntu* as an:

African humanism (that) simply means the African philosophies of life: the African cultural values, outlooks, beliefs, and systems as thought about common human needs and a set of moralities or acceptable social norms, mores, rules, and regulations for the running of African communities.⁷

¹ L.T. Chuwa, "Interpreting the culture of Ubuntu: The contribution of a representative indigenous African ethics to global bioethics" (PhD diss., Duquesne University, 2012), 11.

² Chuwa, *Interpreting the Culture*, 13.

³ Chuwa, *Interpreting the Culture*, 13.

⁴ Chuwa, *Interpreting the Culture*, 13.

⁵ Cornell. D, and Van Marle. K, "Ubuntu feminism: Tentative reflections," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36, no. 2 (2015): 3.

⁶ Cornell and Marle, *Ubuntu Feminism*, 3.

⁷ B. Dauda, "African Humanism and Ethics: The Cases of Ubuntu and Omolúwàbí," in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy*, eds. Adeshina Afolayan and Toyin Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 481.

In addition, Letseka found that people are socialised through social and cultural systems in *Botho*.⁸ *Botho/Ubuntu* is a learned behaviour prone to be misconstrued and socially engineered to the societal contexts in which it is adapted. *Ubuntu* is essentially pragmatic and offers a panacea to societal problems and challenges. *Ubuntu* is often used to remedy financial difficulties and environmental concerns and cushions political and legislative control measures. *Ubuntu/Botho*, therefore, embraces a sense of humanity closely aligned to commonality, communality, responsibility, identity, and belonging. It is inclined to the notion that “I am because we are” and the idea that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’.⁹

Ubuntu advocates interdependence between community members regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, sex, and class. Menkiti claimed that:

What we are looking for, therefore, is a world in which persons can become a community for each other; where one carries the burden for one’s neighbour, and one’s neighbour has the obligation for one....”¹⁰

This sense of community presumably evolves beyond the immediate community towards the local, national, and international contexts. This chapter interrogates the possibility that political boundaries do not circumscribe *ubuntu* and that its fluidity is immeasurable. Furthermore, it concerns *ubuntu’s* construction, regeneration, and degeneration in Top Location and how *ubuntu* was administered in households, communities, and workspaces. *Ubuntu* functions within the theoretical framework and underpinnings of human agency. Though influenced by external factors, Bandura argues:

Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more central or pervasive than people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs function as an important set of proximal

⁸ M. Letseka, “Educating for Ubuntu/Botho: Lessons from Basotho Indigenous Education,” *Open Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (2013): 338.

⁹ I. Menkiti, “Community, Communism, Communitarianism: An African Intervention” in *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy*, eds. A. Afolayan and T. Falola (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 466.

¹⁰ Menkiti, “Community, Communism,” 466.

determinants of human motivation, affect, and action. They operate on action through motivational, cognitive, and effective intervening process.¹¹

The chapter explores human agency in the making of home in Top Location and people's agency in resisting or accepting relocations. It embodies the ability to make decisions amid unfavourable conditions and how people sought economic and social self-determinations amid prohibitive laws. This thesis also contributes to this discourse by exploring how paternalism under apartheid may have contributed to the growth or fragmentation of *ubuntu*. Furthermore, on how *ubuntu* created moments of contestations when political ideologies supposedly embodying *ubuntu* may have clashed.

3.3 The South African War and Vereeniging: the making of place

The history and development of Vereeniging's Top Location is situated within the history and heritage of the South African War (1899-1902). The British used the Top Location in Vereeniging as a Black and White concentration camp, with 341 noted mortalities between September 1900 and November 1902.¹² Warwick reported that:

By the end of May 1902, 115, 700 Africans had also been temporarily (placed) in sixty-six refuge camps: 60, 004 in the Orange River Colony, and 55, 969 in the Transvaal. 14, 154 black refugees are recorded as having lost their lives in the camps, and in December 1901 the annual death rate reached 380 per thousand (436 per thousand in the Orange River Colony camps), a rate of mortality more severe than that in all the white camps in any one month.¹³

The placement of African and Afrikaner women and children in racially separate concentration camps throughout South Africa was a strategic move by the British. It

¹¹ A. Bandura, "Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory," *American Psychologist* 44, no. 9 (1989): 1175.

¹² C. Reynolds, *Konsentrasiekampsterftes gedurende die Anglo-Boereoorlog 1898-1902* (Bloemfontein: SA Printgroup, 2013), 44.

¹³ P. Warwick, *Black People and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 145.

circumvented supplies and military support to the war front of the Boer war troops. Nasson points out that Africans, who had a minimal immediate determining influence on the war, were removed from their homes by the tactic of the British scorched-earth campaign.¹⁴ Moved to concentration camps; displacement harmed their ways of living, especially for sharecroppers and agriculturalists who depended on political stability for their functionality. African agriculturalists were a threat to the warfare; for this reason:

The question of how black refugees were to be accommodated assumed new importance when it became clear that if the policy of destroying buildings, livestock and crops, and concentrating Boer families into supervised settlements, was to be an effective way of combating the guerrillas, then blacks would also have to be removed from the countryside.¹⁵

The British camps, regardless of their racial orientation, became synonymised with death, squalor, disease, and malnutrition. This was caused by congested tents that facilitated the quick and easy spread of diseases, insufficient and contaminated water supplies, and poor diets lacking essential vegetables and dairy products.¹⁶ Fundamentally, deaths were significantly caused "...by the epidemics of chicken pox, measles, dysentery and other diseases that swept through the camps".¹⁷ Some of these diseases were later prevalent in Top Location due to the township's overpopulation (discussed later in the chapter). The image of disease-stricken environments was coupled with combinations of sombre, monotony, and attempts to destabilise the mundane. Leslie's Letters to Jane, his wife, on the experiences in Vereeniging, emphasises this:

The refugee camp is divided into two parts - one for the Kaffirs and one for the Dutch. In the former, the natives have made themselves huts and shelters of every description and kind and lazy away the time by sitting round fires. The Boer camp is divided into two sections. One (is intended for) ordinary surrendered Boers and

¹⁴ B. Nasson, "The Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902," in M. Gosselink, M. Holtrop, R. Ross, *Good Hope South Africa and the Netherlands from 1600* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1990), 220.

¹⁵ Warwick, *Black People*, 147.

¹⁶ Warwick, *Black People*, 152.

¹⁷ Warwick, *Black People*, 152.

their families, the other (for) those whose zeal on behalf of the English has led them to form themselves into Burger Corps. Their principal duty is as cattle guard, on their own cattle.¹⁸

The mundane routine was destabilised in more ways than farming practices that were allowed in some camps throughout South Africa; Leslie notes that in Vereeniging camps:

Sports for the refugees were held after I arrived and very amusing they were, the gem being the ladies' race. In this event which was keenly contested, the competition showed a great amount and variety of leg. The men busied themselves with tug of war or races of different sports.¹⁹

The history of the South African War, in particular the British concentration camp in Vereeniging, is an important aspect, as Top Location was established, where the concentration camp was based. Also, this history is critical in situating and diversifying the region's tourism product, debated in *chapter 7*, which is currently neglected. Leslie's articulations amid the region's rich history can strengthen the region's tourism potential. Furthermore, it may assist in articulating the impact of the South African War on non-White communities.

3.4 The economic development of Vereeniging

Established in 1892 and gaining the status of a municipality in 1912, Vereeniging's economic growth was supplemented by industrial growth stimulated by the Union Steel Corporation (USCO), established in 1911 by Sammy Marks and Horace White.²⁰ it has been observed that:

The site of the new steelworks was on the Transvaal bank of the Vaal River at Vereeniging, scarcely a mile away from where the Treaty of Vereeniging, which

¹⁸ J.W.N. Tempelhoff, R. van Niekerk, C. Heine, R. Pelser and J. Oosthuizen, *Images of War in Vereeniging T.N. Leslie's 'Letters to Jane' 1899-1901* (Vereeniging: J.W.N. Tempelhof and the Vaal Teknorama, 1998), 79-80.

¹⁹ Tempelhoff, Van Niekerk, Heine, Pelser and Oosthuizen, *Images of War in Vereeniging*, 80.

²⁰ M. Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville: A History of South African Townships in the 1950s" (Honours diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 1.

brought the South African War (Anglo-Boer War) to an end, had been negotiated nine years before. The main equipment of the factory, then the most modern available, consisted of a 10/12 ton Siemens Marting gas-fired open-hearth melting furnace, a 600-ton press, two reheating furnaces and a 12-inch merchant bar rolling mill. The manufactured products would include steel castings, drill steel, small forgings, tube mill bars, rolled bar sections, axles for carts and wagons, tension standards and pithead rails.²¹

Less than twenty kilometres from Vereeniging, the state-owned Iron and Steel Corporation (ISCOR) operated in Vanderbijlpark under the Smuts government in 1943, enhancing its industrial presence further.²² Additional steelworks in Vereeniging included Steward and Lloyds (est.1927), African Cables (est.1935), and Ferro-Alloy Works established by Amcor in 1941.²³ The prosperity of Vereeniging and the Vaal region since its inception in 1892 is due to the mining of substantial coal deposits in the area.²⁴ George William Stow's discovery of coal fields along the Vaal River sparked economic interest in the region.²⁵ In addition to coal, the proximity of developing industries to ample water reserves of the Vaal River and later the Vaal Dam (completed in 1938) paved the way for profitable enterprises. "Vereeniging was destined to be more than a mining town since its abundant coal could be used in many industries and was, in fact, a principal source of industrial power until the middle of the 20th century when petroleum and natural gas began to be used more widely".²⁶ Access to water, cheap coal from nearby collieries, and an industry-friendly Vereeniging Town Council (hereafter, VTC) encouraged Stewards and Lloyds to establish their tube-making plant in Vereeniging in 1927.²⁷ In addition to ISCOR,

²¹ Arcelor Mittal, *Vereeniging Works 100* (Johannesburg: Corals Copious Publishers, 2011), 7.

²² P. Scott, "The Iron and Steel Industry of South Africa," *Geography* 36, no. 3 (1951): 139.

²³ Scott, "The Iron and Steel", 139; R.L. Leigh, *Vereeniging South Africa* (Johannesburg: Courier-Gazette Publishers, 1968), 65-67, 76-79.

²⁴ J.W.N. Tempelhoff, V. Munnik and M. Viljoen, "The Vaal River Barrage, South Africa's Hardest Working Water Way: An Historical Contemplation," *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 3, no. 1 (2007): 114.

²⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 21.

²⁶ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 25.

²⁷ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 1.

the region was home to the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM, 1923) and the South African Coal Oil and Gas Corporation Ltd (SASOL)²⁸, contributing to the employment and the making of an industrial region.²⁹ Electricity was paramount to the industry's existence and growth. In 1912, the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company erected a power station, Vereeniging Power Station, on the banks of the Vaal River near Cornelia Colliery at Viljoensdrift³⁰ to supply water and coal to ensure daily operations:

The Barrage across the Vaal some 17 miles downstream from Vereeniging ensures the maintenance of an adequate depth of water at the power station site; and the recent construction of the Vaalbank Dam, conserving an enormous quantity of water upstream from the station, guarantees an unfailing supply of water.³¹

As a result of the rapid growth in the electricity demand, Klip Power Station was established in 1936, and aided in attracting many smaller firms in the region.³² Chaskalson asserted in his 1986 seminar paper that “the construction of Taaibos and Highveld Power stations in 1954 and 1959 respectively added an extra 960MW of output that forestalled any serious power shortage”.³³ The railway line and road bridge over the Vaal River (1921) connecting Vereeniging to Natal and other local areas also made transporting goods possible.³⁴ Most notably, Vereeniging's accessibility to streams of job seekers from Lesotho and other regions enabled a labour supply. The Second World War (1939 to 1945) boosted Vereeniging's industrial capacity, and the region was declared a strategic area for the supply of ammunition for the war effort. It is estimated that:

²⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 27.

²⁹ S.J. Sparks, "Apartheid Modern: South Africa's Oil from Coal Project and the History of a Company Town" (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2012), 27.

³⁰ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 66.

³¹ A.M. Jacobs, "The Development of Electrical Power Supply in the Union of South Africa," *Transactions of the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers* 32, no. 8 (1941): 259.

³² Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 96.

³³ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 1.

³⁴ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 94.

Stewarts and Lloyds alone employed 1,000 women to man shell making lathes and they, with some 600 males and 3,000 Bantu, made up the company's daily workforce. By the end of 1942, the tube company's output had reached 130,000 shells a month, and later tubing, valves and pumps made in the Vereeniging works were shipped to the Far East theatre of war. The Union Steel Corporation converted immediately to the manufacture of aerial bombs, and within eighteen months production of 250-pound bombs alone had reached 1,000 a week.³⁵

The greater part of Vereeniging's residents were employed in industry. There are many industries to add to the already mentioned USCO, Steward and Lloyds, ISCOR, ESCOM, AMCOR and SASOL. One of the town's first manufactory industries was the Vereeniging Brick and Tile Company, established in 1890.³⁶ This company produced ceramic products from the fire clay deposits found at the nearby Bedworth Colliery. The name of the company was changed to Vereeniging Refractories Limited in 1967. Sammy Marks registered the Vereeniging Consolidated Mills Limited Company in 1916 to handle facilities for bulk intake and storage of maize.³⁷ The Rand Water Board (established in 1903) supplied drinking water to the local municipalities and the Witwatersrand.³⁸ In 1913, Rand Water Board developed the Lindeque's Scheme on the Vaal River near Vereeniging to supply water for the Witwatersrand.³⁹ Other companies which made tools for the manufacturing industries were African Cables, a cable-making factory (est. 1935) at Peacehaven in Vereeniging; Broderick Engineering Works (est. 1947); Vanderbijlpark Engineering Corporation Limited (VECOR), established in 1945 as well as more than 13 engineering companies.⁴⁰ This increased capacity requirements attracted labour, which in return needed accommodation. This became an Achilles' heel that fragmented the

³⁵ "Vaal Triangle Information, A Town at War, Chapter 13/50," Accessed September 12, 2024, https://vaaltriangleinfo.co.za/history/vereeniging/chapter_13/50.htm.

³⁶ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 118.

³⁷ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 146.

³⁸ History Workshop, *Rand Water: A century of excellence 1903-2003* (Johannesburg: Rand Water, 2004), 35.

³⁹ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 158.

⁴⁰ Leigh, *Vereeniging*, 164-332.

benign relationship between industry and VTC, especially during the 1940s. To maintain the initial amicable industry and VTC conducive partnership, “a Vereeniging Publicity Committee was formally established with representatives from the council, the Vereeniging Chamber of Commerce, the Vereeniging and District Chamber of Industries and the Vereeniging Afrikaanse Sakekamer”⁴¹ in the 1950s. This interconnection deepened dialogue between stakeholders on industrial development matters and, as will be discussed, accommodating labour.

Clark and Worger contend that “most of the mayors until the 1940s were likewise foreign-born industrialists brought to Vereeniging to work for the foreign firms such as Stewards and Lloyds (Scotland), Babcock and Wilcox (United States), Irvine Chapman (Ireland), and Massey-Ferguson (United States)”.⁴² Notably, John Lille Sharpe, who the township of Sharpeville was named after, born in Glasgow, was an employee of Stewards and Lloyds who later became the region's Mayor (1934–1937).⁴³ The first mayor of Vereeniging, T.N. Leslie worked for Cornelia Mine after leaving Sammy Marks owned Hatherley Distillery in Pretoria.⁴⁴

The symbiotic relationship between the VTC and industry was symbolised by their collaborative effort to enhance the Vereeniging industrial area's image as a strategic industrial environment, particularly on a global scale. The VTC bought Duncanville in 1950 for \$250,000; the land purchase was envisioned for expanding industrial activities.⁴⁵ To attract international investors, adverts for stands available for industrial purposes were published in British media. Consequently, they attracted British multinationals; Babcock and Wilcox, Engineering and Raleigh Cycles to operate in Duncanville. However, the VTC was heavily imbued with ambitions of industrial expansion and lacked foresight of the conundrums eminent in the politics of land in the region. Circumscribed by the presence of the freehold township of Top Location, the planned expansion of Duncanville was

⁴¹ Chaskalson, *The Road to Sharpeville*; Taken from Town Council of Vereeniging, meeting of 28 January 1959. Report of the Town Clerk.

⁴² Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 27-28.

⁴³ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 28.

⁴⁴ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 27.

⁴⁵ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville,” 4.

temporarily and physically constrained. A deeper analysis of the reasons for in-migration into Top Location and its dynamics is pivotal in understanding its physical demeanour and vigour in halting industrial development.

3.5 Top Location: a permanent township

The accommodation of labour was pivotal in the industrial operations of the region. In 1912, an ever-growing African labour population worked in the Vereeniging industries. To the Vereeniging Town Council, it became clear that some more permanent township would have to be made available for the migrant workers, and they declared a new location called Top Location. Top Location is situated in Duncanville where the Vaal Teknorama Museum currently sits.

Sammy Marks already drew the plans of Top Location in 1892; in his town planning, “he divided the land into a grid pattern of approximately 1,000 “stands” or plots of land, for sale to Whites only, where they could build their own houses.”⁴⁶ This was predicated by the initial purchase of the land in 1881 by Lewis and Marks's company that placed Top Location on municipal land planning discourse. The land did not attract White buyers. Following the South African War, Lewis and Marks agreed with the municipality to declare the British concentration camp site municipal property in 1903. Still, they allowed Lewis and Marks to control the mining rights on the land.⁴⁷ After the Union of 1910, this area became increasingly occupied by Africans and fewer Whites, Chinese and Coloureds. Though Africans owned the structures they erected in Top Location, the land belonged to the municipality that had demarcated 188 plots on an estimated 30 acres.⁴⁸

Population growth and interest in the region were inevitable. The township was built on municipal boundaries in 1912; Chaskalson mentions that it “sprung up against the will of the council...”⁴⁹ Regardless of the Council’s unwillingness, the council issued stands to residents for residential purposes on this land. The Gauteng Provincial Administration

⁴⁶ N.L. Clark and W.H. Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville The Long History of Racial Injustice* (New York: Routledge 2024), 28.

⁴⁷ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 29.

⁴⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 29.

⁴⁹ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 9.

Museum Services' *Short Histories of the Vaal Region* reveals that the original planning of Vereeniging comprised 24 stands allocated for Black settlement.⁵⁰ In 1912, Vereeniging Estates authorised the local authorities to construct a settlement for Black communities; it was only in 1914 that Top Location officially became a township. By 1919, the population comprised 576 residents, and the township experienced further expansion in 1925 and 1927.⁵¹ The cosmopolitan character of Top Location in the later years, especially in the 1930s, was enhanced by the demand for labour and its proximity to employment opportunities, making it attractive for job seekers. In 1941, the population growth of Top Location exceeded 16,000 people.⁵² During the 1950s, residents of Top Location were moved to a new Township development called Sharpeville.

Analyzing the economic development in the region is pivotal before considering the dynamics of labour and community formation in Top Location and Sharpeville.

3.5.1 Influence of urbanisation on African customs

In-migration of men found employment in Vereeniging and stayed in freehold locations and compounds for long periods without returning to their reserves or countries. The absence of the head of household exacerbated the fragmentation of the African family structure,⁵³ especially when couples were fully married under *magadi/dowry* customs. The absence of a father who is regarded as the custodian of *ubuntu* is tantamount to the absence of African values, principles and moral fibre. Grandparents and other figures in the household and the village were expected to fill this lacuna. The proverb *Motho ke Motho ka Batho* (you are a human being because of other human beings), *go tšea setšhaba go godiša ngwana* or it takes a village to raise a child, attests to the rigour of the close-knit African community in shaping the individual.

⁵⁰ VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: J.W. Van Der Westhuizen, "Sharpeville, Evaton and Sebokeng: A Short History," Gauteng Provincial Administration Museum Services, July 1997, 2.

⁵¹ VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: J.W. Van Der Westhuizen, "Sharpeville, Evaton and Sebokeng," 3.

⁵² VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: J.W. Van Der Westhuizen, "Sharpeville, Evaton and Sebokeng," 2.

⁵³ E.W. Wood, "The Implications of Migrant Labour for Urban Social Systems in Africa," *Cahiers d'études Africaines* 8, no. 29 (1968): 7.

The migrant labourer father figure played a more central significance in endowing family histories, spirituality, and traditions from a lineage perspective. Undoubtedly, women whose husbands (wholly or partially depending on the *mahadi*) left the homestead for long periods have carried the brunt of instilling Afrocentric values, discipline, and moral compass in their offspring.⁵⁴ Women took over gender roles designated for men and managed the household's well-being. On occasions when the husbands were absent for extended periods than usual, women often left their reserves and homesteads in search of their husbands. Clark and Worger found that:

Families that were torn apart when the men spent 11 months of every year in the cities working in the mines or factories sought any way to stay together, even courting arrest in the cities. Families that could not survive in the countryside had no choice but to move into the cities, such as Vereeniging.⁵⁵

Jeffrey asserts that women whose dowries were paid in chobale were sometimes deserted by their husbands and were compelled to search for them.⁵⁶ There were many reasons for the search for estranged husbands and partners. In other instances, widowed women who had succumbed to abuse and exploitation from their in-laws evaded their suffering to seek employment opportunities in industries.⁵⁷ Women experienced limited opportunities in urban areas. Under the radar of influx control measures, women who could not rekindle their marriage or find their husbands returned home or found abode in freehold locations. Within freeholds, women renewed kinship relations and networked with folks from their villages to cushion the harsh reality of urban life. These connections

⁵⁴ E. Gordon, "An Analysis of the Impact of Labour Migration on the Lives of Women in Lesotho," *The Journal of Development Studies* 17, no. 3 (1981): 62.

⁵⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 34.

⁵⁶ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943-1985" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 50. Jeffrey asserts that chobali is considered a payment made to the father by the men that his daughter has eloped with, this is regarded as compensation for eloping and not paying bridewealth.

⁵⁷ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 50.

were a gateway to gaining independence from their husbands as prolonged stays in urban environments provided opportunities to seek employment or establish trades.⁵⁸

The normalisation of helping kinship and 'homeboys' and 'homegirls' seeking abode in their search for husbands or economic emancipation from the harsh realities of landlessness and patriarchal subjugation should be unpacked adequately. Language, culture, customs, race and village affiliation played an important role in circumventing the possibility of visitors becoming vagabonds or being jailed for loitering. Many Lesotho men entered employment through connections and word of mouth. They found abode in compounds and alternative accommodation. In contrast, this was different for women; faced with limited opportunities, their arrival, in some instances, was not premeditated or arranged. They did not have a bed or employment opportunities reserved for them. The help that many women and men received is attributed to *ubuntu/botho*, which transcended village borders into urban spaces and underpinned the moral fibre of African societies.⁵⁹

Once again, the notion that *Motho ke Motho ka Batho* entrenched the stern conception that humans in the African context are interdependent for their survival. Women had to fend for themselves, and many participated in the formal and informal sectors.⁶⁰ The concern here is women's agency in alcohol production as a means of entrepreneurship in freehold locations. The discourse and nuances on the nature of Top Location cannot be understood outside the dynamic relationship between the Vereeniging Town Council and industries in its locality. Jeffrey posits that most ingress into Vereeniging came from the Basotho or Lesotho. Arguing from a traditionalist point of view, land shortages and depression, exacerbated by the severe drought in the early 1930s, considerably reduced the ability of many young Basotho men to pay a full *bohali* (bridewealth) and most resorted to *chobali* instead.⁶¹ Land shortages in Lesotho, like the repercussions of the Natives

⁵⁸ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 51.

⁵⁹ L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa 4th Ed*, (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2014), 173.

⁶⁰ P. Bonner, "'Desirable or Undesirable Sotho Women?' Liquor, Prostitution and the Migration of Sotho Women to the Rand, 1920-1945," *African Studies Institute* no. 1 (1988): 2.

⁶¹ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community," 50.

Land Act of 1913 in South Africa, destabilised the cultural economy of small-scale farmers and sharecroppers. Thompson furthers the consequences of land deprivation to have been a catalyst for sending men out of the reserves into industries.⁶² Droughts, loss of land, economic disempowerment and hut taxes arguably forced many young men into the cities for a better life. This was a movement away from subsistence farming to circumvent the harsh conditions of their homesteads and to bring honour to their names by sourcing *mahadi* (dowry) in mining and other industries, such as those in Vereeniging.

The changing economy and the transition into a cash labour market pushed young men out of the rural areas into urban environments to attain modern economic modalities to sustain ancient and new social practices. However, if Western influence and the migrant labour system were a catalyst and harbinger for change, the migrant labourer displayed agency. Nsereko argued that “with the encroachment of colonial capitalism, a new mechanism for securing the resources (whether it was cash, cattle or consumer goods) to negotiate and formalise matrimonial ties for *lobola* emerged: a wage-based labour system”.⁶³ This has, in essence, contributed to the commercialisation or the commodification of cultural practices. Chiweshe situates the peculiarities of the cultural practice of *lobola* with male hegemony in the domestic sphere.⁶⁴ The practice of cash as a gift for *lobola* stimulated by the male-dominated, masculine, and patriarchal early mining industries of South Africa increasingly heightened the existing patriarchy in African traditions.⁶⁵

3.5.2 Accommodating workers in Top Location and industry

The VTC was cognizant of the industry’s economic prowess and vigour to contribute to alleviating unemployment in the region. For this reason, the myriad deliberations between the VTC and the industry accentuated the growth of the sector on the one hand and the demand for accommodation on the other. Industry accommodated labour in compounds,

⁶² L. Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Hall Publishers, 2014), 155.

⁶³ D.D. Nsereko, "The Nature and Function of Marriage Gifts in Customary African Marriages," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 23, no. 4 (1975): 67.

⁶⁴ M.K. Chiweshe, "Wives at the Market Place: Commercialisation of Lobola and Commodification of Women's bodies in Zimbabwe," *The Oriental Anthropologist* 16, no. 2 (2016): 231.

⁶⁵ Chiweshe, "Wives at the Market," 213.

often unabated by the VTC⁶⁶, evident in overpopulation and the relaxation of influx control measures. The industries' inability to accommodate increasing labour exacerbated population growth in Top Location. Chaskalson states that Top Location had 299 stands in 1923; by 1937, the total number of people a stand accommodated reached 21.⁶⁷ By the early 1950s, Chaskalson estimates that "on the 426 stands in Topville in 1951, there lived 1588 lodging families".⁶⁸ Population increases in Top Location occurred because the VTC was limited in controlling it. Petrus Tom presents a picture of a well-monitored township by stating that:

Topville was fenced in with high wire to make sure that everyone was checked when they entered or left the location. There were three gates, and each one was guarded by police who demanded identification documents or special passes. At each entrance a notice was displayed saying people should have permits when entering Topville.⁶⁹

Ernest Nkabinde paints a different picture indicating that "the slum yards of old location could not be patrolled as effectively as the neat rows of Sharpeville, and they provided shelter for gangs of unemployed youths and for prostitutes and beer brewers who serviced the nearby compounds".⁷⁰ Ernest Nkabinde's 1980 article on Model locations described Top Location's slums as filthy, poor, and overcrowded.⁷¹ Regardless of the population size, the VTC provided amenities for the multiracial society. Topville, according to Petrus Tom, enjoyed access to a "communal hall, football ground, tennis court, clinic, single men's hostel, superintendent's office, and a T.B. hospital."⁷² Unfortunately, the downside of relaxing the influx control system, purposed to attract and accommodate

⁶⁶ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 29.

⁶⁷ Although the family size of each resident on the stand could not be determined, the dissertation estimates that there are at least 2 people in a family for the purpose of the study.

⁶⁸ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 10.

⁶⁹ P. Tom, *My Life Struggle* (Johannesburg: Ravan Worker Series, 1985), 6.

⁷⁰ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 10.

⁷¹ VTMA, Vereeniging. Box: Sedibeng History, Top Location, article Ernest Nkabinde, "Plan to make Sharpeville a Model Town," *Vereeniging News*, 26 September 1980.

⁷² Tom, *My Life Struggle*, 6.

labour, resulted in unsanitary living conditions. Such conditions perpetuated the “spread of diseases such as typhoid, polio, tuberculosis, pneumonia and gastroenteritis.”⁷³ Overcrowded conditions were problematic.

Many stands in Topville were occupied by no less than 21 people who entrenched a sense of community through *ubuntu*, sharing space, identities, culture and belonging. Africans could forge companionship and extensions of village life by transfusing the patterns of African life in urban areas, thus giving them meaning and identity. An interviewee mentioned; “We lived together peacefully with other families, shap shap we would not have survived were it not for the love and concern we showed each other in Topville; we made it our home”.⁷⁴ Traditionally from large families, Africans were equipped with principles of communal living and caring for one another, as in the village environment. However, the compounds of steel industries were broadly limiting and not preferred by many migrant labourers who wanted the self-determination and independence that Topville offered. As Ramphele argued, compounds were structures constructed to house labour temporarily; upon the end of the labour contract, the labourers were expected to exit the premises.⁷⁵ Most of them were not established to accommodate families, especially in Vereeniging. This normality was an imminent reminder to African men, in the case of single-sex hostels, to detach from the compounds as a home or permanent residence.

Compounds were an extension of capitalist endeavours to protect, control and discipline the means of production and labour.⁷⁶ These dynamics prevented them from being home, primarily when demarcated as single-sex apartments. The temporary nature of accommodation in freehold locations was determined by the tenant’s ability to pay rent, the relationship between the landlord and tenant, and the tenant’s desire to relocate.

⁷³ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends”, 51.

⁷⁴ L.T. Ledwaba personal archive (hereafter LTL) Oral Archive file 1 (OA1), Interview: Mr Bhiza, Sharpeville, 27 January 2023.

⁷⁵ M. Ramphele, *A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1993), 20.

⁷⁶ S. Moroney, “The Development of the Compound as a Mechanism of Worker Control, 1900-1912,” University of the Witwatersrand, History workshop, 1978, 2.

Labourers in compounds did not enjoy the agency enjoyed by tenants in freehold locations. Generally:

Township residents look down on hostel residents. This social divide has come about with increasing urbanisation, whereby the lifestyles of township residents have become more sophisticated and their links with traditional authorities in the rural areas ever more tenuous.⁷⁷

Fundamentally, compounds could not accommodate families; as a result, the backyard shanties within walking distance from Topville housed large families, regardless of capacity. The temporary nature of accommodation in compounds and freeholds did not deter Africans from practising African spirituality to give their structures a sense of home and spiritual protection. African spirituality, cultures and traditional practices assisted in bridging the gaps between home and the urban environment regardless of the temporary nature of their abode. This practice was a continuation of the methods they learned in their villages.

3.5.3 Class formation, tenancy and backyard shacks

Revisionist historians classist outlook, discussed in Chapter 2, assisted in detailing the interrelations between class, race, and inequality in apartheid South Africa. Townships were a classist construction designed to accommodate and ensure the flow of labour to neighbouring industries. Class was inevitably evident in the physical structure of the township, especially in the disparities between the size and types of houses. Whilst Whites generally enjoyed access to skilled and valued labour, non-whites, on the other hand, experienced exploitation that heightened class stratification in freehold locations. Among the middle class were Black property owners, those who forged a living in the medical, law, and education fraternities whose professional careers brought admiration and respectability from the community. The lower economic scale comprised the working class, whose source of income was derived from the industries, particularly those in Vereeniging within walking distance of Topville. In addition to them was the lumpenproletariat and those that secured survival in the informal sectors of the economy.

⁷⁷ A. Minnaar, "Hostels on the Reef: the Goldstone Report," *Indicator South Africa* 10, no. 2 (1993): 63.

Top Location's economic positionality and class formation comprised people who contributed to the economic landscape of the township in many ways. Notable was a class division and economic footprints made by entrepreneurs in Topville; Petrus Tom for example noted that:

We lived with Coloureds in the southern part of Topville. Indians and Chinese lived on the eastern side, owning shops and a bioscope. Blacks owned grocery shops, butcheries, tailors, vegetable shops, and stands. They had tenants and would rent ten or more rooms in one yard.⁷⁸

Earlier estimates projected 21 families to have occupied a single stand in Top Locations 'backrooms'. These numbers attested to the demand for accommodation and the willingness of tenants to share communal spaces:

Residents could build onto their houses to enable lodgers to live on their properties. This resulted in overpopulation of the area, and it was found that sometimes up to 45 people lived on one stand. Although the population increased, the available land they were legally allowed to occupy did not.⁷⁹

The lack of administrative control and planning over 'living space' by the location superintended Mr H. Niblett encouraged the rapid growth of backrooms, potentially increasing profit margins for stand owners. The increased number of tenants overpopulating backyard shanties⁸⁰ attests to the possible profitability of the backroom economy and the heightening of class and class consciousness in freehold locations.⁸¹ Class and its consciousness within African communities were not a new phenomenon. Lexicons such as "tenants," "sub-tenants," and "landlords " promulgated class divisions.

⁷⁸ Commentary by Petrus Tom, taken from Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community", 46.

⁷⁹ VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: Sedibeng History, Info Top Location.

⁸⁰ According to archival work accessed in the Vaal Teknorama Museum Archive, the stands allocated to the residents of Topville were 22.7x15m. This space was inadequate for the number of families occupying 'Ma stands' backrooms. Overpopulation was a catalyst for sanitation concerns, service delivery, and water availability.

⁸¹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 43.

Taaso's presentation on the *Lifestyle of Top Location* reverberates that "the local government did not issue title deeds for residents to own their stands. There were, however, "*Mastands*" or "Landlords" to whom they had to pay rent".⁸² The coining of property owners in this manner vehemently instilled class consciousness, particularly from tenants and landlords. *Mastand*, literally interpreted as the "mother of the stand", further suggests that women participated in property ownership and the business of letting their properties. Furthermore, *Ma stan*, a word of endearment depending on the context in which it is used, is contemporarily used to refer to landlords regardless of their race, culture and class. Notably, due to respect governed by *ubuntu* and cultural norms, Africans do not refer to their elders and, in some instances, peers by their names and, therefore, did not certainly call their landlords by names.⁸³

In essence, *Mastands* were perceived to be mothers of the stand who expressed concern, love, compassion, *ubuntu*, and care for their tenants.⁸⁴ *Mastands* received respect and admiration not only because of their position as respectable women in society but also because of their domineering aura as owners and managers of property. This positionality placed them on a higher economic pedestal. To problematise this further, *Mastands* could have arguably been a wife to a male property owner who rented out parts of their property to tenants. Oral research has yielded instances where the wives of landlords were referred to as *Mastand* and, essentially, enjoyed the respect and honour afforded to landlords.⁸⁵ Regardless of their property ownership status, women were motherly in the broader community, the stands, and their households.⁸⁶ In instances of rent non-payment, *Mastands* were required to assert their authority over rent delinquents. Adherence to rent payment determined and cemented the relationship between tenant and landlord.

Despite the debates on class consciousness, property renting contributed to class differentiation in Top Location. Lodge asserted that renting out a property in backyard

⁸² VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: Sedibeng History, Info Top Location, Presentation: S.B. Taaso: Top Location.

⁸³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Pete Sithi, Sharpeville, 3 October 2024.

⁸⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Mokale, Sharpeville, 31 January 2023.

⁸⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Lea Mundoma, Sharpeville, 3 October 2024.

⁸⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr. Lamba, Sharpeville, 2 October 2023.

shanties could not have realised profitability because "...the municipality charged them for sewage, rubbish disposal, and water according to the number of tenants".⁸⁷ With low wages, Beavon is mindful of the exorbitant building society loan repayment interest, which ranged between 7% and 10%, typically higher than those issued to Whites.⁸⁸ In the context of Topville, Jeffrey argues that tenancy and ownership of shops perpetuated a "class of well-off African, Indian and Coloured landlords".⁸⁹ These business owners circumvented property rates by increasing their infrastructural capacity to accommodate additional tenants. Unfortunately, this resulted in slums. Though Beavon⁹⁰ argues that these measures were implemented to survive and negotiate living costs, the thesis suggests an alternative perspective that embodies these businesses as a reaction to the market's needs.

Opportunistic and business-driven individuals took advantage of the gap in the accommodation sector. The opening was inevitably harnessed by industries' inability to accommodate the growing labour market, particularly during the 1930s. Chaskalson posits that though some companies could accommodate their workers, "in 1937, 3898 out of an estimated 9638 workers in the Vereeniging area lived in the industrial compounds but still left 60% of the urban workforce without accommodation provided by the industry or the local state".⁹¹ The growth of shantytowns may have been an Achilles heel in the sanitation concerns of the VTC. Still, landlords and *Mastands* provided a valuable service that the council and industry struggled to provide. Top Location landlords assisted in delivering the much-needed accommodation, though difficult to quantify. The compounds and the municipalities could not accommodate the large labour pool, particularly during the war-induced manufacturing boom.⁹²

⁸⁷ University of the Witwatersrand Historical Papers Archive, Box: ABX 520401, A.B. Xuma Papers, Memorandum to the City Council on Western Areas Removal Scheme, 8; Taken from Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown", 116.

⁸⁸ Beavon, *The Making and Shaping*, 103.

⁸⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 43.

⁹⁰ Beavon, *The Making and Shaping*, 103.

⁹¹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 10.

⁹² This is discussed further in the section on removals in Top Location.

Additionally, accommodation for migrant labour, though deemed essential, is far more complex than imagined. Landlords of shanty towns, unlike compounds, had to accommodate the individual migrant labourer and the large families that relocated into Top Location. Their product flexibility and business acumen in broadening the customer base favoured tenants. In doing so, migrants preferred the flexibility of raising their children in urban areas to circumvent the normalisation of absent fathers. This meant that men had the agency to undo and contradict the perception of Vereeniging as strictly a place of employment by living with their families in the accommodations offered by *Mastands*. The reality of numerous families occupying rooms in one stand attests to the transmission of African cultural identities.

Relationships and community well-being initiatives among women were established in Topville, commonly known as stokvels. Chaskalson notes that large numbers of men living in the compounds of industrial Vereeniging visited townships to attend to women and, in some instances, stokvels.⁹³ Why were stokvels important? Verhoef advanced that:

The name stokvel originated from the nineteenth-century Eastern Cape 'stock fairs' organised by the English-speaking settler stock farmers. The Black farmers and labourers who attended these fairs engaged in a lively interaction of ideas, socialising and gambling.⁹⁴

In addition to Verhoef's findings on English-speaking settler stock farmers, women and men in Topville formed stokvels or financial clubs to mediate the high costs of funerals, weddings, unemployment, and groceries. Most importantly, for establishing support structures that created a community of care and belonging by empowering women financially.⁹⁵ Stokvels are often understood from an economic perspective. Membership is upheld by financial contributions on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis towards the materialisation of yearly savings targets or the rotation payments to members in good

⁹³ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 10.

⁹⁴ G. Verhoef, *Stokvels and Economic Empowerment: The Case of African Women in South Africa, c. 1930-1998*, in *Women and Credit* eds. Gail Campbell, Beverly Lemire, and Ruth Pearson (London: Routledge 2002), 93.

⁹⁵ M.J.K. Bophela and N. Khumalo, "The Role of Stokvels in South Africa: A Case of Economic Transformation of a Municipality," *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 17, no. 4 (2019): 33.

standing. Other forms of stokvels were positioned to circumvent the cost of groceries. These types of stokvels comprise monthly contributions of money primarily used to buy groceries in large quantities to obtain discounts for large purchases.⁹⁶ However, these clubs were not limited to women; while some comprised both men and women, others remained determined mainly by sex. Despite their economic orientation, stokvels existed in Africa because of *ubuntu's*— compassion, care, and thoughtfulness.

Property owners who joined stokvels were essentially the older sector of the community. They had lived much longer than most people in Vereeniging and could, therefore, secure 'lucrative' salaries in the steel industry.⁹⁷ Regardless of their economic superiority, they joined stokvels to advance their financial endeavours and cement relationships with other community members. Another possibility for property owners' enlistment in stokvels that this thesis cannot substantiate is the financial assistance needed for buying building materials or maintaining their properties.

3.5.4 Beer brewing

Beer brewing accentuated class consciousness in Top Location, as did establishing property-dependent businesses such as grocery shops, butcheries, and vegetable shops.⁹⁸ Women, mainly from Lesotho, made strides in the beer brewing industry in Top Location. The manufacture and distribution of traditional beer is another example of how African cultural experiences became a means for profit acquisition in inaccessible economies to women. Vereeniging's industries were predominantly male-oriented, leaving little space for women's participation. Having mastered the skill of brewing traditional alcohol⁹⁹ in their native homelands, women in Top Location, resorted to

⁹⁶ The nature of stokvels will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

⁹⁷ The male population of Topville were preferred over women in the industrial areas of Vereeniging, creating an economic advantage for men who worked long enough to participate in the property economy.

⁹⁸ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community", 46.

⁹⁹ Traditional alcohol or *umqombothi* was and remains pivotal in African communities; it is essential as an alcohol beverage and for traditional customs such as appeasement of ancestors and other ceremonies.

brewing alcohol for economic gain. Petrus Tom witnessed illicit production and consumption of alcohol. He observed that

People at Topville drank illegal beer like Barberton because it was quicker to make and you could get drunk very quickly. If you brewed corn beer then the police would see big dishes of sour porridge (*mothoho*) cooling outside your house before it could be mixed with malt. They would know that you were going to brew corn beer and they came and searched your house the following day for it. If they found the beer you could be arrested or if it was in a hole somewhere in your yard, they would spill it on the ground and take the containers to the nursery to be used for plants.¹⁰⁰

Their entrepreneurial-mindedness and the camouflage afforded by the slum-like conditions ensured clandestine operations. These contributed to the success of the illicit beer brewing industry. The illicit brewing industry's 'success' or longevity enunciates a risk element that women embodied and embraced in their daily operations. Though regarded as illegal by the government and enforced by municipalities, it is not easy to quantify its profitability. Factors such as the frequency of raids, bail/fine payments following an arrest and alleged bribes influenced determinations of profitability. The interviewees spoke about the frequency of local folk in clandestine-operated drinking spots in Topville. In these places, hard-earned money contributed to the establishment and growth of informal businesses; "we knew all the places to get alcohol of all kinds, it was not a secret, and we bought (alcohol) regardless of the law".¹⁰¹

Women provided beverages that were barred by the legal system. Many Black consumers could not access the so-called 'European liquor'. Therefore, homemade alcohol was provisioned and consumed as an alternative. Still, it was, in many instances, the only form of alcohol migrants enjoyed before they arrived in compounds and townships. The illicit production of alcohol and its producers in Top Location were continuously on the radar of

¹⁰⁰ Tom, *My Life Struggle*, 8.

¹⁰¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr. Tsolo, Sharpeville, February 2023.

the local enforcement agency to such an extent that law enforcement officers were conspicuously aware of them.

The court records in the case between Egenes Mahlelebe (the applicant) and the Vereeniging Town Council (respondent) accentuated the intense relations between illegal brewers and the VTC law enforcement officers during the 1940s. Mahlelebe's affidavit to the court states that the Superintendent called her to his office in Vereeniging, where she was asked to present her lodger's permit. The Superintendent allegedly ordered Mahlelebe to vacate the location "...and the said Superintendent at the same time speaking to your Petitioner states that he did so because your Petitioner is a "skokiaan queen" and that your Petitioner had left her former husband and was now living with a different man".¹⁰² The alleged "skokiaan queen" asked for her lodger permit, but the Superintendent refused. She was arrested on 25 January 1942 at her house for failing to present a Lodger's Permit but later released on bail by her attorney at 11:30 p.m. Moses Mafolo's (a former Blockman in Block 4 and a member of the Native Advisory Board of Top Location) affidavit vehemently stated that:

I know of my own knowledge that the applicant manufactures and brews Kaffir Beer. I have on more than one occasion seen large quantities of Kaffir Beer in her house which could not possibly have been for private consumption. She is a very quarrelsome native and has frequently caused disturbances. She has frequently abused me especially when I was trying to settle quarrels between her and her husband.¹⁰³

The affidavit further explains that the applicant manufactured "other intoxicating liquors" in addition to kaffir beer and skokiaan and that she had been convicted and simultaneously fined on two separate occasions: 30 December 1940 and February

¹⁰² National Archives Repository of South Africa, Pretoria (hereafter NARSSA), Public Records of former Transvaal Province and its predecessors as well as of magistrates and local authorities), TDP Correspondence File no. 1542 Applications, 8/1021. In the Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division. In the matter of the application of Egenes Mahlelebe (Applicant) and Vereeniging Town Council (Respondent), 4.

¹⁰³ NARSSA, Pretoria, TDP Correspondence File no. 1542 Applications, 8/1021. In the Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division. In the matter of the application of Egenes Mahlelebe (Applicant) and Vereeniging Town Council (Respondent). Affidavit by Moses Mafolo, signed on 23 February 1942, 101.

1941.¹⁰⁴ These and other court-complex legal proceedings are vantage points for comprehending the experiences of beer brewers in Top Location. The Blockman's affidavit shows that they were, in essence, extensions of the law, which often opposed illegal income-making strategies in their jurisdiction.

Domestic obligations and business operations were entrenched as part of the home. Alcohol consumers could not be easily differentiated from backroom tenants. Similar spaces elsewhere in urban and rural South Africa have been characterised by prostitution, sexual violence against women, and violence between patrons.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, women experienced immense difficulties in their quest for economic identity and belonging in male-dominated urban spaces.¹⁰⁶ Beer brewing instilled women's agency in negotiating a permanent presence in urban areas as entrepreneurs and contributors to the local economy. Although their positionality threatened firmly entrenched male hegemonies, cultural conceptions of gender relations began a gradual fragmentation process.¹⁰⁷

Beer halls, supported by bylaws, became a threat to informal breweries. The first beer hall in Top Location was built in the 1930s, followed by the Sharpeville beer hall in the 1950s, which was regarded as the most profitable beer producer in the 1950s.¹⁰⁸ "By 1953, the Sharpeville brewery was being operated on round-the-clock shifts and was producing more than any municipal brewery in the Union other than those of Durban and

¹⁰⁴ NARSSA, Pretoria, TDP Correspondence File no. 1542 Applications, 8/1021. In the Supreme Court of South Africa, Transvaal Provincial Division. In the matter of the application of Egenes Mahlelebe (Applicant) and Vereeniging Town Council (Respondent). Affidavit by Moses Mafolo, signed on 23 February 1942, 101.

¹⁰⁵ H. Bradford, "'We are now the Men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside, 1929" (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987), 295.

¹⁰⁶ M. Rorich, "Shebeens, Slumyards and Sophiatown. Black Women, Music and Cultural Change in Urban South Africa c1920-1960," *The World of Music* 31, no.1 (1989), 91.

¹⁰⁷ Research has found that women who achieved self-reliance through formal employment or the selling of illicit liquor were recipients of subjugation practices in the household from their husbands. In addition to brewing alcohol, women were traditionally inclined to manage their households; however, in some instances, the patriarchy often controlled the expenditure profits. Helen Bradford, "'We are now the Men': Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside 1929," in *Class, Community, and Conflict: South African perspectives*, ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1987), 295.

¹⁰⁸ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 10.

Johannesburg”.¹⁰⁹ The profitability of the beer hall in Top Location and later in Sharpeville resulted from the invention of a cheaper beer recipe, which inevitably increased beer profit margins.¹¹⁰ It is estimated that “...profits shot up from \$1870 from October 1949 to February 1950 to \$4420 over the next four months”.¹¹¹ Whilst the profit margins of illicit alcohol production are difficult to quantify, their contributions to economic culture remain challenging to measure. Still, migrants and business operators may have sent money to their countries and villages. Leakage may have taken place, thus, in some ways, limiting the growth of the local economy.

Compared to the informal sector, the profits of the beer halls were used to construct townships in apartheid South Africa. Essentially, “Section 19 of the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952 eased the restrictions on the use of beer profits. The council used this to balance its African housing budget with \$16 138 appropriated from the beer account”.¹¹² Consequently, the Vereeniging Town Council used beer profits to construct houses, amenities, and other spaces in Sharpeville. *The Rand Daily Mail* reported that beer profits were used to construct 150 houses, a hostel, a communal hall, and a second beer hall that generated £2,000 on the first day of operations.¹¹³

It was not arguably the cheap recipe or the efficient production prowess of distilleries in the region that supplemented the profitability of beer. It was instead the illegalising of alcohol production by the informal sector and the drinking culture of the economically and politically oppressed that increased the profit margins that were invested in real estate. The low salaries offered by industries, the general cost of living, the financial constraints of providing for large and often extended families, and the stress thereof contributed to the excessive consumption of alcohol. The local council became revered as pioneers and trendsetters in the beer industry, winning illustrious beer awards for the quality of their

¹⁰⁹ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 10.

¹¹⁰ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 10.

¹¹¹ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 10.

¹¹² Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 14.

¹¹³ Author unknown, “Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

beer. The enormity of their achievement meant that alcohol consumption, especially in the region, increased tremendously.

The ability to achieve large profit margins that constructed houses and communities points to the possibility that housing for Africans came at a moral cost. Councils that used beer halls to generate income for the construction of houses contributed in many ways towards the moral decay of communities. Beer halls, especially in Sharpeville, became increasingly associated with youth delinquency, gangsterism, and moral decay.¹¹⁴

The increased police visibility and police patrolling of beer halls and ‘taverns’ allude to the problematic positionality of the alcohol business in freehold locations. In some instances, illicit production and distribution of alcohol brought people together and furthered *ubuntu* and dialogue on people’s experiences. On the other hand, alcohol, though contributing to the construction of houses for Black communities, financed segregated neighbourhoods at the cost of diverse, well-knit communities. The following section unpacks the removal of the Top Location amid the expansion of Duncanville. This will contextualise the usage of beer profits for the emergence of extension one and the impact of relocation on the community’s well-being.

3.5.5 From Top Location to Sharpeville

The golden thread that connects the discourse on coerced and voluntary removals in South Africa is the robust legislative framework designed to segregate the South African landscape according to race.¹¹⁵ This was an attempt to ensure the control of people to avoid miscegenation, political agency, and insurgence that was ubiquitous in South African townships.¹¹⁶ The removals of ‘slums’ and places of squalor were to circumvent miscegenation and mixing of races centred on White people’s fear and sanitation threats posed by the proximity of ‘slums’.¹¹⁷ Essentially, the dilapidation of freehold townships

¹¹⁴ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends and Community”, 163.

¹¹⁵ L. Evans, *Survival in the Dumping Grounds, a Social History of Apartheid Relocation* (Cape Town, UCT Press, 2019), 46.

¹¹⁶ N.T. Vally, *The ‘Model Township’*, 39.

¹¹⁷ M.W. Swanson, “The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native policy in the Cape colony, 1900–1904,” *The Journal of African History* 18, no. 3 (1977): 392.

and their categorisation as slums was, generally, because of their neglect. Vally argues that “the neglected and dilapidated locations formed from the 1920s could not withstand this ballooning and more permanently settled population”.¹¹⁸ Contestations on the causes and spread of the Spanish influenza 1918 oscillated from religious underpinnings, primarily based on fear, towards neglecting sanitation in urban areas.¹¹⁹

The removals of Top Location should be understood within the legal and political framework that governed much of South Africa's landscape. The severity of implementing laws such as the Slums Act of 1934, the Urban Areas Act of 1923, and the Group Areas Act of 1950 was not uniformly applied throughout South Africa. Parts of Topville contradicted the Slums Act, particularly the stands that were often densely populated and deemed unsanitary for inhabitants. In a bid to heed the clarion call for racially segregated townships, the councils abruptly implemented the Slums Act as a justification for the removal of some overcrowded townships.

Environmental rehabilitation programmes should have followed the declaration of slums (black spots) as unsafe spaces purposed to renew hazardous areas, if any possibly existed. However, as history has shown, the declaration of black spots was followed by the erection of new communities, costing councils exorbitant amounts of money. Group areas were ironically established miles away from the places initially occupied by communities. This resulted in increased transportation costs to places of employment. In some instances, loss of community and relationships. Forced removals were implemented to increase the geographical divide between races and to eradicate the proximity of non-white communities to those of whites.

The narrative fits closely to the contextual history of Topville; as with most freehold locations in its era, it was cosmopolitan and vibrant, and its layout hindered policing. It had all the characteristics that apartheid planners detested of township spatial planning, and it was too close for comfort in proximity to White Vereeniging. The council's desire for economic development in the region depended on the land that Top Location acquired.

¹¹⁸ N.T. Vally, The 'Model Township', 39.

¹¹⁹ H. Phillips, "Why did it happen? Religious and lay explanations of the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 in South Africa," *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 12, no. 1 (1987): 81.

Top Location was planned to have been demolished in the 1940s to make way for industrial expansion. A letter from the town clerk to the councillor of Vereeniging A.H. Chapman on 20 June 1944 read:

The council has been granted a loan of £175, 000 of which approximately £98, 000 will be spent when the twelve houses at present under construction are completed. Since 1941 the Council has built 68 houses and 12 more are in the course of erection, and will be completed by the end of September. As soon as ground becomes available the balance of £77, 000 can be spent.¹²⁰

The houses in question were economic housing schemes. The town clerk further confirmed the construction of 295 sub-economic housing schemes and alluded to the completion of 80 more houses by the end of July 1944.¹²¹ The town clerk further stated that approval to build an additional 625 houses was issued, but there was a problem:

The houses will cost £230/ approximately, and it is estimated that nearly 5,000 houses will have to be built before all the families residing in the present location can be accommodated. Progress has been slow, due to delay in the granting of permits, and shortage of both labour and material. If labour and material become more readily available there is no reason why at least one house a day should not be built.¹²²

Financial difficulties in expanding Sharpeville were further experienced in the 1950s when the Vereeniging Town Council requested another £1,66,200 for housing projects.¹²³ Many obstacles delayed the township's removal until the late 1950s. By 1951, the council had constructed 3163 houses in Sharpeville to accommodate the first groups of people to be removed. However, the additional housing required for the thousands of Top Location residents experienced prohibitory administration-related hindrances from the Native

¹²⁰ VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: Housing, letter to the councillor A.H. Chapman, 20 June, 1944.

¹²¹ VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: Housing, letter to the councillor A.H. Chapman, 20 June, 1944.

¹²² VTMA, Vereeniging, Box: Housing, letter to the councillor A.H. Chapman, 20 June, 1944.

¹²³ Author unknown (newspaper extract), "Vereeniging wants £1,66,200 for housing", Rand Daily Mail Friday 21 July 1950, page number unknown.

Affairs Department, the National Housing Office, Mentz Commission, and the Transvaal Provincial Administration offices.¹²⁴

In April 1951, the council submitted proposed plans for Sharpeville. Still, the plans did not adhere to the newly updated Native Affairs Department guidelines, which stipulated that a 500-yard buffer zone of unused land must separate townships from White residential areas.¹²⁵ In 1955, the town plans were in the hands of the Mentz Commission, which was responsible for planning African townships in the region that finally endorsed the plan. However, finances for construction had not been set aside.¹²⁶ In November 1955, the housing plans were “rejected for failing to comply with certain technical requirements as laid down in the Native Housing Commission’s book”.¹²⁷ Only in March 1957 did Verwoerd’s office approve the plans. As a result, the approval process delayed the industrial development of Duncanville for at least seven years.

The repercussions of the unconventional lengthy delay in the extension of Sharpeville frustrated industries in many ways; firstly, industries were prohibited from expanding their compounds to accommodate labour. Evidently, “...the council was forced to tell USCO in 1953, Houtkop Brickworks in 1954, and Vereeniging Brick and Tile Company in 1965, that the Native Affairs Department was not prepared to authorise their applications to extend their compounds”.¹²⁸ This resulted in overcrowded and unsanitary compounds whose living conditions were not a concern for the council. The council was fixated on not only obliterating Topville but also the presence of non-white communities in the region. The council did not attempt to mediate overpopulation in compounds and the health risks associated with it because it lacked the financial muscle to do so.

¹²⁴ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 17.

¹²⁵ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 4; M. Greyling, “An Undivided Landscape: Dissolving Apartheid buffer zones in Johannesburg, South Africa,” Master’s dissertation, University of Waterloo, 2013, 44.

¹²⁶ Author unknown (newspaper extract), “Vereeniging wants £1,66,200 for housing”, Rand Daily Mail Friday 21 July 1950, page number unknown.

¹²⁷ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 4.

¹²⁸ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 6.

In Topville, the population peaked at over 9000 people in 1951 when financial and administrative hiccups circumscribed the construction of Sharpeville Extension 1.¹²⁹ The council implemented cost-containment strategies to circumvent the costs of providing municipal services to the remaining community. Services to Topville were provided at a minimum. Rubbish removal was scheduled to occur once a week. Dirt roads were left to deteriorate, and requests for essential services such as additional taps and streetlight repair were not a priority for the council.¹³⁰ To worsen the situation, the council restricted the construction of new buildings or improvements to the existing structures. Community members had no choice but to tolerate squalor, decay, and the deterioration of their neighbourhood; homes gradually became buildings that would inevitably be destroyed.

Evan's study on relocated communities in the coastal regions of South Africa accentuates the panic and disorientation that pending removals had on residents' psychological, emotional and well-being.¹³¹ In the context of Topville, residents watched their friends, relatives, and colleagues be removed as their houses were demolished ahead of their journey to Sharpeville. The council's snail-pace at relocating residents worsened uncertainty and despair. For nearly seven years, residents had to adjust to slum-like conditions and the inevitable loss of homes.¹³² The then Mayor of Vereeniging estimated that more than 2000 families still lived in dire conditions in Top Location in 1951 while waiting for houses to be allocated. At this stage, the local council had surpassed an expenditure of £1000 000 in government housing schemes, with just over three thousand houses being built.¹³³ Furthermore, the removals instilled panic and threatened the livelihoods of entrepreneurs whose hard-earned money was invested in property-related businesses. The demise of Topville inevitably ended *Mastands* backroom businesses that accommodated migrant labourers and their families and the illicit production of alcohol spearheaded by women in the region.

¹²⁹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 4.

¹³⁰ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 17.

¹³¹ Evans, *Survival in the*, 137.

¹³² Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 23.

¹³³ Author unknown, "Raise native wages to end housing subsidies– Mayor of Vereeniging", *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 January 1951, 10.

Unlike illegal beer, the backroom business model could not survive the neat rows of houses in Sharpeville that were easily monitored and accessed by the police. Fundamentally, the relocations threatened *ubuntu* and the collegiality that community members cemented in their kindness towards each other. Furthermore, it threatened the spaces in which *ubuntu* was harnessed and propelled, such as the drinking holes, streets, clinics, and the backrooms where people lived communally. It furthermore created a group of former Topville residents who perceived themselves as pioneers of Sharpeville or “the first people to arrive in Sharpeville”. It claimed the new environment as theirs; this is unpacked further in the following chapters. As discussed in the next chapter, this and employer preference for migrant labour over locals exacerbated the tensions within the newly established community.¹³⁴ Remarkably, in 1958, the population of Topville stood at 9763; by 1959, it was zero.¹³⁵

3.6 Reflection

The growth of the manufacturing industry in Vereeniging depended on labour as an essential aspect of production. Fundamentally, labour had to be accommodated beyond the compound system that was limited in its ability to accommodate the large population of workers. The construction of Top Location filled this gap by providing accommodation and an environment within which complexities of cosmopolitanism and community flourished. The discourse on removing freehold locations tends to offer abstract accounts of the experiences of relocated communities, often from parochial perspectives that do not consider the influence of *ubuntu* and African knowledge systems and ways of doing as mechanisms of adaptation to freehold locations. This chapter attempted to accentuate that African ways of doing, worldviews, belief systems and cultural practices were transferred from native lands to urban areas by migrant labourers and were used to cushion isolation from home. This resonated more with migrant labourers accommodated in industrial compounds, the single-sex compounds comprised of a single bed in a space shared by several co-workers. The physical space and the laws of the compounds inhibited the possibility of a family occupying the space. Regardless of its physical limitations, migrant labourers used the compact nature of compounds in addition to

¹³⁴ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 9.

¹³⁵ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 24.

languages, cultures, and *ubuntu* to forge unity amongst themselves. Furthermore, Top Locations was somewhat accessible, which gave them additional accessibility for cultural interaction with township residents. Migrants located in Topville gradually changed their conceptualisation of urban areas as places of work; this was seen by the large numbers of families that inhabited stands as tenants.

This chapter accentuated how *ubuntu* established collegiality in unsanitary and overpopulated environments. The proverb *Motho ke Motho ka Batho* (I am because we are) resonated with the residents vividly in stokvels and the extensive support the community of Topville gave to the women who participated in the clandestine operations of illicit liquor. Implementing the gradual removal process halted economic ventures that aided the growth of businesses in Top Location. The reality was that these businesses would not have been re-established in Sharpeville because of its stringent policing. Residents who endured long waits whilst the council experienced barriers to finance construction in Sharpeville felt the relocation strain in addition to businessmen and women. The next chapter focuses on 'Model locations', contesting space, housing allocations, and community identity between the 1940s and 1994.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘MODEL LOCATIONS’? CONTESTING SPACE, HOUSING ALLOCATIONS, AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY, 1940S-1994

4.1 Introduction

The "model (native) township" was a phenomenon that occurred in apartheid South Africa during the first half of the 20th century, with the framework of separate development (group areas) and segregation. Model locations became the pride and boast of White municipal planners. They debatably provided better living conditions for non-whites and, in doing so, assisted in alleviating slum-like conditions that characterised many places in urban South Africa.

The unprecedented lengthy relocation of Top Location residents to Sharpeville changed the lives of the Top Location residents. Most people arriving in Sharpeville in 1959 were severely affected by rulings implemented by the local municipality that prohibited renovations and maintenance of their properties. The VTC, for example, prohibited Top Location residents awaiting relocation to repair or add on to their existing properties. They were prohibited from physical expressions of belonging, such as, in this instance, housing. In addition, the absence of waste removal and the general maintenance of Top Location due to cost containment strategies led to the loss of feeling of home.¹ The council did not issue lodger permits, which prohibited residents from having visitors. The neighbourhood, once a source of pride, became notable for its abandoned and dilapidated buildings.² Rubble emanating from the demolished houses obliterated the ambience created by the homes that displayed the physical character of Top Location.

These houses also symbolised the loss of property experienced by the remaining local residents waiting for the completion of their future dwellings in Sharpeville. Nevertheless, in some versions, improvements in living conditions as a desired consequence of

¹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 24.

² Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 24.

removals have been noted in some regions.³ The experiences of relocated communities were broadly influenced by the apartheid ideological frameworks firmly embedded in complex paternalism, racial separation, and humanitarian concern. Mindful of this complexity, this chapter employs the lens of *ubuntu* to interrogate the efficacy and justifications for the implementation of Sharpeville and the changes that residents had to adapt to in the new township.

Unconventionally, the chapter problematises the discourse on forced relocations of residents in apartheid South Africa by considering an alternative perspective on forced removals and relocations. Mindful of the racial attitude of the apartheid regime and the sanitation syndrome that characterised racial thinking. This alternative perspective explores the perception that the apartheid government and its local municipalities, especially in Vereeniging and Sharpeville, implemented a notion of care enshrined as a valued principle of *ubuntu*. In their strive to construct a group area and eventually a 'model location' with two- or four-room houses for Bantu people, the well-being of the people was paramount.

With reference to the so-called "model locations", Du Bruyn and Oelofse reiterate that:

The study of the so-called "model location" phenomenon of the 1920s and 1930s and the reasons for establishing class-differentiated and racially segregated urban spaces is still an essential issue despite the attention they have already received by historians.⁴

³ Freehold locations such as District 6, Sophiatown, Cato Manor and others in apartheid South Africa comprised vibrant, multicultural, and unequal societies. Slum-like conditions existed near well-constructed houses, especially in the Sophiatown context. The apartheid government's implementation of forced removals and the obliteration of multiracial societies did not endeavour to mediate the complex health-related issues in their plight for separate development. Doing so would have culminated in implementing restorative measures for the congested and unhygienic backyards comprising many freehold localities. Instead, entire townships were enlisted to be obliterated regardless of the decent living conditions; see T. Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 19, no. 1 (1981): 111; and D. Mattera, *Memory is the Weapon* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

⁴ D. Du Bruyn and M. Oelofse M., "A Hygienic Native Township shall be Developed": The Founding and Development of Batho as Bloemfontein's "Model Location" (c. 1918-1939), *Historia* 64, no. 2 (2019): 49.

4.2 Conceptual framework

The theoretical premise of *ubuntu/botho* has been conceptualised to embody a notion of humanity, concern, and care for people regardless of their social, economic, or political affiliation. In an ideal world, the expression of *ubuntu/humanity* is not circumvented by race, traditions and cultural associations. The previous chapter accentuated the plethora of ways in which *ubuntu* cemented and determined communal relations in freehold locations. Further, it highlighted the practice of *ubuntu* amongst the diverse, multiracial, vibrant, and cosmopolitan society of Top Location. Little emphasis, however, was on how *ubuntu* was practised between the different races within Top Location. Though the discourse focussed predominantly on the interactions among Black people and their shaping of communal spaces and identity, interactions between the races inevitably contributed to community identity and belonging.

This chapter considers the construction of Group Areas as an expression of *ubuntu* by the apartheid government in their strategic plan to eradicate slums created by the dire need for accommodation in urban areas. *Ubuntu's* pragmatic expression and implementation can be seen in their agency to construct model locations that exceeded the usual expectations of typical Group Areas in apartheid South Africa. The Sharpeville municipal administrators went as far as describing the model location of Sharpeville as “Die trots van die munisipale amptenare”.⁵ They prided themselves on constructing neighbourhoods for adequate living. Du Bruyn and Oelofse are sceptical about glorifying model locations as municipalities did in the past. Perhaps it is essential to consider glorification as a trumpet of achievement of care embedded in the notion of care for humanity, paternalism, and racial separation in town planning.⁶ This conceptual lens offers an alternative perspective on constructing communities through separately developed group areas. It brings into the discourse debates over the pivotal underpinnings for constructing *Bantu* housing and neighbourhoods. The chapter unpacks

⁵ I first encountered this description in N.T. Vally, “The ‘Model Township’ of Sharpeville: The Absence of Political Action and Organisation, 1960-1984” (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2010), 44. Union of South Africa, Commission of Enquiry into the Sharpeville Shootings (Historical Papers, SAIRR, AD11720 Mfm) “Die Trots Van Die Munisipale Amptenare” (the pride of the municipal authorities).

⁶ D. Du Bruyn and M. Oelofse, “A Hygienic Native Township shall be Developed”: The Founding and Development of Batho as Bloemfontein’s “Model Location,” *Historia* 64, no. 2 (2019): 53.

these debates by analysing the experiences of the people they were intended for and how residents navigated spaces in their homes and communities. The theoretical framework guiding this analysis is borrowed from Handel's theory of home as a critical embodiment of three layers namely:

1. "housing regime," in which the home/house is a feature in a wide system of planning, political economies, and state policies;
2. "critical phenomenology," which explores the gaps between the ideal type of the home/house in a given society and its concrete embodiments; and
3. "active dwelling," which investigates how the gaps between ideals and reality serve as sources for active agency, and, at times, even manifest resistance.⁷

The Township houses built by the apartheid government is understood as a feature of apartheid planning and a wider aspect of the community. Secondly, houses are bricks and mortar constructions; they become homes when human agency reshapes them with personal belongings, memory, and belonging. The agency to have adapted or resisted the "active dwelling" is the type of agency that concerns this chapter.

4.3 Construction of houses in Sharpeville

The construction of houses in Sharpeville unconventionally took more than ten years to complete; the reasons for this delay have been discussed in Chapter 3. This section continues the discourse on *ubuntu*. It argues that the apartheid government, in a controversial move, may have arguably extended the sentiments of *ubuntu* and care by providing houses in Sharpeville. The comprehension of housing and the construction of Sharpeville must be understood from the context of Group Areas, segregation, and spatial planning in apartheid South Africa. Before 1947, councils were at liberty to construct housing they deemed adequate for *abantu*. This resulted in various housing designs that accommodated Black families in various parts of urban South Africa. The justifications for the construction of 'adequate' housing stemmed from the Slums Act of 1934 and the intensification of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and to house Blacks in structures secluded from urban areas. Notably, the chapter unpacks these debates by analysing the

⁷ A. Handel, "What's in a home? Toward a critical theory of housing/dwelling," *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 37, no. 6 (2019): 1046.

experiences of the people they were intended for. Also, how they navigated spaces in their homes and communities, showcasing their resilience and adaptability in the face of challenging circumstances.

Where can elements of *ubuntu* be found in the construction of houses? Humanitarian endeavours to obliterate the living conditions of Black people in slums, especially those of freehold locations, showed *ubuntu*. The discourse on housing development in apartheid South Africa is predominantly fixated on articulating a materialistic analysis of housing development and the growth of communities. Calderwood⁸ and Jennings,⁹ respectively, critically expound on the physical nature of houses and townships constructed before and during apartheid. Their work forms a cornerstone of this study. It provides a vantage point to the dynamics embedded in the shaping of Group Areas, particularly from an architectural point of view. Watts and Sibisi's analysis of township houses in parts of South Africa is instrumental in expounding a socialistic and humanistic interpretation of the houses constructed by councils.¹⁰ However, accentuating the minor structural changes made by recipients of government housing, their analysis of the alterations made to the houses provides an in-depth understanding of the councils' capacity to construct houses relevant to the structural needs of urban Black families.

To fully comprehend the complexity of housing projects by the government in collaboration with local councils, it is imperative to offer an elementary account of housing development in South Africa before situating Sharpeville in the discourse. Against this backdrop, the Housing Act, Act No. 35 of 1920¹¹ (hereafter the Housing Act) was implemented by the Union parliament after the spread of the Spanish flu to circumvent the spread of diseases. Its purpose was to entrench moral values in communities through housing construction. Appropriate housing, it was believed, contributed to the moral fibre

⁸ J.F.B Jennings, Housing for the Urban Bantu, a Problem in Whole Engineering, The South African institution of Civil Engineers, presented at the Monthly General Meeting, June 22nd, 1954, 10.

⁹ Jennings, Housing for the, 166.

¹⁰ H.L. Watts and H.J. Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing: A Detailed Study and Re-appraisal of the Position in South Africa* (Durban: Institute for Social Research University of Natal, 1969), 19.

¹¹ A. Mabin, "A Century of South African Housing Acts 1920–2020", *Urban Forum* 31 (2020): 454.

of the community.¹² In Top Location, it was certain that slums and their character of squalor and decay were, in some instances, spaces void of positive family values, principles, guidance, and moral compass. In his justification for the importance of adequate housing, Calderwood stated that “overcrowded slum areas cannot produce responsible persons; it is through good family living that those responsible persons will grow”.¹³ Calderwood further notes that:

A family housed in the confines of an iron and mud shack, in which all activities of the family, such as cooking, eating, dressing, undressing, and sleeping occur in one room, are not housed in an environment conducive to living a good family life. This is a family which will tend to disintegrate; the children will, as they grow older, run away even if they are to become vagrants, prostitutes, criminals or shebeen kings or queens through lack of employment of parental control.¹⁴

The Housing Act's inception enabled the centralisation of housing through the Central Housing Board of the Department of Health.¹⁵ It was only in 1944 that the Central Housing Board was abolished and replaced by a National Housing and Planning Commission that consisted of a full-time chairman, a deputy, and eight other members.¹⁶ The Bantu Housing Board was established under the Housing Act of 1957. The “functions of the board were to consider applications by local authorities for loans for the acquisition of land, the provision, administration and maintenance of housing schemes, and the formulation of policies for the granting of these loans”.¹⁷

Several organisations guided the costly, mass construction of Bantu housing and determined the standards that construction work had to comply with. This led to further

¹² Mabin, “A Century of South,” 454.

¹³ D.M. Calderwood, “An Investigation into the Planning of Urban Native Housing in South Africa” (PhD diss, University of the Witwatersrand 1953): 11.

¹⁴ Calderwood, “An Investigation,” 13.

¹⁵ P. Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa* (Johannesburg: South Africa Foundation, 1981), 24.

¹⁶ Morris, *A History of*, 31.

¹⁷ Morris, *A History of*, 44.

discourse on the minimum standards of accommodation.¹⁸ The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was tasked in 1947 by the National Housing and Planning Commission to research the housing standards in South Africa. It was believed:

bad housing conditions, if they become general, can be one of the most disruptive influences in society. Good housing tends to promote good citizens and hence stable conditions in society. It is in the interest of every civilised country to set its standards of housing as high as possible within the means of its economy.¹⁹

Construction companies took a similar stance. A brochure by Landsborough Findlay (S.A.) with a Black man in a suite that symbolised Eurocentric notions of civilisation entitled *Hessian or Bricks? You have the answer* read:

By keeping the native in his “shantytown” of hessian and broken tin, you open the door of trouble for tomorrow. Given the facilities and the opportunity, the natives can become honourable respectable citizens – a crime - free race proud and useful. The answer to his appeal “Hessian or Bricks?” lies within you. You possess the power to make the change. It’s you that can tear down the Hessian and give him the bricks to build his own home and build up himself. To do this is to give yourself a helping hand it removes one of tomorrow’s big headaches.²⁰

Landsborough Findlay (S.A.) Limited wrote to the then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. H.F. Verwoerd, in July 1954. In an emotional tone, the letter begged the minister to consider that their machine “proved to be of inestimable value in the speedy erection of cheap, yet sturdy houses in many parts of the world.”²¹ As the brochure by Landsborough has shown, minimum expenditures kept to the desired standards were critical to constructing Native houses. As Morris, Wilkinson, and Jennings have argued, the standards were

¹⁸ Jennings, *Housing for the*, 167.

¹⁹ Morris, *A History of*, 52.

²⁰ NARSSA, Pretoria. NTS 120/3/3 (6), Bylaag van 9-10, 632/313 (6), 4625. Native Affairs Department File number 480/313 (6), Native Housing: Plans and Materials Landcrete 662/281 Building improvements and suggestions for native (1954).

²¹ NARSSA, Pretoria. NTS 120/3/3 (6), Bylaag van 9-10, 632/313 (6), 4625. Native Affairs Department File number 480/313 (6), Native Housing: Plans and Materials Landcrete 662/281 Building improvements and suggestions for native (1954).

determined mainly by the government's financial capacity, entrenched in cost-containment strategies that informed cost-efficient construction methods.²² Mindful of costs, the minimum standards of housing encapsulated what Jennings describes as the four axioms of good housing:

- (a) Allow proper functioning of family life within the community;
- (b) It must safeguard the health of the occupants;
- (c) It must be sufficiently economical to be within the means of the people to be housed and;
- (d) It must be sufficiently durable to justify the investment of capital funds.²³

The section below discusses axioms (a) and (c). Components of axiom (d) are discussed under axiom (c) and reflected upon in the remaining chapters in discussions on housing in Sharpeville.

4.3.1 The “model” Township house

Houses contribute significantly to the well-being of the family and the community. Beyond the protection from the elements (wind, sun, and rain), houses become critical spaces for advancing family value systems, principles, and bonding. The construction of houses by the apartheid government was purposed to have safeguarded the functional wellness of the *Bantu* family unit. This extended beyond the physical protection from the elements to provide a safe space for cultural patterns, family cohesion practices, discipline, and religious and traditional practices within the household. The construction of houses that met the minimum requirements/standards, as per government stipulations, were ideally set out to vanguard the daily function of family life, which “should be based on each family occupying a separate dwelling”,²⁴ to ensure the advancement of individual families. Furthermore, dwelling designers need to know the living habits of the people they plan

²² P. Wilkinson, “A Place to Live: The Resolution of the African Housing Crisis in Johannesburg, 1944-1954”, African Studies Seminar Paper, presented at Seminar in RW319 on Monday, 27th July, 1981, 437.

²³ Jennings, “Housing for the”, 166.

²⁴ Jennings, “Housing for the”, 167.

for and their housing preferences and needs.²⁵ The government and its local councils were cognisant of the enormity and complexity of designing and constructing sub-economic houses that met the preferences of each household, especially in the context of eradicating freehold locations and slum yards.

Meeting each family's standards and living experiences in Sharpeville was impossible. The panacea to this complexity was to design houses shaped by Black people's socioeconomic backgrounds and experiences. This was determined mainly by sociologists and researchers,²⁶ whose prerogative was informing councils of the dynamics in the *Batho's* living patterns and household behaviours. This chapter is not purposed to examine the research shortcomings of sociological research on housing and the Black community. Still, it endeavours to analyse the suitability of apartheid housing to the realities of Sharpeville.

Architects such as Calderwood, influenced by sociologists, were to investigate and plan houses conducive to the broader needs of Black residents, and this was predominantly influenced by family size, amongst other issues. The notion of the family, under the context of apartheid, influenced the houses designed and built for Black communities. In this regard, Watts and Sibisi mention that:

a household may consist of a family only, or it could consist of a group of persons (related or otherwise) who are not a family, or finally it could consist of a family plus additional persons such as an elderly father or mother-in-law or additional relatives or unrelated persons.²⁷

African families have been historically noted to be large and often comprised of polygamous families. It must also be noted that African conceptions of the family are not constricted to the immediate family but to the family lineage. Furthermore, it is common for African homes to accommodate family members beyond the immediate family. *Ubuntu*, economic strains, access to labour, other possibilities, and death in the family

²⁵ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 68.

²⁶ Jennings, "Housing for the", 165-190.

²⁷ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 14.

are some reasons for living with extended family. The housing construction should have been cognisant of the family size and the unique patterns of negotiating spaces in Bantu houses as determinants for the houses built for them. It was typical for a dining room to be converted into a bedroom. Hanging sheets were often used to demarcate space and to ensure privacy. The kitchen space was conventionally used for food preparation, socialising, and, in typical instances, as a bedroom. The coal stove provided warmth in winter. An interviewee mentioned that “there was a radio, a fridge, and a coal stove, and the municipality provided this coal stove; we found them there, so there was no need for anyone to buy them”.²⁸

An interviewee described the kitchen partitioning as a sleeping area: “It was very big because all children were able to sleep in the kitchen, and we were using a table to divide us; it was big.”²⁹ Similarly, another interviewee described the sleeping arrangements as a two-room where children were sleeping in the kitchen.”³⁰ An Interviewee alluded to the living patterns and sharing of space as beneficial to the family “rena (we) we are living well; they (two uncles) were sleeping in the kitchen, the other two moved out when they got houses at Sebokeng Zone 3.”³¹ This was possible because the uncles worked long hours in their respective places of employment, and most of their days were spent at the workplace.

Watts and Sibisi accentuate the symbiotic relationship between the house planner and the dwelling's occupier in their space usage analysis. The knowledge that the dweller provides to the architect will determine the physical aspects of the house.³² Calderwood extends this debate, “psychological aspects are noted ... because in providing housing for natives, the designer is unaware of what is happening inside the occupants' minds. The native may be a newcomer to the urban area or have lived there all his life...”³³ The

²⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

²⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

³⁰ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Motlalepula, Sharpeville, 5 February 2024.

³¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Mofokeng, Sharpeville, 10 February 2024.

³² Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 55.

³³ Calderwood, “An Investigation”, 33.

psychology of the beneficiary of township housing was critical in determining the adaptation to the spaces provided by the house and the socialisation into the broader community. Watts and Sibisi put forward that:

The way in which people use their homes is of interest to the dwelling designer. If an architect knows what types of functions various rooms in a house are normally made to serve, then he has some idea of what design features, including room size, would be appropriate to meet the living patterns of the people concerned.³⁴

The newcomer (young or old) may have lived in a freehold location, a slum, or a privately owned house. These factors, amongst others, needed to inform the construction of native houses and townships. Family dynamics significantly shape any community's social landscape through deliberate and unconscious interactions with other community members and the physical environment. Sharpeville is no exception; residents of Sharpeville alluded to how children played extensively in the township streets, which remains a classic phenomenon in modern townships.³⁵ The primary reason for this can be attributed to the limited space in the houses because of the incongruence between family size and dwelling size. Thus, some of the houses in Sharpeville were too small for children to play in or even host their friends. Additionally, the backyard spaces, envisaged as recreational garden spaces, were, in some instances, obliterated by the garden or shacks constructed to maximise profit margins for landowners. This extended built environment and profit motives forced children to play in the streets. Children were also encouraged to play outdoors, especially during school holidays, because the house had to be kept clean.³⁶ Jeffrey's analysis of cultural trends in Sharpeville found that:

Township dwellers in South Africa, residing in identical "match-box" houses, on tiny plots of land, have been forced to spend a good deal of their daily lives in the

³⁴ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 55.

³⁵ Having grown up in the township of Tembisa in the East Rand, also known as Ekurhuleni, my childhood memories are overwhelmingly from the streets where we played games such as soccer, hide-and-seek, and good guys vs. bad guys. I have furthermore observed children in the townships of Soweto, Westenburg, and Eldorado Park, amongst others, populating the streets with play and laughter as they shared the roads with vehicles and bypassers. Gambling in the form of cards and dice featured mostly amongst young and older people in townships.

³⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Motlalepula, Sharpeville, 5 February 2024.

dusty streets. Children begin to play in the streets from a very young age. Football matches and games of hopscotch are regular occurrences.³⁷

4.3.2 Children's spaces

The discourse and planning of Bantu houses and model locations emphasised additional amenities for children-related leisure activities. In modelling play areas for children, planners were not cognisant of the ingrained tradition of street play harnessed by Top Location. Creches are critical role players as centres for children's elementary development. Regardless of the play area space and the creche in Sharpeville, some children would be required to walk extensive distances to access these facilities.³⁸ The Sharpeville Bantu Creche contributed to shaping young minds within the identity framework of the region. It was in creches that the development and continuation of identity and belonging were entrenched and stimulated. Similarly to adults, children can be considered ambassadors of their homes, communities and the broader experiences of their social upbringing. These complex experiences transcended into creches and other institutions of learning to normalise realities shaped within Group Areas.

The Sharpeville Bantu Creche was administrated under the Vereeniging Child Welfare Society at 34 Merriman Avenue, Vereeniging.³⁹ The Creche applied for subsidies from the Department of Social Welfare. These subsidies, coupled with tuition fees, were used to administer the daily functioning of the Native Creche.⁴⁰ The October 1959 creche records show that £10/2/6 was collected for 80 children, and the Department of Social Welfare subsidised £55/16/9 for the Native Creche.⁴¹ The records also reveal a fluctuation in the collection of monthly fees from parents. £14/6/9 was collected in August 1959; in

³⁷ I. Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943–1985" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 70.

³⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala Junior, Tshepiso, 5 February 2024.

³⁹ NARSSA, Pretoria 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371.

⁴⁰ NARSSA, Pretoria, 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371.

⁴¹ NARSSA, Pretoria, 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371.

the same year, a reduced amount of £12/15/9 was collected in July, and a lower £3/11/6 was collected for January and February.⁴² The creche records do not accentuate the reasons for the fluctuation in fee payments, nor are there available records of communication on settlements of outstanding funds between the creche and parents/guardians.

The Department of Social Welfare claim form shows a municipal grant of £12/10/0.⁴³ The subsidisation form does not mention any reasons for the municipal grant. Still, it does signify a concern from the municipality for the Native's educational well-being as essential to developing an educated community. Interestingly, a newspaper article entitled "Kaffir Beer Profits Provide Housing, Cheaper Milk" stated:

A modern new creche has just been completed, and the grounds have been laid out and the trees planted. The creche is under the direction of the Child Welfare Society, which receives a grant of £350 from the council. Interest on and redemption of the capital cost will come from kaffir beer profits.⁴⁴

The construction of the creche, according to the article, benefited from the extensive profits derived from native beer profits that sustained the growth and development of Sharpeville. Creches (see figure 1.1) temporarily alleviated the crowding of streets, especially during operational hours when children were expected to be at the creche. Fundamentally, they provided, as shall be seen, educational spaces, toys, and play equipment often absent in their streets and homes.

⁴² NARSSA, Pretoria, 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371.

⁴³ NARSSA, Pretoria, 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371.

⁴⁴ NARSSA, Pretoria, 'Subsidization of Creches, 1959, Box number BAO M125/5/7 (B) Vol.2 M125/5/8 Vol 1, 6371



Figure 1.1: A Creche, Sharpeville 2023⁴⁵

4.3.3 Gardens

Watts and Sibisi analysed the use of garden space in over five communities during the apartheid era. Their study accentuated an intricate connection between the house's economic well-being and the garden. They found that "...when available rent margin is looked at, it seems that the very poor kept their gardens neater and paid greater attention to them than those with a slightly higher level of rent-paying ability".⁴⁶ Watts and Sibisi have seen the garden's upkeep as a social practice that contributes to the psychological

⁴⁵ Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

⁴⁶ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 63.

well-being of people who maintain their gardens. However, the upkeep of the garden was in general determined by the family's financial capacity.

Calderwood argued the significance of gardens as strategic innovations that circumvent the bland and monotonous environment created by the design of township houses.⁴⁷ Although this was a success in Bloemfontein, it was limited by poor water supplies due to insufficient taps.⁴⁸ As argued later in the chapter, the house was conceived as a rental space and, therefore, possessed an element of temporality that discarded the importance of maintaining garden spaces. Also, the cost of maintaining a garden was limited by allocating one tap designated for more than thirty families during the 1940s.⁴⁹ These factors, including the spaces for play, garden spaces, the size and layout of the rooms, and the structure and detailing of the house, were most likely influenced by the economy and size of the family.⁵⁰

4.3.4 Sharpeville two or four-room houses and open stands

Consultations between the VTC and the housing beneficiaries regarding the structure of new houses in Sharpeville were an essential but missed opportunity. Due to financial constraints that led to cost-containment strategies, inadequate consultations with residents, and limited housing designs, Sharpeville residents were either issued two or four-room houses regardless of family size. Conversely, large African families were issued four rooms, whilst smaller families were assumed to have had adequate spacing in two-room houses. A respondent's recollection of housing allocation shows that:

For a person to get a 4-room house, he was just lucky because it would come out with the house number they gave him; those who were lucky enough to get four-room houses, it doesn't matter of favouritism, he was just lucky.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Calderwood, "An Investigation," 53.

⁴⁸ Du Bruyn and Oelofse, "A Hygienic Native," 73.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends," 161.

⁵⁰ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 52.

⁵¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Komako, Sharpeville, 28 February 2024.

Calderwood describes the plan type for houses in Sharpeville as “admirable” and that the house plan needed “a small adjustment in window arrangement to make it an attractive housing unit” (see figures 4.2 and 4.3).⁵²

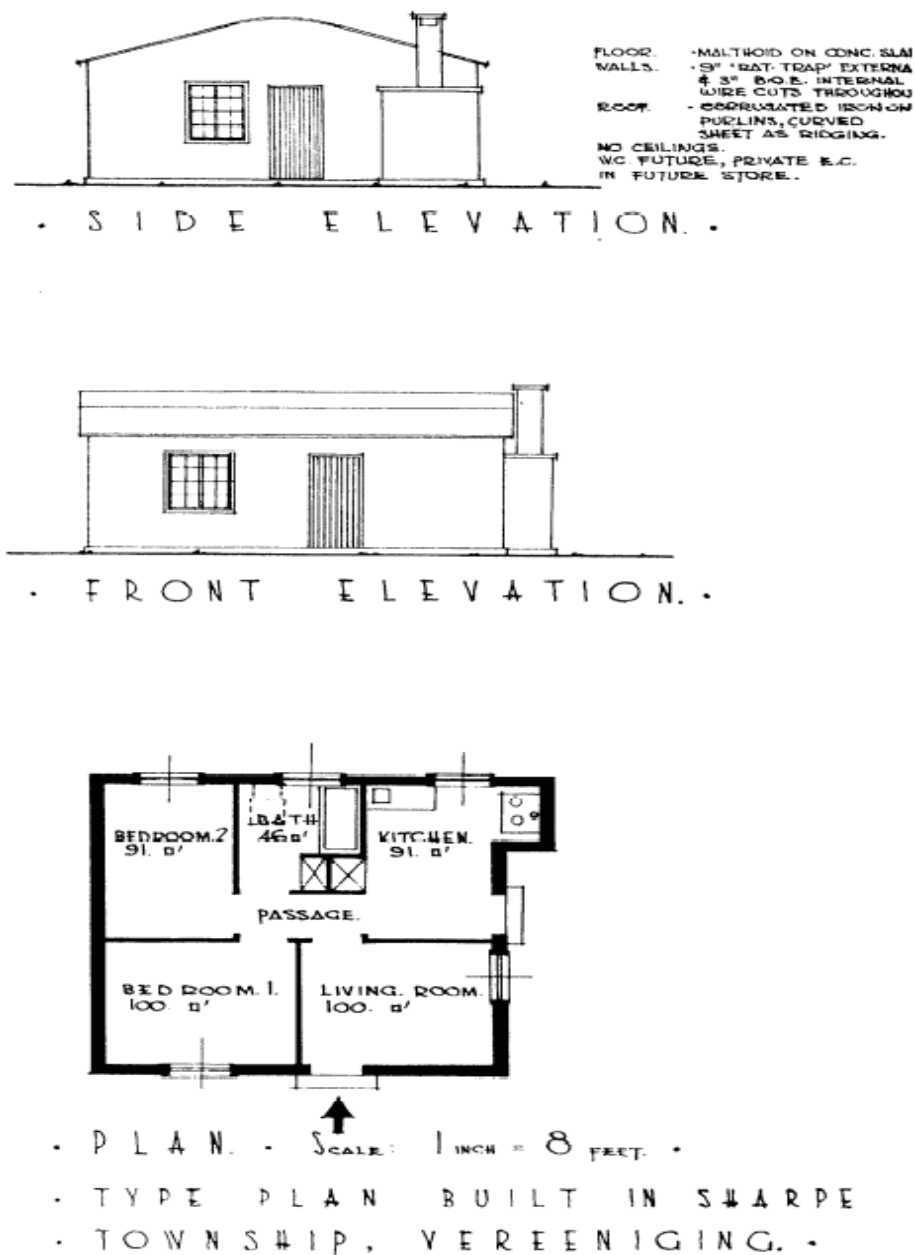


Figure 4.2: An image of a Township four-room house design in the Vereeniging area⁵³

⁵² Calderwood, “An Investigation,” 19.

⁵³ Calderwood, “An investigation,” 21.

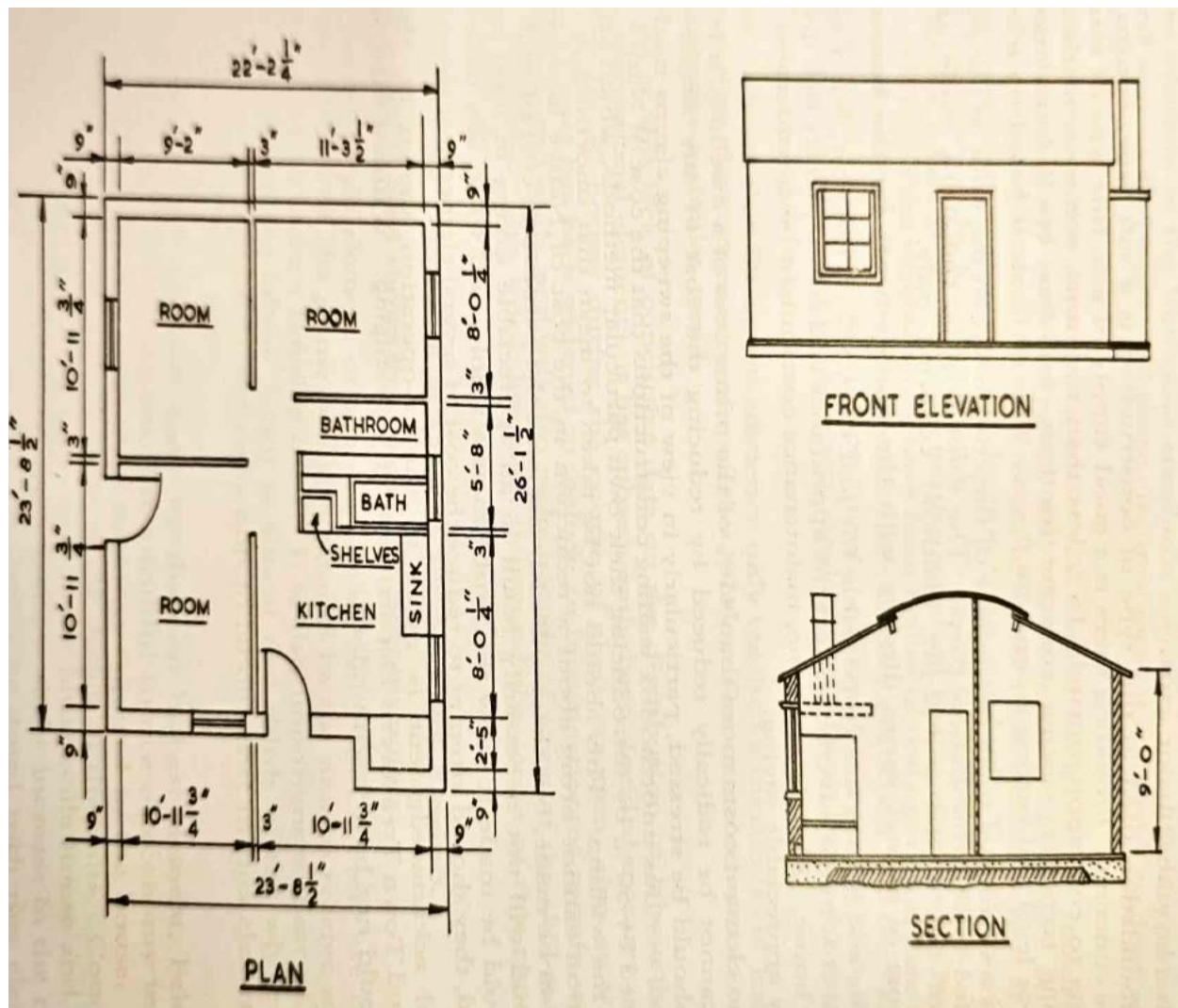


Figure 4.3: House plans of Bantu housing⁵⁴

The VTC was revered for its economic efficiency in building houses. These houses were typically 531 square metres and conventionally fitted with a food cupboard, No. 6 Dover Stove (see Figure 4.4), concrete sink and drainer, concrete bath (no water point) in the house, concrete pail cradle, and corrugated asbestos roofing (see Figure 4.5).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

⁵⁵ A.L. Glen, *The Costs of Native Housing Present Day Costs of Brick Houses at Vereeniging, 1951* in *The South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, National Building Research Institute, Research Studies on the Costs of Urban Bantu Housing*, (Pretoria: CSIR, 1994): 15.



Figure 4.4: A No. 6 Dover coal stove installed in a Sharpeville house⁵⁶

As mentioned earlier, residents of Sharpeville were not involved in the planning and approving the new houses and neighbourhoods. Chaskalson's study on the removals of Top Locations resonates with the exclusion of residents. "To sustain this pace, the

⁵⁶ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2024/02/28.

removals had to be carried out without consultation with the people being removed. Residents were simply given the number of their new house in Sharpeville”.⁵⁷



*Figure 4.5: An old asbestos roof house in Vuka, Sharpeville*⁵⁸

Some former residents recollected that they were allocated stand numbers and that they were responsible for looking for the houses. Consequently, they depended immensely on the Sharpeville residents who had moved to the Group Area earlier.⁵⁹ An interviewee mentioned that “if someone qualified, they would get a number that allowed them to live

⁵⁷ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville: A History of South African Townships in the 1950s” (Honours diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1985): 24.

⁵⁸ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

⁵⁹ Chaskalson, The Road to Sharpeville, 24.

in Sharpeville, and the numbers were written on the toilet door; the house and the toilet were already there”.⁶⁰ Similarly, Petrus recalls:

In Sharpeville we didn't know where to look for our number. I asked some people who gave me directions. We spent one or two hours looking for our new home. The next day one still got lost because one was not used to the place. It took us about two weeks to learn how to get home, where to get off the bus and where to board the bus to town. We did not use busses in Top Location.⁶¹

The provision of standard housing designs for the two - and four-bedroom houses in Sharpeville and similar designs for Group Areas in South Africa created monotonous and uninspiring townships. However, in their quest for sustaining *ubuntu*, it can be arguably considered that the government wanted low-cost housing to create a sense of uniformity and discipline in Black communities. Discipline instilled at the household level, an extension of industry, was beneficial to industry and the provision of disciplined labour. “South African ‘Bantu housing’ was based on the idea that Blacks should be in urban areas only to serve the White man. Since their ‘real homes’ were in the rural areas (Bantustans), it was logical that urban housing should have a temporary character”.⁶² However, Black urban dwellers contributed to the urban social revolution inspired by the growth of the manufacturing sector during the war. In that era Blacks continuously cemented their permanent positionalities in urban South Africa. Thus, they began to reconceptualise the idea of a secondary urban home as a symbol of wealth and connection to the urban areas whilst maintaining their rural home as a primary home and a connection to culture and tradition. Of course, these perceptions of home often interchanged; the urban home, for others, took on a permanent primary home whilst the rural home became a secondary home. These shifts were not static. This interchange was also determined by the time people spent in these environments. Whether bland or not, the houses became spaces conducive to identity creation and belonging and

⁶⁰ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Bhiza, 27 January 2023.

⁶¹ Petrus Tom, *My Life Struggle* (Ravan Worker Series, 1985), 23.

⁶² D.U. Vestbro and Dick Urban. "Housing in the Apartheid City of Former South Africa," *Izgradnja, Journal of the Association of Civil Engineers, Geotechnical Engineers, Architects and Town Planners* 66, no. 7-8 (2012): 7.

resistance towards its temporality was challenged. Broadly critiqued as monotonous low-cost housing communities,⁶³ it is argued that Group Areas were designed for the have-nots and would have furthermore single-handedly created communities for/of poor people living in tiny 'matchbox houses'.

In Sharpeville, this was not the case; the approval of a site and service scheme for Sharpeville Extension 1 uniquely reshaped and diversified the physical appeal of Sharpeville. Instead of building houses for residents, the council allocated stands consisting of a temporary structure, usually a shack and toilet,⁶⁴ to encourage residents to construct houses approved by the council. This reduced the costs of constructing houses from the government's perspective. However, this was not without limitations; the cost of building materials and limited access to water delayed the building processes. It was also found that overcrowding in Extension 1 became a reality when two families were found to be living on one stand because of the council's slow pace in building houses for residents.⁶⁵

The government heightened a paternalistic social welfare approach towards Black communities by forcing some of them through forced removals into sub-economic housing structures without the possibility of ownership of the house.⁶⁶ It was only in 1952 that the council decided that tenants could be removed from the sub-economic rent category to the economic rentals of \$2.5.0. This policy became more entrenched in the mid-1950s, inevitably leading to increased resentment toward the council that eventually led to protest action in the 1960s.⁶⁷

⁶³ A.E. Okem, S.L. Myeni, O. Mtapuru and S. Nkambule, "A Historicity of Housing Policies in Apartheid South Africa," in *The Political Economy of Government Subsidised Housing in South Africa*, eds. S.L. Myeni and A.E. Okem (New York: Routledge, 2021), 35.

⁶⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

⁶⁵ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 26.

⁶⁶ The discourse on title deeds intensified in the Vaal region after the inception of a democratic dispensation. The process of issuing title deeds has been imbued with complexities that are beyond this study. Respondents have alluded to the political conundrums embedded in the process.

⁶⁷ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 16.

The naming of Extension 1 by the residents as Vuka, short for Vukazenzele loosely translated as 'wake up and do it yourself,' signals self-reliance and determination towards the construction of homes instead of waiting for government-owned housing. In comparison to the processes of the Batho Location in Bloemfontein, the council permitted residents to submit plans that were to be approved by the council. The Bloemfontein system allocated financial assistance to ensure the construction of houses.⁶⁸ The transparency and inclusion of the residents in the township's planning created a partnership, a buy-in, from the community for the council to advance its plans. The same cannot be said about Sharpeville, whose council implemented group areas more than 20 years after the Batho Location.

The well-off Black class refused to move to Sharpeville. At its inception, there was supposedly little mention of the possibility for them to construct houses that accentuated their prestige, respect, and social complexity. Instead, many moved to the freehold township of Evaton, where they bought stands and advanced business interests.⁶⁹ Lastly, Extension 1 was evidence that Sharpeville was monotonous and uniform, especially at its inception. The physical structure entrapped an essential expression of individual identity and class differentiation that encapsulated freehold locations in South Africa. However, it was clear that residents who occupied four-room houses were not only larger families that sought space. They paid more rentals than occupants of two-room houses. Class dynamics, as was the case in Top Location, always found expression even in communities designed to be uniform or monotonous.

4.3.5 Superintendent / housing managers

In Sharpeville, the township superintendent was appointed to safeguard Sharpeville. He was given the responsibility of overseeing the affairs of Sharpeville by the authority given to him by the council. He was stationed as a critical extension of political control to ensure adherence to discipline and bylaws. In this regard, Calderwood emphasises the importance of housing managers in the affairs of newly established communities noting

⁶⁸ Bruyn and Oelofse, "A Hygienic Native", 65.

⁶⁹ K. Vusumuzi, "Evaton and a Quest for Economic Independence: A new Dimension to Entrepreneurship, 1940-1949," *New Contree* 77, no. 2 (2016): 28.

that "Housing managers in other countries are responsible for the collection of rentals, the general welfare of the inhabitants, and the maintenance of the property".⁷⁰

Calderwood's preference and emphasis for housing managers accentuated their importance as overseers in the community and were pivotal in facilitating change management for newcomers in Group Areas. Ideally, they would have been instrumental in analysing newcomers' previous residences, cultures, economies, houses, living conditions and the nature of removals in determining adaptation processes. Housing managers would have eradicated the lengthy and cumbersome task of circumventing challenges experienced by new residents and assisted in finding common-minded stokvels, the Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society of Vereeniging, jazz clubs and other groups for the new residents.

The functionality of the stokvels was detrimental to the functionality of the household. Stokvels are often regarded as informal organisations steered towards cushioning and, in some instances, obliterating socio-economic issues experienced by its members. Alongside stokvels/societies, often considered informal, were formally registered institutions that shared similar objectives and strategic functions as stokvels/societies.

The Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society of Vereeniging (henceforth The Society), as per the Secretary for Social Welfare, was registered with the Department of Social Welfare. Therefore, unlike stokvels at the time, they were recognised as a legal entity, evident in issuing a certificate that legitimised their assistance to the community.⁷¹ According to the secretariat, "on the 11th December 1926, a certificate of registration was issued to the Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society, Vereeniging, in terms of Section 2 of the Charitable Institutions (Control) Ordinance No. 5 of 1926."⁷² Similarly to informal stokvels/societies, the primary objectives of the Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society, as outlined in its draft constitution, were to:

⁷⁰ Calderwood, *An Investigation*, 92.

⁷¹ NARSSA, Pretoria. S.W.P. 8/948, RE: Cancellation of Certificate of Registration. Letter from the Secretary for Social Welfare, 25/10/1945 SWP 8/915, SWP 8/948 BV106 288.3.

⁷² NARSSA, Pretoria. S.W.P. 8/948, RE: Cancellation of Certificate of Registration. Letter from the Secretary for Social Welfare, 25/10/1945 SWP 8/915, SWP 8/948 BV106 288.3.

- (a) Organise the women of Sharpe Township into one non-political organisation.
- (b) Assist members of the Society who may be in need in such manner as the Executive Committee may decide and in such a way as the circumstances may warrant.
- (c) In the event of the death of any member of the Society, the Society undertakes to pay all funeral expenses.
- (d) To promote the welfare of the members of the Society (and)
- (e) To assist in the teaching of womanhood to young women.⁷³

The society was well organized and comprised an organisational agreement that stipulated the responsibilities of the executive committee, secretary, chairwoman, treasurer, and finance committee as required by the Charitable Institutions Ordinance.⁷⁴ At the core of their existence was the well-being of women. The society depended on charitable donations and funding from the Social Welfare Department, the community and external organisations to achieve this objective. Amid its responsibilities, the society donated money to Sharpeville residents who needed assistance. These transactions culminated in records that were entitled “Sharpe Ville Women’s Friendly and ass. Society Vereeniging”. The paperwork of the transactions is somewhat problematic. In most instances, the reasons for the donations were “donations for the poor people” (see Figure 4.6) being the amount of money issued to individuals and the signature of the receiver.

The daily running of the Society to study could not be found at the National Archives of South Africa in Pretoria. They are important in explaining processes that guided the issuing of money. At this stage, it can be assumed that the society identified low-income families through word of mouth from the receivers of assistance and the executive team members who resided in Sharpeville. Regardless of the administrative shortcomings and organisational concerns, the Society's functionary role points to efforts in alleviating poverty in Sharpeville.

⁷³ NARSSA, Pretoria. S.W.P. 8/948, Draft Constitution of The Sharpeville Women’s Friendly and Assistance Society, 25/10/1945 SWP 8/915, SWP 8/948 BV106 288.3.

⁷⁴ NARSSA, Pretoria. S.W.P. 8/948, RE: Cancellation of Certificate of Registration. Letter from the Secretary for Social Welfare, 25/10/1945 SWP 8/915, SWP 8/948 BV106 288.3.

Sharpeville Women's
15-10-45
Sharpeville Women's
Friendly and Ass. 82
Society - Vereniging
It is abolished.
This is a donation list
for the poor people
10-3-4
Signature for the
receive
Sideon Mosia
Chair
Alymohantse

Figure 4.6: Donations for the poor people⁷⁵

Some residents transitioning into Sharpeville after the relocations entered the Group Area experiencing some level of poverty due to unemployment and other socio-economic

⁷⁵ NARSSA, Pretoria, SWP 8/915, SWP 8/948.

concerns. Thus, the house manager would have been instrumental in identifying families in need and connecting them with formally registered organisations such as the said society. Unfortunately, according to a handwritten letter to the Department of Social Welfare dated 9 November 1945, it was apparent that the Society had experienced financial difficulties, exacerbated by the resignations of 13 members. The letter also alleged that “these resigned without any reason...”⁷⁶ They also refused to attend a meeting to discuss the issue. The letter further alluded to the society's financial distress caused by dubious financial withdrawals from its coffers. However, the secretary does not detail any fraudulent activities.

Internal issues seemingly contributed to its downfall. As a community guardian, the house manager would have been privy to the organisational dynamics and warned new and old community members of the distrust towards organisations. Remarkably, the government and councils used beer profits to advance a humanitarian footprint in Sharpeville. “Grants totalled £2250 of which £500 was allocated to Santa, £200 each to child welfare and Cripple care, £350 to the municipal market in the Sharpe Native Township and £250 to bursaries”.⁷⁷ In some instances, Beer profits subsidised milk provision to Sharpeville residents.⁷⁸ Regardless of the origins of the funds to finance investments in the community's social well-being, the government, through its welfare department, ensured that poverty alleviation measures and opportunities were implemented in Sharpeville. In doing so, they expressed *ubuntu* as a paternalistic organisation with self-ordained responsibility as a government for the care of its people.

Mindful of the will of the government. The Housing managers or location superintendents would have mediated in alleviating anxiety embedded in the transition to new environments. Mediation could have taken place at the planning stages of Sharpeville to allow residents adequate time to prepare for changes. Furthermore, Calderwood's

⁷⁶ NARSSA, Pretoria. S.W.P. 8/948, RE: Cancellation of Certificate of Registration. Letter to the Department of Social Welfare by the Secretary of Sharpe Ville Women's Friendly and ass. Society Vereeniging.

⁷⁷ Author unknown, “Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

⁷⁸ Author unknown, “Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

perception is that “in Native housing, when families move into new houses, they are inclined to bring with them many unnecessary and dirty pieces of junk”.⁷⁹ This could have been used as a justification for councils to implement change management practices to avoid the courier of “junk” to Group Areas.

Though Calderwood’s perceptions can be critiqued as articulations imbued with racist, Eurocentric, parochial and privileged underpinnings, his perception uncovers a lack of knowledge and expectations for residents who experienced removals. This is evident in the lack of prior knowledge on the size of the houses, rooms, gardens, and overall space. Meaningful consultation processes with the tenants would have assisted immensely in preplanning space usage. Furthermore, what Calderwood calls “junk” were often family possessions with sentimental value to communities uprooted from their homes. These possessions ultimately represented ornaments that portentously gave buildings an identity and a sense of belonging to the community. However, he lacks specificity in detailing the “junk” but the possessions included ornaments, clothing, furniture, stools, decor, tools, and other physical instruments of memory that Calderwood perceived as a waste of space in a space-limited two or four-room structure. The junk carried in trucks assisted in making a house a home.⁸⁰ Furthermore, it attests to the limited knowledge of the Native’s living patterns and behaviours in research acquired by research departments of the CSIR in their determinations of minimum standards of accommodation.

However, cost-efficiency, budgetary constraints, and political dynamics cannot be discarded as fundamental considerations that outweighed the construction of houses that met the demands and lifestyles of every family that experienced relocation to Sharpeville.

4.3.6 Construction, funds and rentals in Sharpeville

The previous section discussed the complexity embedded in the allocation of the Sharpeville houses and their efficacy in meeting the demands of Black residents. It was further shown that people had to adapt their lifestyles to the houses allocated to them, primarily influenced by the family size and the dynamics of removals. This section

⁷⁹ Calderwood, “An Investigation,” 93.

⁸⁰ The sentimental value of family ornaments in shaping the house into a home is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

unpacks the broader economic changes experienced by Sharpeville residents due to the widespread removals of Top Location. Reconsiderations of the notion of *ubuntu* in the council's endeavour to build homes for *abantu* are explored. The development of Sharpeville is interrogated as a social and economic opportunity to provision and house labour for the industries in the region. Lastly, the construction of Sharpeville is analysed from a complex enormous estate business that 'forcefully' charged rentals from their tenants. The financial opportunity derived from this mega-national-enterprise questions if *buthu* and *batho* were at the core of their concern over racial planning and financial gain.

The conceptualisation and discourse of group areas throughout South Africa as mega-government estates managed by councils performing the multiple functions of estate agents and landlords has not been explored. The dominant narrative of relocations in urban and rural South Africa centres their discourse on forced removals. They typically do so by reflecting on the socio-economic consequences of removals. Group areas, a consequence of relocation, are not always analysed from a government business enterprise perspective. Also, many have exhausted the discourse on beer production,⁸¹ especially on women's industry experiences and volatile relationship with law enforcement.⁸² Academic attention has also been given to the profitability of beer halls⁸³ and the civil protests that have attacked such institutions. However, discourses are not deliberate in accentuating the business element of the government, which transcended humanitarian boundaries into capitalistic functioning and gain. The alternative perspective to this debate is that the Natives Affairs Department and government agencies used a business model to generate funds for construction work and maintaining the group areas legislation.

⁸¹ C. M. Rogerson, "A Strange Case of Beer: The State and Sorghum Beer Manufacture in South Africa," *Area* 18, no. 1 (1986): 16; See also C.M. Rogerson and D. M. Hart. "The Survival of the 'Informal Sector': The Shebeens of Black Johannesburg," *GeoJournal* 12, no. 2 (1986): 157.

⁸² A. Mager, "The First Decade of 'European Beer' in Apartheid South Africa: The State, the Brewers and the Drinking Public, 1962-72." *The Journal of African History* 40, no. 3 (1999): 368.

⁸³ It has been estimated that "the gross income from the sale of kaffir beer during the present municipal year was estimated at £109, 630, and the estimated expenditure at £75, 552, leaving a profit of £43, 048, of which at least a third would be spent on health and social services", Author unknown, "Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk," *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

In Sharpeville, it was reported that “the subeconomic housing scheme will be subsidised to the extent of £6 278 from kaffir beer production”.⁸⁴ Furthermore, “the council will, therefore, spend £28 304 of the profits from beer on housing schemes and health and social services for the Native population”.⁸⁵ This property character pursued the construction of cheap houses throughout South Africa to accommodate non-whites. The government’s minimum standards and expectations guided this endeavour. On this note, the mayor of Vereeniging, Dr. R.H. Amm, stated in 1951 to a gathering that inspected houses in Vereeniging and its neighbouring suburb of Vanderbijlpark that Native wages should have gradually increased to qualify residents for rentals they could afford and for constructing their homes.⁸⁶ In so doing, the government would not have had to pay housing subsidies. Interestingly, the memorandum endorsed by the Mayor during a visit to Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark to inspect houses “claimed that by building its schemes departmentally, the Vereeniging Council had saved more than £100 000 in five years”.⁸⁷ The implementation of group areas henceforth ‘estate development’ or ‘Black estate development’ had to, according to Jennings, meet the axioms of minimum standards of accommodation⁸⁸:

In essence, the ‘scientific’ contribution to the resolution of the African housing crisis consisted of a set of cost-efficient methods of building cheap but ‘adequate’ housing to minimum space and material standards in ‘optimally’ rationalised layouts, its product can be seen in almost every township in South Africa.⁸⁹

According to Wilkinson, Jennings, and Calderwood, the construction of Black estates, as mentioned previously, had to be cost-efficient; it would not have been financially viable to

⁸⁴ Author unknown, “Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

⁸⁵ Author unknown, “Kaffir beer profits provide housing, cheaper milk,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 14 December 1954, 15.

⁸⁶ Author unknown, “Raise native wages to end housing subsidies– Mayor of Vereeniging”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 January 1951, 10.

⁸⁷ Author unknown, “Raise native wages to end housing subsidies– Mayor of Vereeniging”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 22 January 1951, 10.

⁸⁸ Jennings, “Housing for the,” 166.

⁸⁹ Wilkinson, *A Place to Live*, 437.

construct expensive houses for a Black population that could not afford them.⁹⁰ Also, it was clear that Black estate development would not benefit from the same investments as White estates. Doing so would have equated Blacks to Whites and contradicted apartheid endeavours of separate development. Estate developers had to conduct elaborate affordability analyses to determine their market and the construction feasibility to meet the housing standards for their clientele. Many people resented and resisted forced removals and declined to form part of the customer base. On the other hand, many voluntarily showed interest in becoming willing customers or tenants of the government's estate business model.⁹¹ However, it must be reverberated that others were forcefully recruited as tenants into the estate development programme without the possibility of alternative accommodation and due to economic constraints.

To better understand the financial peculiarities of the willing and unwilling rental market, the councils generally used samples to determine the type of houses to construct to the clientele's affordability. With its budgetary constraints, the construction of houses could not have built homes that catered to the individual needs of all households. A range of essential information was obtained from sample groups to reach this determination. The sample information included "age, composition, feeding habits, and incomes from legal sources".⁹² Further estimates were made regarding the minimum requirements for families, including food, transport for wage earners, clothing, fuel, lighting, and cleaning materials. Relevant authorities, such as the Department of Nutrition, were sought to assist in making these estimates.⁹³

The cost-of-living analysis and the average household income were used to determine rental affordability. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the sample groups represented the broader experiences of Black tenants. In addition to the general cost of living, food, cleaning materials, school fees, transport, and other related costs. Black breadwinners struggled to provide for their extended families in rural areas while

⁹⁰ Calderwood, "An Investigation," 6.

⁹¹ R. Hallett, "Desolation on the Veld: Forced Removals in South Africa," *African Affairs* 83, no. 332 (1984): 319.

⁹² Jennings, *Housing for the*, 170.

⁹³ Jennings, *Housing for the*, 170.

maintaining an urban lifestyle.⁹⁴ Cheap dwellings comprising low rentals and living conditions were compromises many interviewees alluded to as worthy sacrifices to ensure financial sustainability, which the government-sampled populations may have omitted.⁹⁵

Considerations were based on incomes derived from legal sources. As mentioned earlier, some of the residents of Top Location derived incomes from informal/unregistered trade. To a large extent, they were discriminated against by the determination of income used by the government. This explains the phenomenon of many informal traders and businesspeople opting to be disregarded as potential clientele for the estates. Black vendors and other informal businesses, such as beer brewing, were prohibited in the township. Based on their analysis, the rental market was pigeonholed into four economic categories based solely on affordability. Jennings identified these groups as (a) the very poor, (b) those in need of some assistance, (c) those who can manage, and (d) those who can afford something better.⁹⁶ The latter category comprised tenants who could afford to construct their own houses with minimal assistance from the government. Only in the late 1950s did many Top Location residents take this opportunity in Sharpeville's Vuka. Jennings suggests that:

What is important to remember with this group, however, is that its numbers are small and if good housing developments are to result, they should be controlled under by-laws as with those which apply in European towns, including rigid control of the erection of outbuildings or other shacks which might lead to rack-renting.⁹⁷

Families that could have constructed on the site and service schemes were not immune from government regulations. In most instances, the 'superior class' in Black communities comprised businessmen/women who derived profits from their property businesses. The illegalisation of rack renting and the production, distribution, and consumption of alcohol by Black entrepreneurs and customers in Black estates served to protect the business

⁹⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Komako, Sharpeville, 28 February 2024.

⁹⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Komako, Sharpeville, 28 February 2024.

⁹⁶ Jennings, *Housing for the*, 170.

⁹⁷ Jennings, *Housing for the Urban Bantu*, 171.

interests of White estate developers. The latter derived financial transactions from the profits of beer production sold in municipal beer halls and as landlords of mushrooming estates.⁹⁸

To further circumvent the exorbitant costs of constructing houses in Black estates/townships and ensure class differentiation, the councils provided houses that were vividly different from those of the superior class. Jennings argues that:

There is no doubt that the repetition of uniform single-standard houses throughout these towns is a grave mistake since it forces the better class into houses which are below their aspirations, stifling their natural ambitions, while on the other hand, it also forces people who can pay very little, into dwellings that are much more expensive than they can afford at this stage.⁹⁹

This differentiation was once again made vivid with the structures rented out to the lower class:

This class might have space for bathing, but no proper bathrooms, floors should be of earth in all rooms except kitchens, passages and lavatories; in one of the rooms the sleeping and living functions should be combined, there should be no ceilings and generally the houses should be arranged as semi-detached.¹⁰⁰

Similarly subsidised, the houses rented by the minimum class were also impacted by cost-containment strategies envisaged to create inequality based on rental affordability. It was suggested that their structures should be void of ceilings, and buildings should have been arranged in rows. The wall thickness should have been reduced to a minimum to save costs and allow for rentals befitting their economic circumstances. The constriction of Sharpeville housing designs to the two—and four-room structures attest to this strategic cost-containment business model.

⁹⁸ Rogerson, "African Traditional Beer," 257.

⁹⁹ Jennings, *Housing for the Urban Bantu*, 171.

¹⁰⁰ Jennings, *Housing for the Urban Bantu*, 171.



Figure 4.7: An old bathroom refurbished into a shop, Sharpeville¹⁰¹

These forced tenants who could not build for themselves in Vuka to a limited choice of dwellings and cheap buildings that met the minimum standards.¹⁰² To alleviate the inconveniences of limited bathing facilities in households, the municipality constructed communal bathrooms in various places in the township. Some of these bathrooms, in addition to washing facilities, have been, as pointed out by Ntate Ncala in our walk around the township, remodified into houses occupied by residents (see Figure 4.7).

Implementing forced and voluntary removals and constructing new Townships required strategic marketing campaigns attractive to the potential target markets. Regardless of the economic disparities in freehold locations, the council's mandate was to assure the community of its intentions through notions of care for its citizens. In addition, to improve their living conditions by providing quality houses and amenities that communities needed. The council boasted of their model location that had six schools, nine churches, two communal halls, a chief's rest house, a beer hall, a library and a creche, a cycle track,

¹⁰¹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

¹⁰² Jennings, *Housing for the Urban Bantu*, 171.

football fields, a stadium, and four tennis courts that were constructed during its existence before the inception of a democratic dispensation in South Africa.¹⁰³

However, this chapter argues that no complex marketing analysis and endeavours were needed in Sharpeville, and some of the services and products offered in Sharpeville were present in Top Location. Essentially forced by economic situations and forced removals, tenants entered 'rental agreements' predominantly persuaded by family size, affordability, and the need for adequate housing. The living conditions in some parts of Top Location may have stimulated a desire to attain the benefits of a caring government. The prospects of 'improved' living conditions, access to urban living and the lifestyle attached to it persuaded tenants to enlist for 'cheap' housing in Sharpeville. The council (landlords) "were able to boast that they led the Union in terms of both the cheapness of their African housing and the number of houses they provided relative to the local African population".¹⁰⁴

The construction of houses comprised "engineers, architects, quantity surveyors, practical builders, administrators, production experts and research workers from many branches of science and technology".¹⁰⁵ The technical aspect of construction involved excessive money spent on labour and materials required for building projects. White labour and expertise were commonly used to construct Black estates/townships. The Louw Commission estimated that 33% of the prime cost of building houses for Blacks was attributed to the usage of European artisans and conventional construction in the brickwork at Vereeniging.¹⁰⁶ Job reservation measures contributed towards the normalisation of White labour preference in the industrial sectors of apartheid South Africa.

To contain the high costs of labour costs of constructing cheap housing, councils trained and employed Black menial labour to build townships because Black labour was cheaper

¹⁰³ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 11.

¹⁰⁴ Non-European Affairs Committee, meeting of 15 November 1951. Minutes of Sharpeville Advisory Board Meeting held on 24 October 1951 in Chaskalson, The Road to Sharpeville, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Jennings, Housing for the Urban Bantu, 178.

¹⁰⁶ Jennings, Housing for the Urban Bantu, 184.

than their White counterparts. Mr Warwick, who chaired the Public Works Committee, stated, "non-Europeans should be trained to build their own houses in Native townships, thereby reducing the cost of Native housing schemes and making more European building artisans available for government development projects".¹⁰⁷ The expertise and building skills administered by Black builders remained within the framework of the minimum requirements for accommodation. Regardless of who laid the foundations and the mortar that may have kept bricks together, the houses remained, in the opinion of this chapter, a Eurocentric structure. The following section highlights the interconnections between cheap housing that met the bare minimum requirements and its relevance to labour.

4.4 The control of labour

In the context of Sharpeville, the development of Black estates/townships can be perceived as an extension of the hostel and compound system. This was essential in accommodating the labour market and a pivotal element of the capitalist system. Hostels, compounds, and the employer's residence were efficient and beneficial in their ability to circumvent transportation costs and arrests for loitering and other charges. Calderwood argues that "the provision of good housing is shown as an important factor in the formation of a stable and efficient labour force and the creation of a community capable of shouldering their own responsibility".¹⁰⁸ Sharpeville residents preferred Top Location because it was within walking distance of the Vereeniging town centre and its adjacent industry.¹⁰⁹ If Calderwood's positionality on the intersectionality between morality, community, and workplace is to be considered. Labour would benefit from the costless journey to work and the psychological well-being of its employees derived from living in what was deemed adequate estates and housing.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Author unknown, "Raise Native Wages to End Housing Subsidies-Mayor of Vereeniging, *Rand Daily Mail*, January 22, 1951, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Calderwood, "An Investigation", 1.

¹⁰⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

¹¹⁰ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 18.

However, the relocation to better housing in the Sharpeville estate/township increased the distance to work. Regardless of this pivotal change, the industry continued to perceive Sharpeville as a strategic 'compound' for labour. In marketing stands for sale in Vereeniging, a newspaper advert stated that "the most strategic industrial sites in the steel hub of South Africa. Opposite the new £300 000 Railway Marshalling Yards at Vereeniging, this speaks for itself. Opposite the Sharpeville Model Location labour on your doorstep".¹¹¹ Some tenants purchased bicycles to avoid transportation costs and to access their places of employment.¹¹² Bicycles were a cost-efficient means of transportation, far more affordable than public transport. Other residents seemingly used buses to access places of employment; an interview recalled that "because when we were at the Top Location, we were close to work, after moving to Sharpeville, our fathers had to wake up early and take buses, and the bus stop was also far."¹¹³

The dynamics of employment recruitment preferences reshaped Sharpeville and the family economy. Furthermore, the region's sprawling population and limited economic opportunities contributed to the proliferation of youth unemployment. Chaskalson postulates that "the first generation of youths born in Topville had reached the Vereeniging job market towards the end of the 1940s only to discover that their chances of finding employment were minimal".¹¹⁴ To make matters worse, the industry's long-standing collegiality with migrant labour networks cemented a network of trust and dependence on migrant labourers who were perceived to be loyal, respectful, and hardworking. Industries' preference for migrant labourers over the youth of Sharpeville created an unfortunate situation; it gradually limited youth employment opportunities and, in essence, reshaped the social landscape of Sharpeville.

The rigid preference for a migrant labour system disrupted the perception of Sharpeville as an extension of the hostels and its function to accommodate labour. Many young Sharpeville residents began to increasingly disconnect from the manufacturing industry

¹¹¹ Author unknown, "Industrial Site for Sale, Vereeniging," *Rand Daily Mail*, May 23, 1947, 4.

¹¹² LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Molefe, Sharpeville, 14 April 2023.

¹¹³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Mofokeng, Sharpeville, 10 February 2024.

¹¹⁴ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 17.

as the sole purpose of their stay in the region. Gang activism increased because of unemployment.¹¹⁵ Inadequate wages, racism and negative conceptions of hard labour became unfashionable with youth identity.¹¹⁶

Watts and Sibisi believe that the essence of time is instrumental in forging family relations. The time spent accessing the workplace combined with the time spent at work reduces the time spent at home with family, friends, and the community.¹¹⁷ Depending on the operating hours, the nature of work and the commute to work, the house retains, especially in apartheid Sharpeville, a place of rejuvenation of the body for labour. Essentially, the house and all its aesthetics, spirituality, and comforts intersect to provide spiritual, emotional, and cognitive support and rejuvenation for the labourer to have worked another day. Arguably, the family and the community at large contributed immensely towards a sexist and ageist labour market that depended on the family and the community to provide labour.

4.5 Reflection

This chapter explored alternative and often unexplored perspectives on the discourse of Sharpeville as a model location. It considered the arduous task of building houses and communities a paternalistic act of *ubuntu* governed by the ethos of care for its citizens. However, it was critiqued to have been primarily influenced by racist ideological frameworks embedded in separate development endeavours. The chapter considered establishing communities to have contributed to alleviating shantytowns, squalor, and decay that characterised most freehold locations in apartheid South Africa. Generally influenced by the sanitation syndrome and the perception of Black communities as carriers and transmitters of diseases, the spread of the Spanish Influenza (1918) accentuated the imperativeness of government intervention in the hygiene and well-being of its citizens. However, the relocations from Top Location to Sharpeville provided an escape from the spread of diseases such as typhoid and TB, which were common in overcrowded spaces. The implementation of the Slums Act facilitated and justified the

¹¹⁵ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville", 18.

¹¹⁶ Chaskalson, *The Road to Sharpeville*, 7.

¹¹⁷ Watts and Sibisi, *Urban Bantu Housing*, 19.

removal processes throughout apartheid South Africa. The Slums Act was envisaged to safeguard civilians' living experiences (health) in slums and other areas deemed inadequate for habitation. Within overcrowded spaces, people forged co-existence evident in gestures of kindness through established networks such as stokvels, support structures, and neighbourliness. In these spaces, informal businesses flourished amid the vibrant streets shaped by children's play and interactions with the township folk.

However, the Vereeniging Town Council's ambitions of removing the community occurred without sufficient consultation processes that would have transplanted vibrant cultures evident in Top Location before its demolition. For instance, the council's cost containment strategies disrupted the continuation of family life in the new houses given to Blacks in Sharpeville. The employment of 'house managers' and other social organisations would have contributed towards alleviating feelings of isolation and disorientation in a new environment. The houses, it was shown, became, in some instances, inadequate for family life. Rooms comprised dual functionalism depending on the demands of the inhabitants; children could not actively play in the houses, and privacy continued to be an obstacle. Furthermore, some buildings in Sharpeville seemed inconsistent with the large African families, often comprised of extended families. Thus, the lengthy relocation process and inadequate consultations with the residents created a relationship characterised by disdain and distrust between the parties.

The chapter endeavoured to unpack the construction of Black communities as an effort from the government to position its business interest in real estate investment. In the case of Sharpeville, real estate intersected with beer production to create a monopoly over the two businesses. The chapter dissected Bantu housing from a capitalist-oriented vantage point, driven by income concerns evident in the cost-efficient production of mass houses.

The government was hellbent on implementing Black townships that instilled separateness and contributed to dismantling the informal sector and business practices barred in Sharpeville. Furthermore, using force, manipulation, and limited consultation with the residents forced independent and self-sufficient communities into rental spaces they could sometimes not afford. This resulted in benign protest action over rentals (discussed in Chapter 5). It can be argued that the construction of a model Township was influenced by apartheid policies, which were primarily concerned with cementing separateness. This required financial capacity, which stemmed from beerhall profits and

rentals from their tenants that ensured a social welfare footprint. The process in which tenants were 'recruited' to Sharpeville, rent increments, youth unemployment, and eradication of the informal sector destabilise(d) notions of *ubuntu* and care and the ambiguities thereof. The next chapter focuses on the deconstruction of the Township landscape from 1994 to 2024, observing the dynamics surrounding spaces, housing allocation and identity.

CHAPTER FIVE

‘DECONSTRUCTING’ THE LANDSCAPE: CONCEPTIONS OF HOME, HOUSING, AND IDENTITY, FROM APARTHEID TO DEMOCRACY

5.1 Introduction

The evolution of townships has been predominantly shaped by political contexts and governance that have formulated policy frameworks that have shaped the socio-economic landscape of many urban and peri-urban areas in South Africa. The government implemented social engineering policies aimed at the ethnic separation of its African urban population. The government was not only intent on constructing Black estates (so-called Model Townships). However, to an overwhelming extent, it determined townships' social, economic, and political atmosphere. Chapter 4 endeavoured to outline the structural processes and dynamics embedded in the construction of Sharpeville. This chapter continues the discourse by providing a deeper analysis of the evolution of Sharpeville by contextualising and synthesising the resident's perceptions and agency towards place, space, and identity. This chapter concerns the material, spiritual, and cultural evolution within houses/homes allocated to residents and how political dispensations influence or disintegrate the essence and meaning of home and community.

Notably, the house/home is perceived as a primary space for the fermentation and solidification of culture, discipline, religion, politics, love/hate, *ubuntu* and other factors associated with the home/house. Against this backdrop, the chapter argues for and accentuates the adaptation mechanisms within these houses. Inadvertently or consciously, the chapter is concerned with the ‘deconstruction’/‘decolonisation’ of colonial/apartheid structures into ‘African’ homes by residents. Sharpeville families Africanised and personalised colonial houses by instilling spiritual and cultural belief systems to rid the colonality of houses. The home was a place intruded upon by apartheid law enforcement agencies through raids; this invasion is a reminder of the hegemonies that controlled place and belonging.

5.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptualisation of this chapter is deeply rooted, similarly to the previous chapters, in highlighting *ubuntu* as a moral compass and fibre of African communities in the South African context. The notions of *ubuntu* as a guiding tool for enhancing communality are extended to comprehend the making of home in Sharpeville from the 1950s up to the 1990s. The 1950s-1960s were harbinger moments in the political discourse of South Africa. The women's protest against passes, amongst other issues, to the Union Buildings in 1956 accentuated women's political and human agency in opposing unjust laws.¹ It was an opportune moment that holistically, on a national level and certainly in the context of Sharpeville, questioned masculinity, patriarchy, and misogyny in the issuing of housing, employment, and women's belonging in urban spaces.

The Freedom Charter, signed in Kliptown in 1955, was the cornerstone of a political movement whose basic tenets embraced the principles of *ubuntu* and the people's will, regardless of political affiliation and race. Much of the Charter opposed apartheid ideologies that shaped Sharpeville and similar group areas in South Africa. It spoke against the separation of the people according to race. It emphasised the fair distribution of the country's resources and the advancement of the people's will in the country's political administration.² The Freedom Charter safeguarded the freedom of quality housing and neighbourhood choice, contradicting model locations that determined spaces occupied by people. It was only in 1994 that the seeds of the Charter began to sprout. This chapter contextualises and conceptualises the Freedom Charter as a theoretical, ideological framework for the making of home amid the paternalism-rooted base of the apartheid government.

The chapter argues that the 'deconstruction/decolonisation' of the Black estate housing project, on an individual house level, was influenced by the tenets of *ubuntu* that encapsulated the notion of care for people within the home and the neighbourhood. The previous chapters showed how individuals and official and unofficial organisations advocated for *ubuntu* through their generosity and humanitarian endeavours. *Ubuntu*

¹ E. Sisulu, "The 50th anniversary of the 1956 Women's March," *Feminist Africa* 6 (2006): 73.

² Alliance, South African Congress, "The Freedom Charter," *Adopted in Kliptown, Soweto* 26 (1955): 1.

often takes a non-materialistic and intangible approach. For *ubuntu* to achieve an intangible yet meaningful presence, *umuntu* or *motho* practices a sense of agency often profoundly rooted in *ukuhlambulula* (the spiritual cleansing and maintenance of the home). The cleansing process of the home eradicates the spiritual ownership of the home from a previous owner and centres it on the current occupant.

This agency essentially informs the notion *Ntlo ya motho ena le botho le borotheo*, directly translated as “a person's house must have a sense of humanness and warmth”. Many African households believe that prayer and African-oriented customary practices such as libation, among other practices, create a well-balanced home. Therefore, the European constructs/houses provided by the Vereeniging Town Council became homes when Africans instilled their traditional beliefs and practices to make them homes of *botho* and *borotheo* (warmth and comfort). Furthermore, the spiritually protected home became a place of rejuvenation for the house's occupants, extended families, and neighbours. During celebrations, the community was expected to contribute, in diverse ways, to the event's preparations.

The inaccessibility of the community to specific households deemed, especially in rural contexts, the house to have been occupied by unfriendly and unwelcoming ancestors or spirits, and therefore lacking *borotheo*. Holistically conceptualising the African home in a colonial Eurocentric built environment requires an in-depth analysis of the interactions between *Bantu* domestic experiences and practices and the laws implemented by the VTC. Doing so answers a pivotal question: to what extent did the Group Areas Act of 1950 prohibit, enhance, or accommodate Bantu, and how did this shape conceptions of home and identity in Sharpeville? Handel's third layer of theorising home states that “active dwelling,” which investigates how the gaps between ideals and reality serve as sources for the active agency, and, at times, even manifest resistance” frameworks this chapter. This theory assists in determining the home in a house purposed to accommodate labour and how moments of home-making contested the house's ideals as an extension of the compound system.

5.3 Discourses on Home

5.3.1 Marxist and feminist discourse on home

Discourses on the home may be understood from a humanistic, Marxist, or feminist orientation. Feminist-orientated discourses have critiqued the Marxist conceptualisation of the home for its parochial analyses of the home as a strategic place for supplying and rejuvenating the industrial labour.³ Alison and Blunt further assert that “the fact that workers become homeowners not only meant that they developed an economic stake in the success of capitalism but also that the financial imperatives imposed by mortgage repayments made strike action less likely”.⁴ For Sharpeville residents, paying monthly rentals and making a home through various cultural and spiritual practices cemented the notion of home and, for some, a sense of belonging. However, the longevity and experience of their stay were determined by their ability to pay rent to the local council. This inevitably depended on steady incomes, as shown by Ramphele’s study.⁵ Failure to keep up with payments threatened the home with instability and emotional insecurity.⁶ Capitalism contributed to the home’s physical and emotional constructions. The house was inseparable from industry and its experiences; homes and houses were places of rejuvenation and the release of frustration linked to the workplace.

Capitalism was central in the context of Sharpeville and its economic connections to industries in Duncanville and adjacent economies. The construction of the township maintained a steady supply of labour that boosted the local economy. Industries’ preference for labour, shifted from the townships of the Vaal region to preferences for migrant labour from Lesotho and beyond the borders of South Africa. Sharpeville remained strategic as a source of labour for the region’s economic development. It is

³ A. Blunt, and R. Dowling, *Setting Up Home: An Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 11.

⁴ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 10.

⁵ M. Ramphele, *A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town* (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1993), 76.

⁶ M. Chaskalson, K. Jochelson, and J. Seekings, “Rent Boycotts, the State, and the Transformation of the Urban Political Economy in South Africa,” *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 40 (1987): 51.

uncontested that capitalism benefited from the massive 'Black estate development' throughout apartheid South Africa.

The feminist discourse expounds on this contestation by accentuating factors related to the parallels between capitalism and the home as a catalyst for the subjugation of women.⁷ Feminists critique the home in relation to capitalism as a catalyst for gendered space. "Household and domestic relations are critically gendered, whether through relations of caring and domestic labour, affective relations of belonging, or establishing connections between the individual, household and society".⁸ Mokgoatšana argues that the "sense of place brings with it how people feel and experience the place, how they express themselves concerning space, and how they imagine the place in which they live".⁹ The normalisation of gendered spaces is ultimately a learned construction and should be contextualised to avoid generalisations, misconceptions and the intrusion of Eurocentric underpinnings and nuances on cultural communities. Gendered spaces often encapsulate the reservation of gendered chores and responsibilities within the household for men, women, and children (both girls and boys).

The inception of the migrant labour system arguably contributed to the destabilisation of gendered roles in African and mainly rural communities. The absenteeism of crucial role players in the domestic/household labour/chores system created instabilities and oscillations that camouflaged the fixation of gender roles, exposing their fluidity. However, the slaughtering of livestock for any festivity in the Sesotho cultural practice, for instance, is strictly reserved for men, whilst the preparation of vegetables and carbohydrates is reserved for women.¹⁰ Within households, washing dishes, cleaning, gardening, and general maintenance of properties in Sharpeville were arguably gendered. Furthermore, gendered roles are explicit in the division of play that takes place in the vibrant townships of South Africa. Pauw found that "girls stay at home more than boys do, play with dolls,

⁷ D. Marlene, "The Subjugation of Women Under Capitalism: The Bourgeois Morality," *Synthesis* 1, no. 4 (1977): 19.

⁸ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 15.

⁹ M. Sekgothe, "(De) Scribing home in apartheid South Africa: Locating Sepedi literature in the discourse," *South African Journal of African Languages* 41, no. 1 (2021): 36.

¹⁰ Personal observations as a participant in traditional ceremonies in my upbringing and as an attendee of cultural ceremonies such as *magadi*, rites of passage and libation ceremonies.

and play touch, hide and seek, and skipping”.¹¹ Sharpeville also displayed these social tendencies. Observations of street soccer revealed that participants were boys, while girls played tins and *mgusha* (a game played with discarded stockings). In some instances, skateboarding was predominantly observed to have been enjoyed by young boys. Gambling commonly took place in the form of dice and cards.

Feminist critiques of Marxism, capitalism and the home are cognisant that the home extends beyond the house and the fence¹², commonly known amongst township residents as a “stop nonsense”. Whilst stop nonsenses are designed to inhibit physical intrusion, non-tangible aspects and experiences of human beings permeate these boundaries to shape homes and houses. At the forefront of these experiences and feelings, generally from men deriving from workplaces, are women/mothers. Having been historically barred from effective participation in the economy, Vally notes that “one of the ways of controlling women was by forcing them to be attached to a man and thus, in turn, women had to inherit the control that was imposed on men at work”.¹³ The attachment to a man guaranteed women access to urban environments of apartheid South Africa, especially in some hostels and family units. As a result, women have played critical roles in not only cushioning the harsh impact of work-related frustrations from men but also making homes out of bland, monotonous apartheid structures. Their domestic obligations, often involving house maintenance, have been attributed to the slow-paced infiltration of women into industries dominated by male counterparts.

The home and its daily obligations were and may still be a limiting boundary to women’s aspiration for economic success and self-determination outside the borders of domesticity.¹⁴ In the apartheid context, discriminatory passbooks limited women’s access

¹¹ B.A. Pauw, *The Second Generation: A Study of the Family Among Urbanized Bantu in East London* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1973), 76.

¹² S. Riukulehto and K. Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home* (UK: Cambridge: 2016), 27; Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 2.

¹³ N.T. Vally, “The ‘Model Township’ of Sharpeville: The Absence of Political Action and Organisation, 1960-1984” (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2010): 51.

¹⁴ W. Webster, *Our Life: Working-Class Women’s Autobiography in Britain*, in *Imaging Women Cultural Representations and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 117.

to employment in urban areas.¹⁵ This was the primary motivation for opposing passes during the women's march to the Union Buildings in 1956, and the Freedom Charter highly contested it as a limiting force to freedom of movement and economic opportunities.¹⁶ In the transitional period to a post-apartheid South Africa, research pointed out that "in South Africa, it is often said that African women were oppressed in three ways: oppressed as Blacks, oppressed as women, and oppressed as workers".¹⁷ It meant minimal possibilities for women's employment. Gavron found that middle-class women in the global north preferred access to employment as a means of caring for the well-being of their families and as a mechanism to circumvent boredom and the monotony of household duties.¹⁸

The desire for employment went beyond the need to escape monotony. It encapsulated economic freedom, independence, and self-determination beyond the reliance on absent migrant labourers who occasionally sent remittances home. Gavron's analysis is contextual and depends on many issues, including but not limited to political, economic, and labour reforms structured to advance women's interests.¹⁹ The Freedom Charter emphasised that "All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture and to enter all trades, crafts and professions".²⁰ The absence of a deliberate effort to widen access to women in employment spaces beyond domestic labour, teaching, and nursing, amongst others, during apartheid limited women to poorly paid employment and the domestic sphere. This was especially in Bantustans where they were left to care for the family.

In African contexts, gendered roles are generally entrenched and justified as elements of cultural and traditional practices from an early age. Childhood games mimicking adults'

¹⁵ E. Unterhalter, "Women in Struggle: South Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1983): 883.

¹⁶ H. Bernstein, "The Freedom Charter," *Third World Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1987): 673.

¹⁷ G. Deborah, J. Kimble, M. Maconachie, and E. Unterhalter, "Class, Race and Gender: Domestic Workers in South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 27/28 (1983): 86–108.

¹⁸ H. Gavron, *The Captive Wife, Conflicts of Housebound Mothers* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 107.

¹⁹ Gaitskell *et al.*, *Class, Race and Gender*, 87.

²⁰ Alliance, South African Congress, "The Freedom Charter" Adopted in Kliptown, Soweto 26 (1955), 2.

exchanges and conduct point out the participant observations of adults by children. In her analysis of childhood play in the hostels of the Western Cape, Ramphela notes that:

Young children's games are both a reflection of their interpretation of their environment and a strategy for coping with it. Impersonation of adults takes the form of 'mother-father' games with appropriate gender role-play as these roles are perceived in the hostels. Children also poke fun at adult's drunken ways, the quarrels, the harsh punishment of kids and so on, using the same medium of play. There is a lot of improvisation because of a lack of toys. Bottles, bottle-tops, stones, rags and tins all find their uses in games.²¹

These games reflect individual realities within and outside homes and houses and young people's normalisation and acceptance of gendered roles and behaviours in their socialisation and spaces of identity construction. Essentially, young people begin to associate with gender roles and, in so doing, begin their inductions and training in a gendered household and society. Participation is arguably an induction into the lifelong training that prepares young people for societal expectations and participation (or lack thereof) in the economy, the house, and home. It becomes an inextricable extension of capital and arguably a centre for learning and preparations for the industry. The saying 'You can build a house, but a woman makes it into a home' finds relevance as ideal homes embody familial-based gender relations. Imaginings of suburban homes and home-making practices within them position women as mothers and primarily responsible for the domestic sphere.²²

The domestic sphere embodies complex responsibilities. Women and mothers are expected to manage the demanding practice of childcare and childrearing. In addition to cooking, cleaning, and decorating the house, making it a warm home, and providing sensual comfort to their partners. These skills, responsibilities, expertise and expectations, feminists argue, have not been accorded their economic worth and have contributed to women's oppression. Fundamentally, "when household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children occur outside the home they are classified as

²¹ Ramphela, *A Bed Called Home*, 85.

²² Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 110.

work and remunerated".²³ Cock and Emdon reverberated similar sentiments by pointing out that:

The powerful image of a woman as a domestic worker as wife and mother, preserver of the home and hearth has tended to obscure her role as a wage worker. The link between the two roles operates to reinforce women's subordinate position in society.²⁴

The social construction of the house and home, depending on the context, contributed, in contrast to feminists' views,²⁵ to empower men and women, preparing them for the finite, racially restricted labour market. In domestic-gendered homes, family members learned gendered domestic labour that included child rearing, house maintenance, gardening, beer brewing, animal care, etc. These skills contributed to their training as domestic servants, specifically 'kitchen girls' and wetnurses. These skills were not limited to formal employment. Women also used these skills to attain self-employment opportunities. In some instances, they used their homes as workplaces to advance economic interests.

Cock and Emdon enunciate Johanna Masilela's experiences as a childminder in Soweto. After years as a domestic labourer in various households in apartheid Johannesburg, her experiences of childminding during apartheid empowered her to use immediate resources, a house, and a supportive husband to run a successful childminding institution after childhood injuries prevented her from continuing paid domestic labour.²⁶ The difficulties of operating a childminding business, as with those experienced by creches, vary from excessive noise levels, late collection of children by parents, unpaid fees, lack of privacy, and disapproving neighbours.²⁷ Masilela's experiences accentuate how

²³ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 90.

²⁴ J. Cock and E. Emdon, "'Let Me Make History Please': The Story of Johanna Masilela, Childminder," in *Class, Community, and Conflict: South African perspectives*, ed. Belinda Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 456.

²⁵ Gaitskell *et al.*, *Class*, "Race and Gender," 88.

²⁶ Cock and Emdon, "Let Me Make History Please," 47.

²⁷ Cock and Emdon, "Let Me Make History Please," 47.

African women used the skills and expertise gained from gendered households and gendered chores to access employment and business ventures. In Sharpeville, some of these businesses, similarly, took place in gendered spaces where gendered chores had been entrenched, this is discussed later in the chapter.

5.3.2 Home and multilocality

Multilocality accentuates the practice of belonging/associating or finding meaning in multiple contexts. In the Finnish context, Sulevi contends that:

One special feature of the home space is multilocality. The home experience is not limited to one location. In a way, home is not situated in one place because the home experience is a totality formed at the same time in many places, multi-spatiality.²⁸

People transcend socio-cultural boundaries to practise multilocality. This involves cultural assimilations, constructions of identities, and adaptation in new environments while being cognisant of other environments in which they assimilate. Closer to Africa, Naduni and Burns' study on the Sudanese experiences in the rural town of Victoria accentuates the difficulties migrants negotiated to make sense of space and belonging to new environments.²⁹ Singleton's study found that "young women and men use their houses in a variety of ways to satisfy their survival needs. Many go back and forth from living in their own houses to living at home with their families because of existing economic conditions."³⁰ The migrant labour system in South Africa is a repercussion of capitalism; its inception and expansion helped normalise the concept and practice of what scholars of home often refer to as multilocality.³¹ Studies of migrant experiences in the Eastern Cape also reveal the implementation of customs and practices associated with rural areas

²⁸ S. Riukulehto and K. Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home* (UK: Cambridge: 2016), 65

²⁹ W. Naduni and E.A. Burns, "Belonging, Strangerhood and Mobility: South Sudanese in a Rural Town, Victoria," (unknown) (2018): 5.

³⁰ J.L. Singleton, 'House' and 'Home' Changing Meanings and Practices in a Post-apartheid Township, in *Ekhaya the Politics of Home in KwaZulu-Natal*, ed. M. Healy-Clancy and J. Hickel, (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014), 14.

³¹ Riukulehto, and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 65; Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 107.

as adjustment mechanisms in an unfamiliar world.³² Fundamentally, attachment to rural areas in spiritual, cultural, psychological, and other customised multilocality accentuates a non-physical aspect of belonging to multiple locations.

Migrants, as the term suggests, were exposed to multiple localities, the rural and places of employment. Most interviewees perceived their old houses in Sharpeville as their primary home even though they had built other homes within and outside the township. For others, the movement from various townships, eventually into Top Location and later Sharpeville, created a sense of multiple belonging. The forced relocations of Top Location prohibited many former residents of the township from visiting the area during apartheid. The spiritual, emotional, and cognitive attachment to the former strengthened and rejuvenated belonging. Mythology and story-telling enhanced memory and connection to place and space, especially on the momentous events of the interviewee's time. The young Tsolo's imagination relives memories of a moment during the Second World War (1939-1945) in his life:

There were anonymous aeroplanes that would come. They belonged to Hitler, so a siren would ring if the aeroplanes were around. Our parents would switch off the lights, and everyone would be indoors because we were preventing Hitler people from seeing what was happening. We used to call Mkhize.³³

Remarkably, in adulthood, the narrators legitimise these stories as experiences that assisted children and the young in making sense of the political realities of their surrounding environments. The vigorous sounds of aeroplanes, even in adulthood, trigger memories of where they once belonged and called home. Memory depends on the political context, the primary vehicle of revisitation, the oscillations, though through memory, between the past and present. This highlights an emotional and mental attachment to place. Similarly Mme Mariah recalls:

I was born in Evaton, but I did not grow up there; after the riots occurred in Evaton where people were killed and then when my father got sick we decided to live in

³² Ramphela, *A Bed Called*, 57.

³³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

Top Location with my mother's sister. In 1959, we left Top Location and went to Sharpeville.³⁴

Positive sentimental recollections do not always sustain multilocality and a sense of emotional belonging to localities. Moments of conflict, arrests, racial intolerance, and daily experiences often sustain the longevity of memories. Essentially, they are used as tools of legitimacy to place, space and the desire to return. In other instances, the political, social, and economic push factors stimulate the need to live in new environments. Mme Mguni left Top Location for the Free State when she married her husband.³⁵ Because of their marriage, she emotionally attaches to Top Location (her place of upbringing), the Free State province *bogading* (inlaws) and her current residence in Sharpeville. Therefore, the home and sentiments attached to it are not fixed.

Marriage, especially for Africans, forced women out of their childhood homes; in some instances, marriage forced men out of their childhood homes (as was the case with the Ncala brothers). This often culminated in the movement within and outside ordinary residences. This enhanced multilocality. After the lobola negotiations, the Ncala brothers moved out of their parent's house into Tshepiso (into the same street), a township separated from Sharpeville by a road. When asked about where he grew up, he mentioned:

It is still there, we are going there right now, I will show you. This place right here is called Vukuzenzele/Vuka, which means wake up and do things for yourself. It meant you had to build a house for yourself, you could not depend on anyone, and you had to do everything by yourself.³⁶

For many, moving out of a home meant reinstalling material belongings and ornaments into a new structure. These ornaments become daily reminders of the attachment to previous dwellings and the making of a new home with physical aspects of the previous residence. Though the previous structure is abandoned, the material aspect assists in

³⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Maria, Sharpeville, 20 April 2023.

³⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Mguni, Sharpeville, 20 May 2023.

³⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Junior, Sharpeville, 2 March 2024.

making a home elsewhere, especially in the context of forced removals in the political landscape of apartheid South Africa. In essence, forced and voluntary removals encourage multilocality and reaffirm that home is often replicated and may not necessarily be fixed. Blunt and Varley argue that “rather than view the home as fixed, bounded and confining location, geographies of home traverse scales from the domestic to the global in both material and symbolic ways”.³⁷ Urbanisation in South Africa created a sense of belonging in urban spaces, especially for the second wave of migrations of Africans into urban areas during the 1940s.³⁸ Bonner argues that the first waves of migration maintained connections with rural areas in diverse ways. African men perceived the urban environment as temporal by sending remittances home, keeping to cultural values, and returning home. Migrants continuously detached from urban areas as permanent spaces, thus cementing multilocality.³⁹

Philip and Mayer’s study finds commonalities with Bonner. Their thinking emphasises economic pursuance as a pivotal determinant for accessing urban areas. Cognisant of the economic gains pursued by migrant labourers, they deepen the discourse of urbanisation and sentiments of belonging by vividly accentuating an additional belonging category beyond the urban and rural. Their work emphasises that:

[Migrant labourers] are men of two worlds. Perhaps one should say ‘of three worlds’, for if the country home is one world, East London itself comprises two others: the White town where the Xhosa works and the non-White town where he lives⁴⁰

As with the hostel dwellers studied by Ramphela, males and later women, too, had to adjust to the capitalist reality that employment was a precursor to their presence in urban

³⁷ A. Blunt and A. Varley, "Geographies of home," *Cultural Geographies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 3.

³⁸ B. Phillip, "African Urbanisation on the Rand between the 1930s and 1960s: Its Social Character and Political Consequences," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995): 119.

³⁹ Phillip, "African Urbanisation on," 119.

⁴⁰ P. Mayer and I. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City*, (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1961), 32.

areas.⁴¹ Residents of the Western Cape had to produce proof of employment to obtain a bed and a living space in the hostels. The bed symbolised membership to a community of men whose sense of belonging was shaped by masculinity, traditional rule, and customary practices.⁴² The construction of group areas, as has been accentuated in the previous chapter, fast-tracked amongst migrants the socio-cultural disintegration with the reserves and rural areas.

In the Eastern Cape, Pons *et al.*, found that amaXhosa constructed terms to explain the depth of urbanisation amongst their countrymen and later women. For example, *ukutshipa*⁴³ is often used to identify people who have absconded from their homes and unrooted themselves from the rural areas in preference for urban environments. Also, *amagoduka* describes individuals who maintain rural connections through regular visits.⁴⁴ In the northern parts of South Africa, Limpopo, *makarapa*⁴⁵ is a term of endearment regularly expressed by rural and urban dwellers to describe migrants who work at *makgweng* (a place for Whites) that, similarly to *amagoduka*, occasionally visit their roots. Mojela indicates that:

Makarapa 'helmets' (singular: *lekarapa*) are safety hats worn by workers in the mines. Most of the men from the rural areas worked as migrant labourers in the Witwatersrand area. In those days, it was prestigious to work in the mines, returning during Christmas holidays (usually with a lot of money). That is why most of the returning migrant workers wore their helmets (*makarapa*) to show that they come from the mines. As a result, the name for the migrant worker's helmet

⁴¹ Ramphele, *A Bed Called Home*, 71.

⁴² Ramphele, *A Bed Called Home*, 71.

⁴³ Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, 6.

⁴⁴ Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, 171-173.

⁴⁵ M. Mogomme, "South African Research in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Challenges of Change," *Indilinga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* 4, no. 1 (2005): 27.

lekarapa (plural: *makarapa*) metaphorically came to refer to the migrant worker himself.⁴⁶

Makarapa, when used, is often associated with people who live in Gauteng primarily to obtain an income. An individual who spends most of their time in an area outside their regular rural and semi-rural residence and occasionally visits the homestead is often referred to as *lekarapa*. The occasional visits were opportunities for *makarapa* to re-situate and reconnect with childhood memories. Also, with the affairs of the village, family and friends. To maintain their property and livestock and participate in cultural festivities such as the passage of rites, lobola negotiations, *pulo ya maswika* (tomb unveiling), housewarmings or *pulo ya motsi* and other occasions such as funerals and ceremonies to mark the end of a mourning period.⁴⁷

From a tourism discipline perspective, also applicable to multilocality, Marschall posits that “the total immersion in a culturally familiar place includes the experience of cultural elements such as language, customary practices, food, religion and social behaviour; the multisensory encounter of remembered sounds, smells and familiar sights...”⁴⁸ This was often absent in the urban areas of South Africa under apartheid. The rural areas of *makarapa* were enticing because they became closely associated with peace, quietness, and other social and economic complexities that urban areas could not provide.

Makarapa were revered for using the gains from capitalism in the industries of urban South Africa to better the living conditions of their families and constituencies, remaining behind in the Bantustans. Likewise, they were gatekeepers for homeboys and homegirls who aspired to live in urban areas. The opposite of *makarapa* in the Northern Sesotho cultural context is *makgolwa*. The Sesotho speakers of Lesotho refer to absconders of rural life, especially in parts of Sharpeville and the Vaal as *makholoa*.⁴⁹ This derogatory,

⁴⁶ V.M. Mojela, "Polysemy and Homonymy: Challenges Relating to Lexical Entries in the Sesotho Sa Leboa–English Bilingual Dictionary," *Lexikos* 17 (2007): 438.

⁴⁷ These practices have been observed as stimuli for *makarapa* to return home, especially in the context of Lesotho.

⁴⁸ M. Sabine, "Migrants on Home Visits: Memory, Identity and a Shifting Sense of Self: Migrant Home Visits," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19, no.10 (2017): 215.

⁴⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: William Serobane, Randfontein, 17 January, 2024.

unaffectionate term describes people who have deserted their village and cultural rootedness and found permanent places in urban South Africa. *Amagoduka* and *makgolwa*, based on their absence, as the names suggest, are often critiqued for their inability to contribute to their rural communities' emotional, financial and way of life. Their absence was fundamentally conceived to be missed opportunities to facilitate and ascertain the fruition of rural-urban migration for job seekers and, in essence, the disruption to *ubuntu*.

Capitalism allowed migrants to reconsider their positionality towards home and cultural spaces. It offered accessibility to an urban lifestyle that broke away from the constraints and norms of cultural values transmitted by age-long traditions embedded in patriarchal determinations and practices. Furthermore, developed towns and urban areas provided recreational facilities such as “cinemas, swimming pools, dance halls, cafes, beauty contests”⁵⁰ and other facilities that allowed migrants to express their taste in clothing, food, dance and social complexity and class. This is because “in the rural community, on the other hand, institutions of recreation appear much less diversified, and the individual is given little choice as to his participation”.⁵¹ Finally, capitalism, industry and urbanisation have made it possible for the migrant to decide “whether to go to church or not, whether to gamble or drink or use the recreational activities, (whether to send money home or not). Town opinion, if there is such a thing, does not impose on the migrant any particular set of choices”.⁵² Urban living provided premises for migrants to break away from traditional lifestyles to contribute to the ever-changing urban lifestyles and expressions of autonomy.

5.4 The making of home in Sharpeville

The previous sections outlined the broader and general experiences and challenges navigated by migrant labourers in their affiliations with urban areas. This section follows a similar trajectory; it expounds on the experiences of Sharpeville residents and the complex processes embedded in making homes in a group area. It endeavours to unpack

⁵⁰ Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, 6.

⁵¹ Mayer and Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, 16.

⁵² Mayer and Mayer, “Townsmen or Tribesmen,” 17.

the complexity of making homes in an environment purposed to accommodate labour and to solidify racial segregation. Clark and Worger are opposed to referring to the residents of Sharpeville as migrants in their latest impeccable scholarly work on the Sharpeville massacre. This thesis veers and unpacks from that positionality to consider the spectrum of debates.

5.4.1 Home, homelessness and homeyness

At the least, Sharpeville residents had not been issued title deeds that cemented their residence in Sharpeville. This process began after 1994, but its legal peculiarities are beyond the scope of this thesis. Blunt and Dowling postulate that homeownership is directly connected with notions of home:

Notably, ownership is termed ‘home ownership’ rather than ‘house ownership’, signalling that ownership is synonymous with home. Those buying a house are presumed to be properly capable of making a home, of creating a place that is secure, comfortable and welcoming.⁵³

Title deeds gave residents a sense of ownership and, in essence, a sense of belonging. They may have contributed to the ethos of care and lack thereof over their properties and belongings. Investing money in the maintenance and minor upgrades within the town council's building standards towards a house that families rented from the local council at exorbitant rentals without the possibility of ownership was an unnecessary expense.⁵⁴ Many houses in Sharpeville and adjacent townships have not undergone any structural or cosmetic change since their construction. Numerous reasons, such as financial limitations, memory, old age, outward migration into former white-only neighbouring suburbs of Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging, and rural rootedness, have contributed to disconnections with the place and the lack of desire to renovate. Interviewees whose lineage accessed Sharpeville for labour maintained rural connections and rootedness, maintaining a sense of multi-locational situatedness that changed with old age. Upon retirement, most people preferred returning to Lesotho, the Free State Province, or other

⁵³ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 110.

⁵⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Mguni, Sharpeville, 20 May 2023.

places of origin because these places were more peaceful and affordable than the vibrant township of Sharpeville.

In doing so, the houses in Sharpeville, for some, were a temporary shelter at a place of work.⁵⁵ Mokgoatšana accentuates the interdependence between the ownership of land and African customary practices that strengthen sentiments of home within and beyond African homesteads. He states that “to possess land is to be at the centre of power and control”.⁵⁶ In essence, landlessness, the lack of political control and disempowerment combined with generations of transitions between rural and urban environments normalised the ‘foreigner’ syndrome. This formed a stark reminder that Sharpeville residents were migrants until 1994. The combined lack of ownership over their houses and the land upon which they were built, contradicts Afrocentric conceptions of home embedded in Mokgoatšana’s framework. He has found that “most African societies find it morally binding that every person has to have a piece of land to settle or farm”.⁵⁷ This thesis argues that to ‘settle’ embodies a permanent stay in an environment conducive to self-expression and determination. It furthermore represents an opportunity for self-sustenance and reliance through agricultural practices that safeguard food security within the family. As emphasised throughout the study, the latter depended on access to employment opportunities in the Vaal region.

The threat of unemployment destabilised families and sometimes forced them to return to the rural areas. The resuscitation of their rural connection was, considerably, the maintenance of an economic, cultural, emotional, and spiritual cushion against the harsh realities of living in a group area. The apartheid system was hellbent on reminding non-Whites, through various laws, including the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Natives Urban Areas Act of 1923, of their temporality in White spaces and towns. This was furthermore exacerbated by the stipulation that Blacks were to have in their possession passbooks to validate their sojourn in White areas. The anti-pass law protests may have been viewed as a collective effort to curtail the lack of belonging in Johannesburg and,

⁵⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Junior, 2 March 2024.

⁵⁶ Sekgothe, “(De) Scribing home,” 36.

⁵⁷ Sekgothe, “(De) Scribing home,” 36.

for some, in South Africa. However, it should be viewed as an attempt to ascertain a legal, permanent, unrivalled belonging to urban South Africa.⁵⁸

Mindful of this argument, Clark and Worger's conceptualisation of migrants in the 1960s Sharpeville should be understood from a humanistic perspective that opposes apartheid's separate development ideology. This thesis frames their positionality as leaning towards the Freedom Charter's and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108 of 1996 basic underlying tenet that South Africa belongs to all that live in it and that the natives cannot be considered foreigners in their land. The historical processes that shaped migrant labour and normalised patterns, behaviours, cultures, and traditions cannot be side-lined as unimportant, especially considering the phenomenon embedded in political actions that constantly reminded Blacks of their unbelonging in urban South Africa. Bonner argues that historians have been vastly fascinated with the push and pull factors of African migration to urban centres and not so much by why Africans chose to stay in urban centres permanently.⁵⁹ Making a home in group areas, townships and the memory collection processes that intensified the sense of belonging and identity creation, benign or harsh,⁶⁰ were sufficient for them to identify with the place regardless of the oppressive political climate.

Sabine asserts that:

on the African continent, South Africa is one of the most important host countries for transnational migrants, immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from

⁵⁸ Healy-Clancy and Hickel, 140.

⁵⁹ B. Phillip, "African Urbanisation on the Rand between the 1930s and 1960s: Its Social Character and Political Consequences," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1995): 116.

⁶⁰ S. Riukulehto, "Dangerous, Frightening, Homely: Home Experiences of Those Living on the Goldmines of the Far West Rand," *New Contree* 89 (2022): 104. Sulevi's paper shows that the home is not always a place of benign memory or pleasantness, home can be constructed in the most unthinkable environments characterised by environmental degradation, conflict, and despair. At the core of the argument is that homes are human constructs that can occur in any locality regardless of its social, economic, environmental, and political surroundings.

central west and southern Africa, many of whom embark on temporary return journeys home.⁶¹

The deliberate or non-deliberate making of 'home' ascertains, arguably, the host environment and the structure that accommodates the migrant to a state of temporality that is sometimes distant from home. Although 'home' may be associated with the world, country, province, localities, and neighbourhoods.⁶² This implies that places of employment can be associated with home, but the apartheid government's policies did not legally encourage this. The home was an emotional construct amid an oppressive environment. The conceptualisation of home is embedded with insurmountable complex ambiguity that rests on context and individuality to unpack its essence.

The trajectory of the home is, therefore, multifaceted. Sulevi asserts that home is a social construct with emotional features. Furthermore, "home is a place and an idea, where the decisive point is that you feel it is your home".⁶³ The conceptualisation of home can additionally be understood from an age perspective. Lewin's study on the meaning of home among elderly residents shifts the notion of home as a physical structure where the individual's identity is developed and heightened through time and space.⁶⁴

The distance between Sharpeville and Tshepiso townships allowed occasional walks for the Ncala brothers to their parental house to recollect childhood memories and reconnect with what became their spiritual home over the years. Having walked with Sandile Ncala for nearly three hours in Sharpeville, nostalgia and memories dominated the conversations on places of interest during his upbringing. The journey was not only a reminder of places of play, mourning, politics, fun, tourism and heritage, and hurt and despair. But an opportunity for him to connect the researcher with his memories and experiences and, of course, to test fitness and endurance levels. In his words: "You must walk the streets, connect with the streets, speak to the people, breathe the air they

⁶¹ M. Sabine, "Migrants on Home Visits: Memory, Identity and a Shifting Sense of Self: Migrant Home Visits", *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19, no 10 (2017): 214.

⁶² Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 13.

⁶³ Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 5.

⁶⁴ L.F. Ahmadi, "The Meaning of Home Among Elderly Immigrants: Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development," *Housing Studies* 16, no. 3 (2001): 355.

breathe to understand *Shavas* (Sharpeville)”.⁶⁵ The methodology of this thesis articulates a fundamental justification for the immersion of self into place as a tool for appreciating the environment and its people.

The remaining old physical structures pointed out by Mr Ncala are pivotal beacons of memory and structures that contributed to homemaking at the community level. These included old schools that have retained their names, especially Shandu Lekoa, Mohloli Maritime Secondary School, Matsie-Steyn Primary School, municipal beer halls that have not undergone many physical changes, the municipality swimming pool (see figures 5.1 and 5.2)⁶⁶ abandoned washing facilities, police stations, a creche, and the infamous view of the Dlomo Dam from Sea Point,⁶⁷ amongst others. For the Ncala brothers and elderly residents of Sharpeville, access to memory and the indulgence of place because of nostalgia is convenient. For those who have retired in rural areas distant from Sharpeville, memories are without immediate physical connection. However, previous infrastructure, especially old houses, and accessibility are possible remnants and reminders of place.

⁶⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala junior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁶⁶ The pool facilities seem to have been well maintained when the fieldwork was conducted; however, the facility could not be accessed by community members. We were barred from entering the pool facility by the locked gates. On a separate occasion, I was fortunate to take a picture of the pool but the security personnel once again disapproved my entry.

⁶⁷ Sea point is a name given to a section of houses in Sharpeville that enjoys a view of the Dlomo Dam.



Figure 5.1: A public swimming pool, Sharpeville⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.



Figure 5.2: Cornerstone at the swimming pool entrance, Sharpeville⁶⁹

5.4.2 Home: the physical structure

Memories of home are often associated with houses and the physical structures people occupy. In essence, a home is primarily purposed to protect people from the elements (rain, sunshine, wind, storms, etc.), from trespasses wanting access to the goods and products stored in houses, and spirits purposed to disbalance the spiritual base of the home. Blunt and Dowling posit that “one of the important elements of the home is that it is a house or shelter; a structure in which we are housed, whether that be a tent, caravan, house, apartment, park bench, or any other assemblage of building materials”.⁷⁰ Moore impeccably interrogates the concepts of home and homelessness to unpack parallels and

⁶⁹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

⁷⁰ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 6.

disconnections between the terms;⁷¹ the study found, as with Sulevi, that the absence of a physical structure does not render a human being homeless.⁷²

Homelessness is often associated with the living conditions of people living on the streets or outside a house or a building. This has led to the articulation of proper houses as homes, whilst negative stereotypical views are associated with informal shelters occupied by the homeless.⁷³ Apartheid's town planning endeavours emphasised slums and unmonitored ghettos as insubstantial to the making of a home, rendering people who occupied illegal structures homeless. Essentially, a home must, in their conception, be comprised of a physical structure. Studies have shown that "the idea of home is not necessarily connected with a house. In practice, many Finns see home as a place, most concretely as a house, apartment, or room. Furthermore, home is specified as furniture and objects in it, which can be taken along to a place".⁷⁴

For Moore, "it is possible to be homeless and at home at the same time, as home has more to do with a state of mind and an emotional engagement than it has to do with a fixed place."⁷⁵ This is also contextual and vastly influenced by a plethora of factors, including the politics of the time, especially in South Africa's historical context of oppression, landlessness, dispossession and forced removals.

Against this backdrop, this thesis argues that home, homeliness, and homelessness have existed in group areas and model townships since their inception. Context is once again essential in investigating this phenomenon. The first wave of migrant labourers mainly resided in hostels, factories, and farmhouses in urban South Africa. As pointed out by Bonner, they did not identify with urban areas, nor did they intend to establish permanent residences in cities.⁷⁶ Although male migrants were not without shelter, they had material

⁷¹ J. Moore, "Polarity or Integration? Towards a Fuller Understanding of Home and Homelessness," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 24, no. 2 (2007): 145.

⁷² Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 59.

⁷³ Moore, "Polarity or integration?", 148.

⁷⁴ Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 27.

⁷⁵ Moore, "Polarity or Integration?," 150.

⁷⁶ P. Bonner, "African Urbanisation," 116.

and spiritual homes in the reserves and countries of origin in addition to the hostels. Migrants could be thought of as being homeless on the basis that home is a feeling and not necessarily the presence of a structure and building material over their heads. Furthermore, they could not have felt at home away from home because their home was ideally defined by the presence of a wife, children, kin, agriculture, chieftaincy, ownership of land, and the like. The desire to retire home was an aching feeling to urgently disconnect with places that did not have positive emotional relevance.

In applying the Apartheid Township housing context, the government, in some instances, built, houses that families had to be active in the making of homes out of unhomely structures. The ability to live with wives and children intensified, in some instances, sentiments of the home, especially with the construction of four-room houses during apartheid. The feeling of being home away from home was something the first wave of migrants could not have enjoyed. The following section analyses respondents' perceptions towards home in Sharpeville up to the 2020s. This is done by shedding more light on evolving perceptions towards housing over time.

5.4.3 Conversations with residents about home

Discourses on home and housing revealed diverse perspectives. Interviewees had shown that some housing conditions before Sharpeville were superior in quality, space, and size. Another sizeable portion of respondents perceived Sharpeville's housing changes to have improved their lifestyle. For others, a housing structure, whether two or four rooms, was a vast improvement from the shack dwellings they occupied in Top Location before receiving housing in Sharpeville. Ultimately, a cross-comparative analysis was conducted by interviewees starting new lives in Sharpeville, which led to positive and somewhat negative perceptions of their houses.

How people arrived in Sharpeville catalysed perceptions towards houses. The size of the house and space were critical. The two-room houses comprised a kitchen-cum-living room and a bedroom, whilst the four-room housing structures comprised three rooms and a kitchen-cum-living room. Large and small African families populated both structures, sharing limited spaces and usage at any time. Most respondents who occupied two-room houses indicated that parents slept in the bedrooms whilst the children and, in some

instances, relatives (young and old) slept in the kitchen-cum-living room. This was also the case for the four-room houses.⁷⁷

The kitchen was where food was stored, prepared, and consumed.⁷⁸ Later, the kitchen became a bedroom demarcated by a table. One of the interviewees mentioned that the kitchen was a sleeping area for her four siblings and that her youngest sister slept under the table:⁷⁹ “There were four of us; we didn't share space properly because I slept on the floor in the kitchen, and my father and sister slept in the rest of the room”.⁸⁰ Bhiza's reminiscence accentuated how their space solidified sibling relationships because its intimate structure made it conducive to verbal interactions. In addition, entertainment was enhanced by gathering family members in the kitchen to listen to stories broadcasted on the radio before preparing blankets for the night's rest.⁸¹

The subject of privacy was not a contested issue amongst respondents, mainly because they were siblings and were young, making it easier for them to adapt to the way of life. Advantageously, the kitchen's coal stove, which came standard with most homes provided substantial heat on cold winter nights, which made the kitchen far warmer than the bedrooms. However, the warm kitchen was occupied till the late evening hours. These occurrences were inconvenient for those who occupied the kitchen when they wanted to sleep earlier than usual. Besides the dynamics of the winter season, the kitchen space was regarded as the entertainment space for two- and four-room houses. Expressing sentiments on the size and compatibility kitchen during apartheid, an interviewee stated that “E ne ele kgolo haholo because nere kgona ho robala rele bana kaofela ka kitchen re devide ka tafole fela, enesa lekane le RDP houses tsa now.”⁸²

⁷⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Junior, Tshepiso Township, 2 March 2024.

⁷⁸ In her research in Sharpeville, Gouws found that African families diversified the purpose of the kitchen by using it as a living room.

⁷⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Bhiza, Sharpeville, 27 January 2023.

⁸⁰ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Bhiza, Sharpeville, 27 January 2023.

⁸¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Bhiza, Sharpeville, 27 January 2023.

⁸² LTL, OA1, Mr Komako, Sharpeville, 28 February 2024.

(Translation) The kitchen was very big because we, the children, could sleep in it; we used the table to divide the kitchen; it was bigger than the kitchen designs of the RDP (post-1994) houses.

In addition to the kitchen, the purpose of the bedroom evolved with people's needs. Many respondents mentioned that the bedroom shared by their parents became a bathroom in the morning. Occupiers of the bedroom either left for work purposes or sat in the kitchen to grant privacy to those bathing in the morning. As indicated by a respondent, the changing functions and usage of rooms contributed to children's interactions in the streets to allow space for cleaning, cooking and privacy. One respondent added to this by stating that children in Sharpeville, especially in the 1980s, played joyously in the streets after school and during weekends and would only return to their homes at night or to eat.⁸³ Another interviewee disagreed with this norm and used the interview session to criticise parents for their lack of involvement in their children's affairs (sports, education, etc.).⁸⁴ The interviewees were asked about the room or space where they spent most of their time or enjoyed the most. Some alluded to the bedroom, whilst others overwhelmingly leaned to the kitchen.

The older interviewees who represented a small percentage of the interviewees expressed high satisfaction levels with the quality of housing issued during apartheid. Still, their satisfaction did not encompass experiences of apartheid as a determinant of their perspective on old houses. Their satisfaction and positive perceptions of their houses were accentuated by the materials used to build them. In this regard, the interviewees mentioned that the houses built by the apartheid government still maintained the old structure because of outstanding workmanship and quality building materials (see axiom d discussed in chapter four).⁸⁵ This categorisation accounted for the contemporary perception that Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) houses built by the post-1994 government, were of a mediocre standard compared to the houses built by the apartheid government. In addition, respondents indicated that the local council regularly

⁸³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁸⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁸⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Lamba, Sharpeville, 2 October 2023.

painted and fumigated their properties.⁸⁶ By the 1990s, municipal authorities, unlike the former Bantu Administration Boards, no longer resorted to these often-hazardous fumigations of properties. This contributed immensely to how they perceived their households and service providers in the township and the 'do it yourself' approach embedded in post-1994 Sharpeville.

5.4.4 Renovations

In her studies on the changing landscape of Western Cape's township of Gugulethu, Lee found that "attempts at major structural improvements to matchbox houses, which could arguably be classified as definitive 'statements' of authority over one's residence, were only initiated once households had a reasonable guarantee that their efforts would not be in vain".⁸⁷ The vast majority of Sharpeville residents began deconstructing old houses after 1994 when they began feeling emotional and material ownership over their properties. Perceptions towards housing undergo a constant process of change and re-evaluation. In some instances, people modify positive and negative perceptions of old houses by redesigning or renovating them, as with some houses in Sharpeville.⁸⁸ The primary determination for altering this perception depends heavily on the economic ability of respondents to either entirely change the house's structure or to modify it. Most respondents partly renovated their houses (see figures 5.3 and 5.4) by installing more significant, modern large aluminium windows, doors, roofs, ceilings, tiles, garages, and front walls, known as 'stop nonsense'. When asked about her dissatisfaction with the old apartheid government house, an interviewee stated:

Let me start with what I did not enjoy. The roofing was not okay; we did not have tiles, and the walls were not okay. We did not have a garage, and what I liked the most about the house before the renovation was that it was big enough compared

⁸⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Carly, Sharpeville, 25 January 2023.

⁸⁷ L. Rebekah, "Reconstructing 'Home' in Apartheid Cape Town: African Women and the Process of Settlement." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31, no. 3 (2005): 620.

⁸⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Carly, Sharpeville, 25 January 2023.

to other houses. At least I had my own bedroom, and it was also easy for me to have visitors because the kitchen was big.⁸⁹



*Figure 5.3: A house in Vuka*⁹⁰

⁸⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Carly, Sharpeville, 25 January 2023.

⁹⁰ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/05/02.



Figure 5.4: A partly renovated house in Vuka⁹¹

By contrast, other property owners demolished the entire structure to build ostentatious houses, including double-storey tiled roof homes. For most, the extensions of their houses continued from where the government left off (see Figure 5.5 below), which encouraged residents to extend their houses, especially after apartheid.

⁹¹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/05/02.



Figure 5.5: An add-on to a house constructed by the council showing where construction ended⁹²

⁹² Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

The primary reasons for the implemented changes varied from the desire to give the house a modern look, removing the asbestos roofing and replacing it with modern roof construction materials. In addition, most respondents built additional rooms onto existing structures by following the brick pattern left by the council, as illustrated in Figure 5.6. This is primarily done to accommodate expanding families. The addition of sitting and dining rooms in the renovations included rooms where families could entertain themselves in spacious settings. The benefit of receiving housing from the past government has economic and social benefits for the residents of Sharpeville. The vast garden space enabled residents to build backrooms within their premises for rent to students of the nearby higher education institutions in Emfuleni, and workers in the vicinity (see Figure 5.6).



*Figure 5.6: Backrooms in Sharpeville*⁹³

Residents derive income from renting out their properties, which is pivotal to improving the family's financial health. The additional garden space, in some instances, as the

⁹³ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/08/17.

researcher noticed, comprised spinach, tomatoes, green pepper, and fruit trees (pear, grapes, peach and orange). The latter are used as shade in the summer and assist in keeping cooler temperatures in the yard. Socially, landlords mentioned that the presence of tenants made them feel safer and contributed to the deterrence of crime, particularly for female landlords. Landlords furthermore mentioned that tenants were people they interacted with daily, leading to positive and sometimes negative relationships.⁹⁴

The respondents positively perceived the pieces of land available for renovations and extensions to their houses, citing that the more recent RDP houses lacked space to implement extensions or backrooms. The affordability of pursuing construction detrimentally influences the ability to shift perceptions. Thus, some residents expressed high satisfaction levels with the quality of the old houses and the additional benefits of space. Still, due to financial constraints, many cannot restructure and add backrooms to make additional income. Unsurprisingly, perceptions are determined by context and vogues of their time. A respondent added that they would implement changes if they had the finances. Most residents renovating homes expressed the joy and comfort derived from the physical changes their houses had undergone, particularly the inclusion of *en suite* bathrooms that eradicated having to use the toilet outside the house. Most residents kept their outside toilets, as displayed in Figure 5.7. These structures are useful when the property is extended for tenants and when gardeners and contractors want to relieve themselves without using private internal infrastructure.

⁹⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Komako, Sharpeville, 28 February 2024.



Figure 5.7: Outside toilets in Putsoastene Sharpeville⁹⁵

To probe further into the usage of physical space within the household, respondents were asked which part of the house they mostly used and why. Responses varied from sitting and dining rooms and bedrooms to kitchens. Many respondents were unconscious of how they used their spaces, evident in moments of thought before responding to the question. Most female respondents indicated that they enjoyed spending time in the kitchen and preparing meals for their families. The importance of the kitchen evolved when questions about renovations came up. Many respondents preferred to spend most of their time in their sitting and dining rooms while watching television.

The apartheid design houses veered from their initial purpose of accommodating African families for labour to become business institutions for African men and women aspiring

⁹⁵ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/07.

for additional and primary incomes. In present-day Sharpeville, houses are used to acquire additional income in the property rental sector. They tend to be part of business ventures that do not experience stringent policing strategies that were prevalent in apartheid townships. In former times there were regular raids to combat the illegal purchase and distribution of alcohol and the squatting of undocumented visitors and backroom tenants. Many residents, property owners, and business operators in pre-democratic Sharpeville had to operate clandestinely.⁹⁶

Many post-1994 residents, despite the limitations imposed by municipal bylaws, ventured into informal trade (spaza shops in varied sizes and shapes selling anything from bread to sweets and cooldrinks), taverns, pubs, and backrooms. The informal trade of small businesses, barred since vacating Top Location, mushroomed in Sharpeville, especially after 1994. The responses of people interviewed also revealed that the home often becomes an industrial or office space. One respondent interviewed is a fashion designer who conducts business in the sitting room. As she has shown, the benefit of such an arrangement is the opportunity to multi-task household duties with her business without leaving the house. In addition, she does not pay for costly rentals in industrial areas or shopping centres. The nature of her business and location is easily accessible to her Sharpeville clientele in the local community.⁹⁷ The disadvantage of conducting business at home is that guests come unannounced to whom she must attend, which often consumes her time for work. Mr Sandile Ncala, senior, operates a tuck shop in his home. Figure 5.8 shows what used to be the family's sitting room, which has been converted into a tuckshop.

As shown above, the tuckshop is stocked with what seems to be products enjoyed mainly by children in Tshepiso and Sharpeville, making local youths his target market. The Tinkies shelf facing the door's entrance is strategically positioned to be directly viewed by the young customer. The shelf displays sweets, snacks known as 'majakathata' (direct translation snacks that are hard to chew), biscuits, and an assortment of ice lollies in the fridge. Our interview with Ntate Ncala was frequently interjected by both young and older

⁹⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Senior, Tshepiso Township, 2 March 2024.

⁹⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Carly, Sharpeville, 25 January 2023.

customers. Their entrance in the yard marked their presence through the window facing Mr Ncala.



Figure 5.8: Some items displayed in Mr Ncala Seniors shop in a Sharpeville⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

The interviewer did not consider the interruptions as disruptive. Instead, they were opportunities to participate in and experience Mr Ncala's daily routines of engagements with local customers. Upon my arrival, Mr Ncala was wary of the interview because his wife, who assists with the tuckshop, had attended a community function. Similarly to Johanna Masilela's experiences as a childminder, the assistance of partners in the family business, operated at home, is pivotal to the sustainability and success of the business. Whilst Mrs Ncala held the fort, Mr Ncala is solely responsible for maintaining adequate stock levels.

Arguably, their responsibilities in maintaining the tuck shop are ultimately gendered. Mr Ncala is responsible for the regular visits to megastores in Vanderbijlpark and adjacent areas to purchase stock. Mrs Ncala, on the other hand, packs the shelves with stock, among other domestic responsibilities. These responsibilities are clearly gendered. Mr Ncala is expected to see through the heavier tasks associated with the shop's management. He mentioned, however, that he prefers to work in his vegetable garden instead of operating the tuckshop, which requires him to be indoors for the entire day.⁹⁹ When asked about his employment history, Mr Ncala boasted that he had never worked for a 'Boer' (an Afrikaans speaking person) and always found ways and means to secure money through self-sufficiency and reliance. It has been found that entrepreneurial activities within the house and home often blur the added daily responsibilities of maintaining the house because of the additional wear and tear placed on it by the family business.

Like backrooms, the home takes on a different feel and becomes characterised by the presence of others, in this case, the wider community. Women and men in these situations tend to work double shifts. They are expected to work and operate their businesses in addition to domestic chores that involve caring for the members of their households. Despite these obstacles, men and women have benefited from skills obtained from gendered homes to gain additional incomes in problematic socio-economic conditions, characterised by few employment prospects. It has been noted that Sharpeville residents have aspired to achieve growth in the small business sector throughout its existence. Since the onset of democracy, many other businesses, such as

⁹⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala senior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

taxi services, *Shesa Nyamas* (hangout facilities that serve braai meat and in some cases alcohol) and pubs, have been established.

5.4.5 Material possessions

In addition to the physical structure of the household and renovation prospects, material possessions played a critical role in shaping residents' perceptions of the places they called home. The key question asked by the interviewer was, what is the most crucial possession in their households? Responses varied from tables, beds, television, photos, and clothing. Households had vintage property in the form of television stands, stoves, bedding accessories and tables. Surprisingly, many younger generations who owned these properties wanted to replace them with modern objects without attaching memory and historical value to the ornaments. Sullevi contends that:

Objects create safety but also causes problems. Their maintenance alone — cleaning and upkeep demands resources. The abundance of objects is the single reason for the need of space. More and more objects are accumulated in the course of a lifetime.¹⁰⁰

He emphasises that when preserved and cared for, objects become symbols and triggers of memories spanning generations. The occupant's sentimental connections with them determine their efficacy in stimulating interest and recollections. Calderwood belittled the material accumulation of African families experiencing relocations into group areas to unnecessary baggage. But he was mindful of the limited space and the inability of the house to accommodate personal belongings.

The extensions implemented on two and four-room houses in a post-apartheid Sharpeville enabled additional space for the different forms of expression. Fundamentally for the accumulation of material belongings. The freedom of expression stimulated by the ability to deconstruct and reconstruct houses became evident in the landscape. Additional sitting and dining rooms have created spaces for purchasing dinner tables, sofas, smart televisions and, as noticed in one of the interviewee's houses, a pool table with a small bar. Regardless of the noticeable change, some of the construction and deconstruction

¹⁰⁰ Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House a Home*, 33.

phases and processes conserved the old-school stove as a critical ornament. Stoves were used for decoration purposes (see Figure 5.9) and occasionally for baking scones and other delicacies enjoyed by the families.



Figure 5.9: An Emerald Dover coal stove in a Sharpeville house¹⁰¹

For older interviewees, the house is monumental in its performance as an archive and its owners, the proverbial archivists. Mr Ncala recalls how a gentleman and an art enthusiast

¹⁰¹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2024/10/02.

now based in Bedworth Park, Gamakhulu Dingiso, persuaded him to keep a collection of newspaper articles that featured his successes and challenges as an athlete and a member of the Lekoa Athletics Clubs.¹⁰² Following his advice, his certificates and newspaper publications are not conventionally laminated but placed on the wall for the viewer's admiration. Still, some are placed chronologically and neatly in plastic folders that have kept them safe. Also, Mr Ncala (see Figure 5.10) has kept his medals and trophies that remind him of his achievements. However, he is unpleasantly dissatisfied with the little financial rewards the trophies have brought him, stating: "What is the point of all these trophies if one does not have money?".¹⁰³ Nevertheless, he acknowledges the importance of preserving his accolades as memories for future generations.

In addition to accolades, in some instances, the researcher's observations were fascinated by the number of garages, carports and awnings attached to the old house designs. Some owners of these newly constructed additions were not vehicle operators. Nor did they own automobiles, but they constructed garages hoping to attain an automobile. Until then, the garages are sometimes used for storage or rented out to tenants or shop operators. Regardless of its usage, the availability of a single or double garage signals class and contributes to the physical ambience of the house. It also challenges the conventions created by the Apartheid Township housing standards and plans that did not issue garages with the houses - a cost containment strategy to limited budgets. The ownership of a garage and a vehicle embodied respectability and status in a social and architectural context that circumvented the construction of a garage. In parts of Africa "people associated with and in control of motor vehicles were granted status in accordance with the type of vehicle concerned. Accordingly, wealthy traders across the continent have become known as waBenzi, referring to the elite prestige ingrained in the Mercedes Benz."¹⁰⁴ Fundamentally, cars became, for those who could afford them, modes of transportation and access to varied places beyond Sharpeville. Furthermore, vehicles, in addition to material accumulation within the household, contributed to the material

¹⁰² LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Senior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

¹⁰³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala Senior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

¹⁰⁴ J.B. Gewald, S. Luning, and K. van Walraven, eds. *The Speed of Change Motor Vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 31 Jul. 2009), 9.

landscape of Sharpeville. Whilst visitors' dishes contributed to the ambience of the home, the family car, in some instances, became an expression of masculinity and fatherhood.

Ultimately, when asked about what constitutes a home, most respondents indicated that a house is made a home by the sounds of children's laughter as they play joyfully. Others mentioned that the presence of people and relatives created a sense of warmth and enjoyment in their spaces. Some mentioned physical attributes such as Tupperware, pots, pictures, dining room tangibles and beds. Others mentioned the non-tangible aspects in the form of household scent, the home's spirit, and the daily feeling they experience upon entering their homes.



Figure 5.10: Mr Ncala senior displaying sports accolades¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

Although most respondents perceived their homes in a positive light, others have emotional attachments to other homes in rural areas and viewed their houses in Sharpeville as 'home away from home'.

Hostels, houses, or any form of dwelling may become a home regardless of the political and economic influences shaping perceptions towards the dwelling. In some instances, African cultures dictate that a home as a cultural space is inhabited by a family comprising a husband, wife, and offspring. In other words, the absence of a husband, wife and children indicates the absence of a home and homeliness. However, based on the research findings, the concept of home is a feeling encompassed by many factors, including attachment and the presence of a physical structure. In some instances, interviewees attest to the cultural view that a home is defined by the presence of children and a married couple. Culturally speaking, a home consisting of unmarried individuals undertaking the 'vat n sit' (cohabitation outside the framework of customary marriage) approach is not considered a complete family. The conception of family is often understood from the framework of *lobola* and adherence to it.

5.4.6 Technology and changing gender roles

Married or unmarried, objects, possessions and the decoration of the house with products purchased from markets and shops contribute to the making of a home. Ownership of household goods such as microwaves, fridges, dishwashing machines, and technologically empowered cleaning devices often advertised on television (TV) by Verimark and other companies have consistently found place and relevance in township houses. Because of the economic progress made by Africans in a post-apartheid socio-economic liberated context, more families are investing in technologies that reduce the pressures and time associated with manual cleaning and food and beverage preparation. These items have become symbols of success and economic advancements.

Beyond symbolism, washing machines, pressure cookers, microwaves, and gas stoves, amongst others, have arguably reduced onerous and arduous washing and food preparation tasks. These symbols, often in branded kitchenware ranging from Russel Hobbs, SMEG and Carrol Boyes, are conventionally and ostentatiously displayed on kitchen counters and take other forms in cups, plates, and utensils. Tupperware, an American brand producing expensive plastic containers for storage, is historically associated with and was made relevant by Tupperware parties hosted by women from

the 1940s.¹⁰⁶ De Vidas posits that American women hosted these parties, often in their homes, to sell their stocks of plasticware to attendees.¹⁰⁷ Remarkably, Tupperware introduced in South Africa in 1964 finds a place and remains a source of pride for African homes, especially for women who generate an income from selling and distributing them to friends and community members. However, due to bankruptcy, the company has announced the closure of operations in South Africa at the end of 2024. The closure will lead to job losses and the end of business operations for many of its distributors in South Africa.¹⁰⁸ Inevitably, it will end an intimate relationship of trust with its clientele.

Similarly to the gendered orientation of Tupperware,¹⁰⁹ in most Sharpeville households, food preparation and other chores remain gendered. Technology, in essence, has not circumvented nor obliterated the home and house as a sight of gendered relations that perpetuate gendered chores. For instance, garden scissors used to manicure lawns during apartheid Sharpeville were conventionally replaced by lawnmowers and bush cutters in a democratic dispensation. Nevertheless, caring for gardens, as with selling Tupperware by women, remains in general the task of males regardless of technological improvements that have made it slightly easier to complete the chores. However, Blunt and Dowling ascertain that “whilst these technologies have made cleaning and cooking processes simpler and less physically arduous, they have increased expectations of cleanliness”.¹¹⁰ These expectations rely solely on the operator's ability to function at their optimum. The inability to do so insinuates backwardness and a lack of cognitive development to maintain a modern domestic home.

¹⁰⁶ S. Vincent, "Preserving domesticity: reading Tupperware in women's changing domestic, social and economic roles," *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 40, no. 2 (2003): 182.

¹⁰⁷ A.A. De Vidas, "Containing Modernity: The Social Life of Tupperware in a Mexican Indigenous Village," *Ethnography* 9, no. 2 (2008): 259.

¹⁰⁸ Nompilo Goba, *Tupperware to close shop in SA at the end of the month*, Companies & Markets Reporter, 02 December 2024. Accessed 27 November 2024.
<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/companies/retail-and-consumer/2024-12-02-tupperware-to-close-shop-in-sa-at-the-end-of-the-month>

¹⁰⁹ S. Vincent, "Preserving Domesticity", 172.

¹¹⁰ Blunt and Dowling, *Setting up Home*, 96.

TV marketing strategies that consistently differentiate between men and women and masculinity and femininity have enhanced gendered households, chores, and expectations. Sitcoms cemented gender roles in American TV by portraying women as caregivers whose place was in the kitchen and, in essence, the family's foundation. Men were often accentuated as beer-drinking, slightly obese sports fans and breadwinners whose existence depended on the domesticated women.¹¹¹ TV did not have a strong footprint on the Sharpeville community in the 1960s-1980s. Instead, the radio and newspapers became intermediaries between the community and the marketplace of commerce and consumption in the urban South African township. Similarly, an analysis of the *Rand Daily Mail's* adverts revealed that they purposefully published adverts centred on women's domesticity, increasingly gendering the usage of kitchenware. Published in the *Rand Daily Mail*, the Bauknecht advert reads, "no mess, fuss, short tempers or aching arms and no vibrations" as a painting of a woman accentuating an adult female control and dominance of the kitchen.¹¹² Technology contributed to the stereotypical perspectives of gendered relations in African households. However, in some instances, women have embraced the technological advancements and accumulation of material wealth associated with gendered chores as symbols of pride in making the home. During an interview, the daughter of a respondent presented biscuits and juice on a plate. Her mother, the interviewee, asked her to immediately return to the kitchen and serve the interviewer with *di plate tsa ba chaki* (visitor plate and utensils).¹¹³ The interviewer was presented food on a decorated plate and glass that resembled social complexity that outweighed the interviewer's. Material possessions are pivotal, as has been shown, in the continuation of socialised cultures, which is vivid in the reservation of plates and utensils for guests.

5.5 Reflection

Marxist and feminist discourse and underpinnings on the home are pivotal frameworks for comprehending and interrogating the complex dynamics embedded in home

¹¹¹ Observation made on the sitcoms *King of Queens* and *Roseanne*.

¹¹² "Everyone's a good mixer with a Bauknecht," *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 October 1960, 5.

¹¹³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Mofokeng, Sharpeville, 10 February 2024.

articulation. Scholars have positioned women as the centre of home discourse. Others, as this chapter has shown, have criticised the home as having aided in women's oppression. In other words, the domestic sphere restricted women's access to capital and industrial agency. Whether through employment or self-employment; women have generally made insufficient infiltration in the economic sectors of many countries. This chapter further showed that contextualisation is pivotal in understanding discourses on home and women's experiences, particularly in Sharpeville. It has therefore endeavoured to accentuate that under the apartheid administration that endorsed job reservation approaches, women, as a result, pursued economic successes in the informal sectors.

In townships, illegal brewing of alcohol, childminding, and tuckshop operations are some of the business endeavours that women pursued in their homes with the assistance of family members and relatives. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the family business and change over time in its operations, this chapter unconventionally oscillated between the past and the present. It has been found that business operations in the home are increasingly gendered and contribute to the ever-changing ambience of the home. Homes have transformed beyond providing accommodation for residents to embodying multifaceted functions that serve the community's needs. Home is, therefore, not limited to the immediate family but is also, to a certain extent, shaped by the presence of others, including strangers.

Furthermore, home is not limited nor solely defined by the presence of people. Home is essentially a feeling that is shaped, but not limited to, experiences and artefacts. The chapter found that ornaments, personal interactions, and belongings contribute to feeling at home. Observations of homes have shown how many families have kept ornaments dating to the 1950s; others have kept photos and trophies as solid symbols of memory and home. Remarkably, the old houses built by the apartheid government are, for some people, symbols of home and connections with the past. For others, the demolition and renovation processes are attempts to disconnect with the heritage of the past that is deeply entrenched in apartheid and its broader consequences. Many families that have renovated and deconstructed their houses have kept coal stoves issued with the houses. They have, in other words, built around a 'hearth' to preserve memory and the practicality of the stove to heat the home and presumably have alternative heating, especially during load-shedding and load reduction.

This chapter has explored the interconnections between the economic and political climate of the country and the material well-being of a people. It has been found that many families in Sharpeville were able to materially express themselves through the collection of the latest technological domestic needs such as microwaves, fridges, dishwashing machines, washing machines, lawnmowers and the like. These have arguably eased domestic labour. The continued presence and influence of international brands and cultures in apartheid Sharpeville transcended beyond the constraints of the previous political environment towards a footprint in the township after 1994. This contributed towards a cosmopolitan society shaped by an international influence. This chapter found that the number of businesses operating at home increased substantially after 1994. This has led to bigger houses and the construction of garages and rental rooms for tenants, which have aided material accumulation by women. This chapter has, therefore, focused on the conceptions of home and its change over time by limiting the discourse to the activities within a structure.

The following chapter analyses factors outside of the home to determine how the township shapes ideological positionalities beyond the house/home. This includes beer halls, cinemas, beauty contests, gangs, music, sports, and religion. Moreover, observing the changed dynamics surrounding the Sharpeville massacre.

CHAPTER SIX

BEYOND THE HOME: THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE AND THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF HOME

6.1 Introduction

South African townships are synonymous with histories of violent encounters.¹ Consistent with the discourse of violent episodes in South African townships, this chapter analyses the 21 March 1960 Sharpeville massacre and its impact on Sharpeville as a home. The massacre is generally understood as an inhumane and unjust murder of African civilians in pursuit of economic and political freedom amid a government that deemed Africans second-class citizens with few rights. This chapter veers to an alternative thinking of the massacre beyond the fixation on accentuating the details and the historicity of the Sharpeville Massacre. Alternatively, the massacre is interrogated as a vantage point to the living experiences of Sharpeville residents encapsulating apartheid, forced removals, the lengthy processes of relocation, rentals, youth unemployment and perceptions towards the community as pivotal preludes to protest action.

6.2 Conceptual framework

To conceptualise this discussion, *ubuntu* is heavily embedded in the principle of I am because we are,² *motho ke motho ka batho*. The proverb *Ntlo lerole ga e tswale kgosi*, translated as “a divided house does not produce a king”, means that a divided people can never be led, and therefore calls for unification among people, especially to the commencement towards a goal. The call for unification by the PAC in 1960, a commencement towards a political goal, ahead of the protest at the Sharpeville Police

¹ S. Swartz and D. Scott, “The Rules of Violence: A Perspective from Youth Living in South African Townships,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 17, no. 3 (2014): 325.

² M.B. Ramose, “The Philosophy of Ubuntu and Ubuntu as Philosophy,” in *Philosophy from Africa, a Text with Readings*, eds. P.H. Coetzee and A.P.J. Roux (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2002), 231.

Station was heeded by Sharpeville residents. Scholars associate the coalition of people from different backgrounds as motivated by the political endeavour to achieve the outcomes of a free society. This chapter considers a different perspective. *Ubuntu* and the sense of community, as shall be shown, enhanced solidarity, which was essential in opposing pass laws. Furthermore, this chapter seeks to unpack how the massacre enhanced *ubuntu* and solidarity and the making or the disruption of homes. Lastly, the township of Sharpeville has a history of violence whose articulation should be multifaceted to include the diverse contributory dynamics that broaden the discourse. Against this backdrop, this chapter accentuates township identity and belonging in social landscapes not only shaped by violence. It unpacks ways in which people perceive and contest township identity.

6.3 Belonging beyond the house/home

The previous chapter explored home's complexities, dynamics, and ambiguities, explicitly focusing on the agencies of African families that made homes within typified structures. Home, the chapter argued, is not limited to abode within physical structures. Sulevi, in this regard, argues that research on housing and households is generally interested and focused on buildings, interiors, and a place of action.³ The apartheid government's conceptualisation of a Township home, on the other hand, was unflustered and deeply embedded and limited to living within approved structures/physical buildings that met town planning standards. Localities declared slums by the *Slums Act No. 53 of 1934* were generally targeted, as with Top Location, for relocation into 'decent' townships. The discussion on making homes and homeliness in the previous chapter was limited to using artefacts, lifelong collections of furniture, cutlery and extensions made to the house to make it homely.

Research predominantly spearheaded by cultural geographers has yielded pivotal interconnections and inter-influences between external (outside the home) macro-factors such as the economy, global conflict, globalisation, and cultural revolutions, amongst

³ S. Riukulehto and K. Rinne-Koski, *A House Made to Be a Home* (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 1.

others, on the home.⁴ Broadly, Sharpeville allows a lens through which to examine relationships between the local and the national, particularly because one would expect a place this iconic to mirror the national historical narrative and because one might expect a place so remembered for a political event to be a consistent hub of political organising.⁵

Though Vally's analysis is on the political history of Sharpeville, essentially, the home is porous to micro-factors and macro-factors in various ways. Technological communication improvements, especially with radio's inception in South Africa in 1923, facilitated the rapid spread of cultures, brands, attitudes, and worldviews interplaying to reshape conceptions of home.⁶ Radio, newspapers and telephonic communication amid everyday interactions between people relay and redistribute catalysts for change, deviation, and inceptions of alternative perspectives to home. This often shows that homes can take the character of an amoeba, constantly adapting to change and influence. Because of constant change, these adaptations accentuate fluidity and the home's capacity to change. Fundamentally, "the humanist tradition put home or, to be precise, the whole sphere of home in the focus of the human experience of space".⁷

Lewin's study on elders' positionality and home experiences shaped by lifelong experiences argues that "the intimate relation between individuals and their homes must be analysed within the framework of each individual's specific political, social, and historical context."⁸ Within these contexts, people create external symbols of home in the global, national, provincial, and local contexts. Furthermore, "feelings of belonging and relations with others could be connected to a neighbourhood, a nation, stretched across transnational space, or located on a park bench."⁹

⁴ H. Easthope, "A Place Called Home," *Housing, Theory and Society* 21, no. 3 (2004): 129.

⁵ N.T. Vally, "The 'Model Township' of Sharpeville: The Absence of Political Action and Organisation, 1960-1984" (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2010): 37.

⁶ Easthope, "A Place called", 129.

⁷ Riukulehto and Rinne-Koski, *A House Made*, 3.

⁸ F.A. Lewin, "The Meaning of Home among Elderly Immigrants: Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development," *Housing Studies* 16 (2001): 362.

⁹ A. Blunt and R. Dowling, *Home* (London: Routledge, 2006), 29.

Sharpeville is no different; most residents originated from Lesotho and parts of South Africa. They identified with their places of origin (multilocality) while navigating a sense of belonging through symbol creation from a common language (Sotho). They participated in community activities and contributed to the community's social, economic, and political landscape. However, Township regulations influenced by national politics determined belonging in South African apartheid townships. The primary determination for the physical belonging to Sharpeville was the issuance of a house by the town council. This was often to a married man possessing a pass/reference book, and proof of employment.¹⁰ A temporary lodger or visitor before and after the 1960s would enjoy a temporary stay approved by the township authority entrusted with Labuschagne's (township superintended) office at the township entrance. Legislatively, the Vereeniging Town Council predetermined the framework for belonging in Sharpeville, which adhered to the national policy of segregation and housing standards. Also, it must be emphasised that residents had minimum influence in the decision-making processes that determined the location of their houses, as mentioned in earlier chapters. They had to make sense of the new houses allocated to them and implement adaptive strategies for their new neighbourhoods.

6.3.1 The social landscape of Sharpeville and cultural trends

Home is multifaceted, linked with people's emotional and spiritual attachment to the region, especially to the home/house. Neighbourhoods problematise and extend sentiments of home and belonging by accentuating the complex interrelatedness between the home and township. The neighbourhood and its broader social systems encompassing relationships between people, service delivery, local governance, and neighbourhood affairs are instrumental in making the township home. This is, however, contextual. During the 1950s, the political climate of apartheid South Africa and its social engineering endeavours engineered a framework for the economic, social, and political landscape of Group Areas (the *Group Areas Act* of 1950 and the *Population Registration Act* of 1950). The Population Registration Act of 1950 was pivotal for determining and categorising people according to race. These determinations and categorisations

¹⁰ N.L. Clark and W.H. Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville: The Long History of Racial Injustice* (New York: Routledge, 2024), 86.

separated people into geographical regions throughout apartheid South Africa. According to the *Group Areas Act of 1950*, people had been removed and relocated from their original homes in most parts of South Africa. This furthermore created moments of resistance, compliance, compromises and negotiations with unfamiliar township layouts and legislative measures that veered behaviour and norms towards acceptable standards. “In other words, if the government had a strategy to impose control through laws, surveillance, and even the physical layout of the town, then Africans developed tactics to create their own freedoms without putting themselves in jeopardy”.¹¹

How did this play out in Sharpeville? The model location framework within which the local administrators worked tirelessly to meet ensured that Sharpeville had amenities and physical features that shaped the social landscape of the township. The model location framework endeavoured to meet the social needs of the residents according to the then Union government standards. This has been linked with humanitarian and paternalistic features of the government. Sharpeville “was recognised by parliament as the best-administered township in the Union and was to become the prototype for all the planned townships that were built in the 1950s”.¹² Beer halls were paramount for the success of the model location modality.

6.3.2 Beer halls

Recognising the importance and traditional symbolism of beer consumption, Sharpeville boasted of a beer hall built in 1943, shortly after the initial removals of Top Location.¹³ Though critiqued in previous chapters for its contribution to the moral decay of African families, beer halls provided drinking holes and spaces for Africans to socialise, reflect, and connect as members of the broader society. Outside the beer hall, the youth spent most of their days gazing at people's everyday movements as the days slowly ended. Public drinking annoyed the local Town Council to such an extent that gangs were banned in the 1950s for their troublesome behaviour and the consumption of alcohol outside the

¹¹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 86.

¹² M. Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville: A History of South African Townships in the 1950s” (Honours diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 8.

¹³ I. Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville 1943–1985” (MA diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), 56.

beer hall.¹⁴ The council thought this threatened decent public behaviour and contributed to the fragmentation of respectability, especially amid youth unemployment and the incitement of delinquency.¹⁵ However, Africans used their agency to reshape their social spaces and the making of home in the township by continuing to consume alcohol in shebeens that accentuated an 'African feel' of identity. Jeffrey argued that shebeens were places of interest because they facilitated the expression of class, sophistication, desires, belonging, identity, and realities.¹⁶

Scores of Sharpeville residents displayed their fashion sense in shebeens, which was often associated with class and sophistication. Madonna's Place was considered a highly popular shebeen in Sharpeville. Occasionally, it became a fashion parade for gangsters and community members to compete and represent their neighbourhoods in dressing competitions.¹⁷ It was also noted that jazz bands competed in shebeens, and the winners were rewarded with LPs. Though shebeens and beer halls contributed to the economic climate of the township, the shebeens were seemingly expressive of African-oriented entertainment largely absent in the Eurocentric construct of beer halls.

A traditional game, frequently played on tables in beer halls and shebeens or in the street is *morabaraba* (South Sotho), *moruba* (Northern Sotho), *tshuba* (Shangana/Tsonga), *mefuvha* (Venda).¹⁸ This game, the most widespread game since the Stone Age in Africa, consists of a "board" with two rows of four holes; in every row, a seed/a small rock is placed and moved; at a specific stage, the one payer may "eat" the opponent's seed/small rock. Additionally, European games like checkers and cards were also played.¹⁹ Dice games are also popular among youngsters. They played a game with two dices (numbered from 1 to 6), throw the two dices together and the one with the highest number

¹⁴ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 18.

¹⁵ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 18.

¹⁶ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends," 128.

¹⁷ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends," 128.

¹⁸ C.M. De Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 1972), 368.

¹⁹ De Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van", 369.

wins. Another game with one dice is “koppie-dice” where one dice is rolled and hid, then the number must be guessed, the one who guess the correct number is the winner. These games often end in unhappiness and assault.²⁰

6.3.3 Cinemas, beauty contests and gangs

As with shebeens and beer halls, cinema played a critical role in shaping the social landscape of freehold and Group Areas. The fashion displayed by the working class in Sharpeville was predominantly influenced by American movies watched in Sharpeville cinemas. For Jeffrey, “the two major gangs which operated in Top Location were the “Indians” or “Bafana ba Kioki” who took their names from the American “Cowboy and Indian” films screened at the Top Location cinema...”²¹ In Sharpeville, soccer clubs and Sharpeville’s Zenzele Y.W.C.A. organised annual beauty contests and crowned a Miss Sharpeville after the soccer club’s name.²²

Beer halls designed for leisure purposes were problematic. Gangs frequently conducted minor criminal activities outside the municipal beer hall to claim their territory and sense of belonging in Sharpeville. Consequently, the Vereeniging Town Council proposed outlawing the carrying of knives, but this did not alleviate gang activities in the region.²³ Like households in Sharpeville, gangs tirelessly claimed their sense of belonging to the township by instilling their presence in public facilities. The cinema’s localised European and American cultural presence in Sharpeville and gave gangs and members of the community an identity. Consequently, the conceptions of home and belonging in a group area took on a multicultural perspective that gave identity to the region beyond the home/house. The filming of moving pictures in the Sharpeville communal hall in Rooistene was cognisant of gang rivalry to such an extent that gangs had to be separated to prevent disruptions to movies.²⁴

²⁰ De Villiers, “Die vryetydsbesteding van”, 370.

²¹ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends”, 71.

²² De Villiers, “Die vryetydsbesteding van”), 340.

²³ Chaskalson, “The Road to Sharpeville”, 19.

²⁴ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends”, 76.

The construction of the Sharpeville stadium in 1962 and of the swimming pool three years later,²⁵ in Vuka, have heightened sentiments of ownership and territoriality amongst Vuka gangs and residents. Consequently, seats were demarcated according to gang affiliation during local games; stadium seating arrangements were strategically designated to ensure non-contact between gangs. The local Vuka gang had the best seats.²⁶ Similarly, the swimming pool was divided to ensure that the deep level was reserved for Vuka, while the less fun parts were used by 'outsiders' or non-Vuka residents.²⁷ Unsurprisingly, the gang's footprint in the township extended beyond the cinemas and sporting fields. They also frequented Sidwell's Shebeen in Putsoastene, infamous for jazz music played by the Sharpeville Swingsters and the Cool Town Swingsters.²⁸

6.3.4 Music

Jazz music, as with cinemas, contributed to and complimented the identity and culture of Sharpeville while disrupting the monotonous layout of the township through a local cultural revolution. Radio LM (Lourenço Marques) had listenership from Sharpeville, and "for Sharpeville residents, LM radio was very much an aspect of their moving away from parochialism, a part of their need to embrace national as well as international trends".²⁹ The names of the 1950s Sharpeville bands, primarily influenced by Black American Jazz artists, as well as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, both British rock and roll bands played by Radio LM, reflected this trend. Sharpeville was home to Beavers, formed by Jonas 'Brian' Chaka, Arthur Moabi, Sophonia Mokgoera, Sonny Boy Modisakeng, and other schoolmates of Lekoa Shandu High in Sharpeville.³⁰ The region's passion for jazz music also encouraged the birth of Sharpetown Swingsters, formed by Ishmael Molefe and David Masuku in 1953 (see Figure 6.1), the California Swingsters, the Tulips, and

²⁵ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 192.

²⁶ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 192.

²⁷ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 192.

²⁸ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 73.

²⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 233.

³⁰ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 235.

the Hurricanes.³¹As Jeffrey's study has shown, these groups did not create territorial rivalry, nor were they perceived to have represented one locality/section of the township. The naming of the bands was not representative of the specific sections of the township, even though they practised, lived and performed in parts of Sharpeville.



Figure 6.1: The Sharpeville Swingsters³²

The Sharpetown Swingsters and the Sharpeville Five, as the names suggest, for example, embraced their belonging to and representation of the entire township: “We got a lot of support here (Sharpeville), because during our concert, the hall was always full.

³¹ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends”, 235.

³² Photo: The Sharpeville Swingsters, Private Collection: Mr Tsolo.

Whites were even hiring us for weddings and parties. We got hired in places such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Vereeniging, Germiston.”³³

Bands comprised working-class members who, according to Mr Ntswakae practiced at night after work before making their way home. Playing for the Sharpetown Swingsters provided an opportunity for the band members to supplement their income:

During Christmas time, we would hire trucks or horse trolleys and put (a) Honda machine on top of it then go to the cities to play music for the whites, they would give us money and food. We would take that money and donate it to welfares.³⁴

In contrast to football and boxing, jazz bands instilled a temporary social cohesion that superseded section affiliation and identity. During performances, bands created rivalry amongst themselves and their various immediate township sections when they competed in formal competitions. It is believed that “one explanation for this is that, in general, music is inherently a less competitive “sport” and thus lends itself less to a statement of rivalry”.³⁵ The absence of rivalry, as mentioned earlier, stemmed from the group's non-recognition or affiliation to specific localities or sections of the township. In the context of jazz in Sharpeville, rivalry mainly took place between the groups. “Jazz performances, usually in the form of a competition between two bands, known as a “two band stage”, were enormously popular throughout townships during the 1950s, and Sharpeville was no exception”.³⁶ The bands that won the competition received prize money but, most importantly, a reputation as the leading band in Sharpeville. Their fame and prestige led to bookings beyond the competition, including performances at weddings, stokvels, and other gatherings within and outside the borders of Sharpeville. Bands were professional, respectable, and adhered to the decorum of the day:

We wore our normal clothes, but when we were going to the wedding, we were supposed to wear suits and ties even though they were not the same. We were

³³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ntswakae, Sharpeville, 20 March 2023.

³⁴ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ntswakae, Sharpeville, 20 March 2023.

³⁵ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends,” 147.

³⁶ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends,” 132.

wearing them for the sake of looking formal. Then, when we went to a night show, we would wear black and white.³⁷

In Sharpeville, as in other townships, young people danced, joined dance clubs, and participated in dance competitions. Two types of dancing were popular during the 1960s: ballroom dancing (e.g., the waltz and cha-cha) and African Jive, known as Mqashiyo, linked with *Mbaganga* music and influenced by Jazz music.³⁸ Sharpeville's amenities (cinemas, swimming pool, creche, schools, clinics, etc.), as with the arts, contributed to the symbolism and positive identity-making processes of Sharpeville. These beacons contributed to the community's well-being from the 1950s onwards, as seen with gang activities, places of contestation, symbolism, ownership, and home. The pioneers of Sharpeville (1943) were granted more time to familiarise, claim, connect, and negotiate with the space. Those relocated much later in the 1950s arrived in Sharpeville as 'rookies' or newcomers who had to adapt to a new environment where well-established residents had already claimed amenities, territories and symbols symbolising belonging, such as affiliation to sports teams and jazz circles.

6.3.5 Soccer

Soccer stadiums are environments in which fans and footballers become attached.³⁹ The home shirt worn at home and away games accentuates this attachment. Essentially sports fields, boxing arenas, shebeens and other places claimed by residents as symbols created rivalry in Sharpeville. These places became home and contesting athletes and artists became home teams that represented the localities pride. In contrast to the newcomers in Sharpeville, the forced relocations from Top Location (1958) meant acclimatising to an environment where communal symbols were entrenched, as seen with the swimming pools, cinemas, and other amenities. Homemaking for the recent arrivals was far easier to implement within a house but was a bit more complex outside their houses and communities. In their study on the home-making processes of football teams

³⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ntswakae, Sharpeville, 20 March 2023.

³⁸ C.M. De Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 1972), 330.

³⁹ S. Charleston, "The English Football Ground as a Representation of Home," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29, no. 1, (2009): 145

in England, Edensor, Millington, and Steedman found that “the football home is made by the accretion of repetitive habitual enaction, by fans’ individual and collective memories and familiar engagements with space and other regular match-going fans”.⁴⁰

Making sense of Sharpeville involved creating amicable and symbiotic relations with space, and for some, frequenting jazz, dance and beauty competitions, soccer and boxing matches was an opportunity to deepen communal relations and identity.⁴¹ However, soccer and boxing intensified area rivalry, especially between the sections from which the footballers and boxers originated. Jeffrey posits that “in contrast to boxing, an individual sport, football clubs in Sharpeville were formed out of street and area teams, and thus have their roots deeply entrenched in them”.⁴² Youngsters played football in the streets of apartheid townships because the houses were inadequate to accommodate the spacious demand for indoor child play. The streets were an alternative to housing limitations and boredom. Street play solidified, from a young age, relations and township *compadre*. Football was convenient as a stimulus for interaction between ‘homeboys/girls’ because of its inexpensive nature compared to sports such as rugby and cricket, which require expensive infrastructure and sporting equipment.⁴³ All the township youth needed was a tennis ball or a makeshift ball made of plastic, pantyhose (leggings), and everything else salvaged from waste to give shape to the makeshift soccer ball.

The plethora of clubs representing their sections intensified the passion for football in Sharpeville. Teams such as the Sharpeville Lions, Naughty Boys (Phelindaba), Sharpeville Fast Eleven, and The Local Police, comprising vast numbers of servicemen and the Government Lions, were the pioneer clubs forming the Transvaal Bantu Football Association.⁴⁴ George Thabe arrived in Putsoastene in 1946 and formed the Young

⁴⁰ T. Edensor, S. Millington, and C. Steadman, "Making the Football Stadium Homely: Manchester City's Relocation from Maine Road to the Etihad," *Emotion, Space and Society* 49 (2023): 2.

⁴¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala senior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁴² Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 111.

⁴³ M.A. Jordaan, "Race, Class and Place in Transforming Sport: A Case Study of Cricket South Africa, 1991–2020," (PhD diss., University of Johannesburg, 2022), 100.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 106.

Rangers.⁴⁵ These teams had great stature and representation throughout parts of Sharpeville. The proliferation of the Vaal Professionals, founded in 1930, placed the entire Vaal region on the map, especially after winning the Nedbank Cup 1994. In South Africa's top-flight league, Vaal Professionals competed against top brands such as Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs. Their prominence led to matches played at total capacity at George Thabe Stadium.⁴⁶ In Sharpeville, the community united behind the region's home team for a while, forgetting township rivalries formed by smaller local teams.

6.3.6 Boxing

Similarly to football, township folks turned to boxing as a social means to attain a sense of belonging. Fist-fighting was a normalised expression of masculinity amongst township males. It culminated in conflicts over territory, among other things, as an alternative to knives and other forms of weaponry.⁴⁷ The Bantu Men's Social Centre (BMSC), formed in Johannesburg in 1925, normalised formal boxing among Africans. Its vision was to suppress militancy and enhance respectability and employability among Africans.⁴⁸ The influence of boxing in South Africa stems from the USA, "the influence of American culture was vividly displayed in the nicknames of the local boxers in Johannesburg. Examples included "Homicide Hank Mahlo, Ephraim "Kid Bogart" Bohata, Reuben "Panama Flash" Londi and "Kid Dynamite" Lekwete.⁴⁹ Boxing in Sharpeville, similarly to football, was well represented in the South African sports fraternity; Sexton "Wonder Boy" Mabena's illustrious boxing career debuted "on 4 December 1955 at the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Eloff Street, Johannesburg, winning on points over four rounds against Matthew Namane".⁵⁰ Obtaining titles in the bantamweight and featherweight divisions, Mabena

⁴⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 97.

⁴⁶ George Thabe was the Vaal Triangle Community Council chairman and president of the South African National Football Association. See Nancy and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*.

⁴⁷ C. Glaser, "Anti-social Bandits Culture Resistance and the Tsotsi Subculture on the Witwatersrand During the 1940s and 1950s." *African Studies Institute* no. 273 (1990): 12.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 81.

⁴⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 89.

⁵⁰ R. Jackson, "Sexton Mabena: one of the select double South African champions," 10 September 2022, accessed 15 October 2024, <https://supersport.com/boxing/wta/news/4b663063-0d15-4b79-9853-e1e5fe75d8c5/sexton-mabena-one-of-the-select-double-south-african-champions>

became a beacon of hope for young boxers in Sharpeville. His successes, as with those enjoyed by local soccer teams and jazz bands, contributed to a sense of identity and pride for Sharpeville. Consequently, township children turned to boxing as an alternative to football and typical play in the streets, Ncala contentds that:

Because my friend encouraged me to join boxing like him, I stayed because I realised it was very lovely and enjoyable. Also, I used to go to boxing practices and matches without my parents' permission. Even other kids used to play at stadiums without their parents' help or support. Our Black parents did not care compared to Whites, as White parents used to accompany their kids to stadiums and watch them play, and that motivated their kids.⁵¹

Formal and informal sports and street playing kept young Sharpeville residents occupied and entertained whilst most of their parents worked in industrial Vereeniging. This is resounded by Ncala's recollections of sporting codes that include the absence of parental support, especially during competitive matches. But as the saying goes, 'it takes a village to raise a child.' Ncala ilamented that "my parents didn't come to support me in boxing. However, a man there gave me money that added up to two rands when I won. Even when I didn't win, he motivated me to continue participating in boxing".⁵²

Community support for sports was visible in the stadiums and sports theatres. Community members supported sports players because participating in sporting codes represented their streets and smaller bits of the township. As Ncala recalls:

The hall used to be full whenever there were boxing matches. Many people loved watching boxing. People like Mabhena used to be big boxers; however, he quit before I joined boxing. At that time, boxing was very popular, and it was played and watched a lot on television. Some of the boxing champions were Sugar Ray and Mahommed Ali.⁵³

⁵¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala junior, Sharpeville and Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁵² LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala junior, Sharpeville and Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

⁵³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala junior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

Ncala was a member of the infamous Ferreira's Boxing Club that was closely associated with Sexton and Joseph Mabena. Central Boys' Club, having its heritage in Top Location, contributed to the realisation of talents in Sharpeville and more prominently in Phelindaba, Phomolong, and Putsoastene. The most decorated of their boxers was John Mthimkhulu⁵⁴ who won the 'non-European' flyweight title in 1955.⁵⁵ These achievements placed Sharpeville on the map, "between 1956 and 1966, Ferreira Boxing Club boasted four South African 'non-European' boxing titles, while Central Boys Club through John Mthimkhulu held the 'non-European' flyweight title for some thirteen years".⁵⁶ Unlike soccer, boxing's display of masculinity and prowess, typical in township streets, stimulated and threatened territoriality and dominance. Evidently, "champion boxer Carlton "Swing Carlie" Monnakgotla was attacked on several occasions by gangsters from rival areas and was charged with assault for knifing an assailant".⁵⁷ It was the prowess and the violence embedded in boxing that caught the attention of gangsters and inevitably became a source of competition for identity, belonging and dominance in the township spaces.

6.3.7 Religion

Music and sports may have been a fulcrum for creating identity, belonging and homeliness in Sharpeville. Still, there was a plethora of other community-based organisations that stimulated belonging and homeliness. Noteworthy of consideration was the presence of the plethora of religious denominations and educational organisations that shaped the social landscape of the township. In Sharpeville, religion and going to church form part of most residents' daily and weekly activities, especially the older people. During the 1960s, the majority (32%) of the Sharpeville residents attended either the two Zionist churches, The Zion Christian Church and the St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission or the five Ethiopian churches; The Ethiopian Church, the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, the Bapedi Lutheran Church, the Bantu Methodist church and

⁵⁴ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 93.

⁵⁵ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 93.

⁵⁶ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 104.

⁵⁷ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends", 96.

the Bantu Baptist Church.⁵⁸ Other churches include the European based churches such as the Methodist Church of South Africa, Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, The Dutch Reformed Church, and the Pentecost churches.⁵⁹

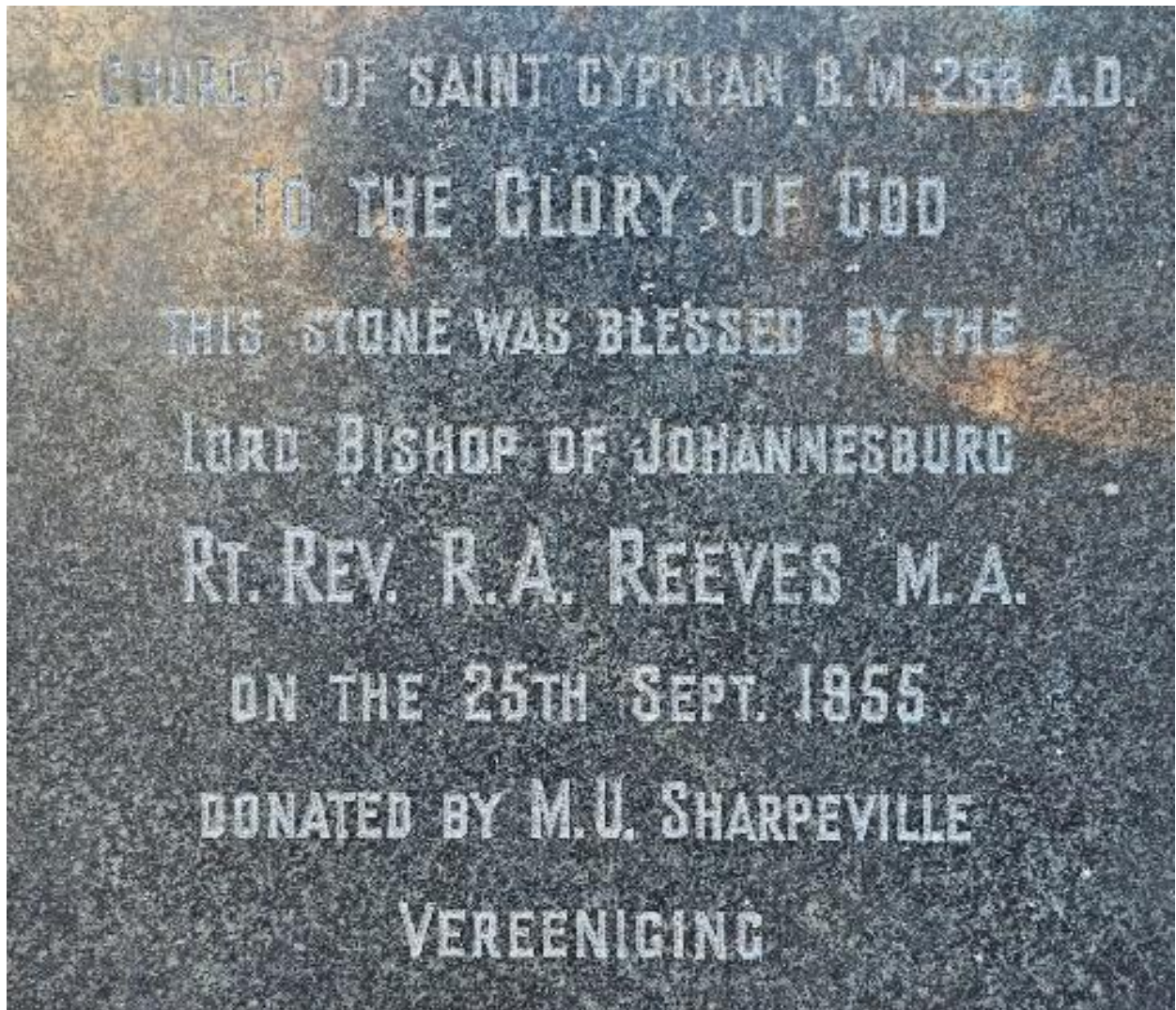


Figure 6.2: The stone blessed by Rev Reeves at Saint Cyprian in Sharpeville (1955)⁶⁰

⁵⁸ C.M. De Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 1972), 348-349.

⁵⁹ C.M. De Villiers, "Die vryetydsbesteding van volwasse manlike Bantoe in die gebied Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 1972), 350-351.

⁶⁰ Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

The Pentecostal churches are part of the Protestant Christian movement and include different denominations: such as Apostolic World Christian Fellowship, Assemblies of God, the Full Gospel Church and the Salvation Army. These religious organisations are estimated by 1959 to have peaked at 18 churches in the township, including the Church of Saint Cyprian (see Figure 6.2).

Clark and Worger noted that:

Both the Ethiopian Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church came to Sharpeville by 1956 and still operate there, as do some specifically African offshoots of the major denominations, the African Methodist Church, African Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church of Africa, and the (now) Uniting Reformed Churches in Southern Africa, a combination of the racially separated sections of the Dutch Reformed Church for Africans and Coloured.⁶¹

Some of these churches existed beyond offering a religious tool to circumvent the cumbersome realities and experiences of township life since the 1950s. The Dutch Reformed Church ran the Matsie Steyn Lower Primary School. Their Methodist counterpart ran the Moeli Higher Primary School. The Anglican Church managed the Boitso Higher Primary, and the Presbyterian Church oversaw the Stewart Higher Primary.⁶² Religious organisations, similarly to the influence of western media on boxing, fashion, jazz and football, diversified the footprint of 'outside' influence on the social identity of Sharpeville. Church uniforms representing the plethora of churches based primarily in 'church square' could and continue to be seen parading the streets on Sunday mornings as churchgoers make their way to church. Churches played a significant role in making a spiritual home and a sense of spiritual belonging to Sharpeville. Reflecting on the role of religion in shaping his life, Mr Molefe recalls:

I was in Pretoria Central prison waiting for my assault trial I was gambling because I did not know anything about God, and when you don't know God you became attracted to many things. It happened that the other night we were gambling I

⁶¹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 97.

⁶² Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 96.

ended up assaulting a gentleman. They opened a case against me and I spent three months in prison. I wanted to share a little history of my life. I was once a gangster, but I found myself in the world by the grace of God; when I was on trial, serving my trial, I started praying, and talking to God, and I made a promise to God that I would start going to church, I think I was between 18 and 19 years old.⁶³

The presence of religion in schools and communities also contributed to the making of place and, in some instances, provided salvation, as was the case with Mr Molefe and many other Sharpeville residents. School kids were exposed to Christianity as a guiding path to life. Church infrastructure and architecture also assisted in alleviating some of the monotony embedded in township design. In comparison to most apartheid townships, such as Soweto and those in Benoni, the tribalist division of Sharpeville was debatably mild.⁶⁴ But Ncala's reflection on the layout of the Sharpeville township attests to some level of division based on tribal lines, he indicated that:

Vuka is divided into two sides: there is Matebeleng, and then there is Basothong. Surnames like mine, Ncala, Kubheka, Hlatshwayo ... are Zulu, and when you go to Shandu, it is surnames like Mofokeng, Motaung... (Sotho surnames). This is Vuka and you can only separate them according to numbers, it is not like Putsoastene and Phelindaba.⁶⁵

Regardless of tribal lines, interactions between residents persisted. The sentiments of home encompassing the broader interactions within and outside the house/home are at play to shape conceptions and experiences of home. Whilst Sharpeville residents made homes out of apartheid structures, the external social productions on the international, national, provincial and local levels contributed a sizeable impact on their homes and townships. The 21 March 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, as with the daily interactions

⁶³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Molefe, Sharpeville, April 2023.

⁶⁴ The researcher's positionality on tribalism in Sharpeville is informed by the lack of attainable evidence of tribal conflict in Sharpeville, even though some of the sections and schools point to the separation of people according to their tribal affiliation, culture or language.

⁶⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala junior, Tshepiso, 2 March 2024.

between residents and the factors outside their houses/homes, reshaped and totally disrupted Africans' sentiments of home.

6.4 The Sharpeville Massacre

6.4.1 Discontentment before the massacre

Home is often a romanticised construct. As Sulevi noted:

When we talk about our home experience, we usually think of positive aspects of love, shelter, safety, relaxation, ease of life, (and) happy memories. At home, wherever I focus my attention, I see familiar landscapes, precious memories come to mind. In reality, not everything is beautiful, acceptable and agreeable at home.⁶⁶

In the context of the model location of Sharpeville, it was almost incomprehensible that protest action would take place and culminate in the loss of lives and injuries. Sharpeville was, throughout its existence, relatively quiet and well monitored, “It was almost inconceivable to the Vereeniging Town Council, or to anyone else for that matter, that an event of the magnitude of the Sharpeville shooting was just around the corner”.⁶⁷ The protest was unexpected because Sharpeville was like other model locations, closely monitored by the police. Sharpeville was strategic in providing labour to the Vereeniging industrial area and the neighbouring industries of Sasolburg.

Clark and Worger put forward an economic view of the region noting that “the Vaal region was key to the economic survival of South Africa, and any disruptions to these industries, especially through the interruption of labour, would be crippling”⁶⁸ to the country's economy. The steady supply of daily labour that ensured the relay of electricity, coal, and water for various industries in South Africa needed to be protected from disruption. The economic disruption of the massacre was vivid and has been expounded upon, the

⁶⁶ S. Riukulehto, "Dangerous, Frightening, Homely: Home Experiences of Those Living on the Goldmines of the Far West Rand." *New Contree* 89, no. 2 (2022): 104.

⁶⁷ Jeffrey, “Cultural Trends,” 152.

⁶⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 115.

disruption to home by the massacre takes centre stage. An analysis of the events leading to the massacre is required to do so.

Though Sharpeville was quiet and somewhat apolitical, the subtle disgruntlement leading to the 1960s rendered Sharpeville a melting pot for political contestations. Sharpeville slowly displayed evidence of disintegration that would inevitably lead to political unrest. The lengthy process of forced removals and the relocation of Top Location residents towards the late 1950s created uncertainty and destabilised peoples' everyday lives. Uncertain of their new environments, these residents arrived in Sharpeville amid high rentals, increased bus fares,⁶⁹ and inadequate wages for Africans.⁷⁰ Chaskalson further estimates that in November 1959, "1500 rent notices were served on Sharpeville households and by January 1960, 2310" notices had been served.⁷¹ Households were under immense financial stress that impacted their ability to meet rent increments. The contestations on rentals continued after the massacre. To encourage the payment of outstanding rents, "those behind in their rent payments were threatened with eviction and punished in other ways; for instance, the township superintendent would not allow rent-defaulting families to bury their dead in the town cemetery".⁷²

Expounding this further, three days after the Sharpeville Massacre, *The New Age* published an article that read "Sharpeville Women Rent Protest".⁷³ The three female protesters against steady rent increments were Mesdames Anna Dhlamini, Mirima Teletsane and Harriet Mahlonoko.⁷⁴ *The New Age* reported that "the pot boiled over when a family was refused permission to bury a corpse because they had not been able to pay their rent for two months".⁷⁵ It was clear that Sharpeville was not home for many residents

⁶⁹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 28.

⁷⁰ A. Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville: Agony of South Africa* (London: Littlehampton Book Services, 1960), 54.

⁷¹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 28.

⁷² T. Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80.

⁷³ Author unknown, "Sharpeville Women's Rent Protest", *The New Age*, 24 March 1960, 8.

⁷⁴ Author unknown, "Sharpeville Women's Rent Protest", *The New Age*, 24 March 1960, 8.

⁷⁵ Author unknown, "Sharpeville Women's Rent Protest", *The New Age*, 24 March 1960, 8.

and that the government's humanitarian concerns and paternalism were relevant in as far as the community members could pay rent. The government's *ubuntu*, in essence, care and concern for the community's well-being did not outweigh its capitalist agenda driven towards the maintenance of the community and its system of model locations.

Eviction was but an aspect of the overall anathema experienced by folks in the region. The African wage remained low because union activism representing working-class Africans was not recognised in most parts of South Africa. This obliterated opportunities for wage negotiations and workers' rights to be formally deliberated.⁷⁶ Petrus Tom, an employee of African Cables, recalls how benign industrial action and resistance towards workplace remuneration inequalities based on race resulted in sporadic attempts to change the situation in an environment hostile to union representation.⁷⁷ White employees, it was alleged, were paid shift allowance; the same courtesy was not allocated to their Black counterparts, fortunately:

There were some very militant workers during those times. Inside the factory one Monday evening workers decided that, 'Tonight we are not going to come back when we go on lunch at midnight. At 1:00 a.m. we won't come back. We want Mr. Woods, (the general manager), to come and explain to us why he is not giving us a shift allowance when our white colleagues are getting it.'⁷⁸

These frustrations amid pass laws, high rentals, evictions, and consequences made their way into Sharpeville. They were, arguably, a stimulus for the participation in the anti-pass law resistance campaign of the 1960s, to be discussed later in the chapter. The problem here is that whilst employees experienced racial discrimination and wage incongruence with employers in the region, the youth of Sharpeville were unable to participate in the economy. They continued to experience the strain of unemployment as industries preferred migrant and older labour.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville*, 54.

⁷⁷ P. Tom, *My Life Struggle* (Johannesburg: Ravan Worker Series, 1985), 14.

⁷⁸ Tom, *My Life Struggle*, 14.

⁷⁹ Jeffrey, "Cultural Trends," 71.

The policing of pass laws prohibited many Africans, especially women, from moving within the region to acquire employment opportunities. The random police raids on Sharpeville homes in the name of pass laws fragmented the feeling of safety, belonging, and security that comes with the 'ownership' of a house/home. Chaskalson found that "the increase in police raids towards the end of the 1950s was the source of considerable discontent among township residents".⁸⁰ Further disgruntlement stemmed from enforcing stock regulations in 1959.⁸¹ Stock regulations prohibited urban farming, a pivotal practice continued by many Africans as an extension of rural life and adaptation to urban living. Having noticed the potential for unrest in townships across South Africa, the Vereeniging Town Council developed social systems to monitor and constrain distress in townships:

In keeping with this approach (minimising unrest), the council showed more sensitivity to local needs and grievances than most other municipalities. It annually made available free beer and the use of its stadium for Moshoeshoe day celebrations, which were organised by residents of Sharpeville.⁸²

The VTC also displayed *ubuntu* when they annually furnished coal and blankets to the residents.⁸³ The extent to which these acts of kindness circumvented, or delayed protest action cannot be measured or determined. However, the community welcomed them. Regardless of language and tribal affiliation, the event may have circumvented, albeit temporarily, the problems people faced in the community, as with soccer and other cultural festivities. It may have delayed mass action up until 1960. Previous attempts at mass protests failed to find prominence in Sharpeville. Furthermore, "a message from the paramount chief of Basutoland calling on all people to go to work was broadcast on days leading to Mayday, and all meetings in the township were banned".⁸⁴ Customary rule seems to have strongly influenced residents because of their unwavering commitment to the structural framework of traditional norms entrenched in rural socialisation. Sharpeville

⁸⁰ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 23.

⁸¹ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 28.

⁸² Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 12.

⁸³ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 12.

⁸⁴ Chaskalson, "The Road to Sharpeville," 13.

also had a strong police presence during the Defiance Campaign in 1952, but there were no reports on activism or support for the event.⁸⁵

Whilst the mass political mobilisation of Mayday proved challenging to obtain interest amongst Sharpeville residents, the 1960 protest received a different audience. These peculiar economic, social, and political circumstances made their township a boiling pot for political unrest. Furthermore, unlike the activities of 1950, the mobilisation and marketing strategies of the resistance movement had a national representation in the demeanours of Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe (the president of the PAC), Job Tsolo (chairman of the Sharpeville PAC branch), Nyakane Tsolo a labourer at African Cable (Secretariat of the PAC Sharpeville branch) and Thomas More (Vice Chairman of the PAC Sharpeville branch) as the ground force representatives in Sharpeville.⁸⁶ The discourse is believed to have found more prominence in the freehold township of Evaton, where groupings of former ANC comrades formed a strong PAC presence.⁸⁷

The news of the breakaway of the PAC from the ANC in 1959⁸⁸ spiked a nationalist political discourse that spread throughout the country, making the PAC a familiar political brand. Centred on an Africanist's conception of 'Africa for Africans', the PAC grounded its political orientation on accentuating issues experienced by Africans. Core to their dissatisfaction with the ANC were the tenets that stemmed from the Freedom Charter of 1955. The Charter advocated that South Africa belonged to all its people, Black and White. The PAC was allegedly against political cooperation with non-white political parties that embodied liberal political traditions.

They strongly believed that Africans should have been at the forefront of the battle against White supremacy and that partnering with other organisations compromised their

⁸⁵ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 82.

⁸⁶ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 83.

⁸⁷ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 77.

⁸⁸ A.K. Hlongwane and S.M. Ndlovu, "*Remembering Sharpeville Day and Fashioning Contested National Narratives: The Sharpeville Memorial Precinct and the Langa Memorial*," in *Public History and Culture in South Africa: Memorialisation and Liberation Heritage Sites in Johannesburg and the Township Space*, A.K. Hlongwane and S.M. Ndlovu (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan 2019): 82.

politics.⁸⁹ “They maintained that during the Defiance campaign of 1952, the interests of African people had been jeopardised by those of other groups”.⁹⁰ Fundamentally, there was a growing concern that the ANC’s *satyagraha* (non-violent peaceful resistance) philosophical endeavour was insubstantial to the violent approaches taken by the National Party. These concerns became widespread and formed the framework for contestations that would lay the political underpinnings for the functionality of the PAC and its justifications for the formation of its military wing, POQO.⁹¹

The PAC’s *modus operandi*, under the leadership of Sobukwe, was clear and driven towards pragmatic political action. Mindful of the ANC’s anti-pass campaign endeavours of the early 1960s and its potential impact in devaluing the political presence of the PAC, the PAC whirlingly implemented the anti-pass action. They inevitably gained the much-needed political mileage ahead of the ANC. The ANC’s annual national conference of December 1959 took a resolution to garner their resources and focus on the anti-pass movement. A week later, the PAC’s National Executive Committee, along with the Resolutions Committee consisting of John Nyathi Pokela and Phillip Kgosana, amongst others, took a similar stance in Orlando 1959. They, similarly to the ANC, proposed an anti-pass campaign against the apartheid regime.⁹² Grobler posits that “because the PAC knew the ANC was planning a similar campaign, it was determined to claim the limelight as the first organisation to launch a pass campaign”.⁹³ Sobukwe only announced the PAC’s anti-pass campaign endeavours on 18 March 1960, three days before the massacre of Sharpeville. Grobler’s assertion of a competitive political attitude between the ANC and the PAC signals the political polarisation embedded in contrary ideologies

⁸⁹ J. Grobler, “Black Resistance against Apartheid, 1950s-1980s,” in *A History of South Africa from the Distant Past to the Present Day* ed. F. Pretorius (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2014), 380.

⁹⁰ Grobler, *Black Resistance against*, 380.

⁹¹ T. Lodge, “The Poqo Insurrection,” *African Studies Institute* 184 (1986): 191.

⁹² Hlongwane and Ndlovu, “Remembering Sharpeville Day,” 83.

⁹³ Grobler, “Black Resistance against,” 381.

that may have existed between the political parties and the vigour to claim relevance in the political representation of Africans.⁹⁴ Ross stated that:

Both the ANC and the PAC announced major campaigns against the Pass Laws. They hoped to bring about major reforms in the way the country was governed. In so doing, they were driven largely by their need to compete with each other, and they seriously underestimated the power and the ruthlessness of the White run-state.⁹⁵

Like Ross and Grobler, Dubow heightens the competitiveness between the parties by describing the PAC as a “rival organisation” to the ANC.⁹⁶ Thompson highlights the competition by stating, “on 21 March 1960, upstaging the ANC, they launched a campaign against the pass laws”.⁹⁷ This ‘competitive’ perception may be misunderstood parochially as an attempt for political dominance. On the contrary, the PAC’s implementation of the pass resistance campaign insinuates pragmatic or action-based politics seemingly absent or not forthcoming within the ANC. Also, the PAC’s invitation to the ANC to forge a collaborative effort in opposing passing laws was perceived by Madiba as a “desperate plan of a leadership in search of followers”.⁹⁸ However, the PAC attracted the South African youth population because of its action-based campaign, which could have been easily perceived as aggressive.

Adhering to the political culture of the ANC, Dubow notes that “on 21 March 1960, just as ANC president and treason trial defendant Albert Luthuli was in the witness box adumbrating the ANC’s commitment to nonviolence, news filtered in of a massacre at Sharpeville township south of Johannesburg”.⁹⁹ Within the apartheid context, Clark and Worger point to the violent clashes that took place in Dube and Meadowlands in

⁹⁴ Grobler, “Black Resistance against,” 381.

⁹⁵ R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 139.

⁹⁶ S. Dubow, “Were there Political Alternatives in the Wake of the Sharpeville-Langa Violence in South Africa, 1960? *The Journal of African History* 56, no. 1 (2015): 124.

⁹⁷ L. Thompson, *The History of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001), 210.

⁹⁸ Hlongwane and Ndlovu, “Remembering Sharpeville Day”, 68.

⁹⁹ S. Dubow, “Were there Political,” 124.

September 1957 that claimed the lives of five Zulu men. This incident, contrary to Ross' positionality on the underestimation of police enormity and muscle, was significant evidence of police brutality.¹⁰⁰ Of course, the extent to which the Union and apartheid government's policing measures repelled minor political unrest in townships and the policing of segregationist laws comprised aggression. The police response was a lens through which freedom fighters and opposition structures to apartheid sensed the robust and violent means at the disposal of the police. How did this violence play out in Sharpeville?

6.4.2 March 1960

The resolution taken by PAC on 20 March 1960 materialised on the ground in diverse ways. The PAC 'rapidly' implemented the Pass Campaign in townships such as Langa and Nyanga (Cape Town), Orlando (Soweto) and the Vaal Region (Vanderbijlpark, Vereeniging and Sharpeville).¹⁰¹ The clarion call for the protest proceedings was seemingly ambiguous and prone to misinterpretation that this study cannot convincingly interrogate. The historian's narration of the event has also accentuated this inconsistency. Ross states that "the campaign in March 1960 entailed the marching of large numbers of people to the local police stations, where they would burn their passes".¹⁰² On the other hand, Grobler stated that "participants had to leave their passbooks at home and present themselves for arrest at police stations".¹⁰³ There was ambiguity in the instructions communicated by the door-to-door campaigns of 20 March. Many questioned whether they were expected to leave their passes or burn them at home or local police stations.

Clearly, people were instructed to present themselves at police stations nationwide and demand arrest for pass offences. The PAC Task Force distributed pamphlets across Sharpeville instructing people to present themselves for arrests to attract a large following for the protest. Maylam asserts that "at the beginning of 1960, there were only about 100 paid-up PAC members in Sharpeville, although PAC activists engaged in some energetic

¹⁰⁰ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 168.

¹⁰¹ Ross, *A Concise History*, 139.

¹⁰² Ross, *A Concise History*, 139.

¹⁰³ Grobler, "Black Resistance against," 381.

recruiting in the township in the early weeks of the year”.¹⁰⁴ The Task Force’s door-to-door campaign was a strategic attempt at convincing people to join in the effort against pass laws. However, in some instances, Clark and Worger’s seminal study accentuates the violent episodes that comprised some of the interactions between Task Force members and the residents that culminated in the damage to property and minor injuries.¹⁰⁵ Lodge’s study confirms Clark and Worger’s findings:

Task Force members even woke up SAP Sergeant Christiaan Nxumalo, someone who would have been well known to Nyakane Tsolo and his fellow branch leaders. He claimed to the commission that the Task Forces told him to come out of his house, that if he did not accompany them that his windows would be smashed.¹⁰⁶

The forceful approach heeded by the Task Forces should be considered within the framework of the recruitment process and its choice of recruitment. “Many of the Task Force members Job Tsolo recruited was the truculent unemployed teenagers who congregated around the beerhall, reputedly a hooligan element whom most householders would have regarded with apprehension”.¹⁰⁷ These were frustrated and unemployed members of society who had yet attained a meaning and presence in the economic climate of Sharpeville. Presumably and based on the rushed nature of the protest, Task forces were inadequately prepared for their task, let alone the political framework of the PAC. Yet, their roughness on the edges proved beneficial if accusations of violence against the community were factual. Amongst the Task Force were unemployed youth who could have participated in the detainment of bus drivers on 20 March, preventing them from operating busses. Fundamentally, the success of the PAC in Sharpeville is partly due to its success in disabling rapid movements of people exiting the group areas, which, as posited in this thesis, required a radical approach.

¹⁰⁴ P. Maylam, “A Tragic Turning-Point: Remembering Sharpeville Fifty Years on” Talk given at the Faculty of Humanities Rhodes University 23 March 2010 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre. 1.

¹⁰⁵ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 126.

¹⁰⁶ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 91.

¹⁰⁷ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 90.

The Vereeniging Transport Company operated in the region and transported commuters from Sharpeville to the adjacent suburbs and places of work. News of the protest action had reached the bus company. On Friday, the bus company drivers reported to management that strike action loomed in Sharpeville, threatening their ability to report for duty.¹⁰⁸ However, management only heeded this reality when bus drivers absconded from work and when Filiberto Cioffi was greeted by the absence of commuters at bus stations.¹⁰⁹ The Task Force members prevented workers who accessed places of employment on bicycles or by walking from leaving the township. The deployment of Task Forces was detrimental to the recruitment of participants and, at the least, in preventing access to places of employment. In hindsight, the close surveillance of Sharpeville and the council's efforts in circumventing industrial and political action in the region aimed to protect industry and its efficiency.

Sharpeville residents were arguably inadequately prepared for the protest action. The PAC manifesto and the macro-political concerns of the party were not relayed to the community except for its positionality on the pass laws. This resonated well with the residents who had first-hand experience of its abuses, limitations, and frustrations. For this reason, amid the possible forceful hand of the Task Force, residents participated in the protest by availing themselves to the Sharpeville Police Station, which opened only in 1959. The 20-21 March 1960 events accentuate Clark and Worger's perspective on community identity and solidarity; "everyone who lived in Sharpeville depended on someone, and at the core were the family and extended family relationships on which the community was built".¹¹⁰ *Ubuntu* and the concern for the networks established over time stretching beyond the family benefited the PAC. It was, arguably, the communication and persuasion within these close-knit networks that encouraged residents to join the protest action. Furthermore, many residents identified Sharpeville as their home and, therefore, felt compelled as community members to participate in protecting their community interests.

¹⁰⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 125.

¹⁰⁹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 125.

¹¹⁰ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 214.

Many Sharpeville residents, especially from Lesotho and other parts of South Africa, were influenced to participate and contribute to the community's well-being. Under chieftaincy rule, it was common for community members to heed the call of the chief or traditional rule to discuss the community's affairs collectively.¹¹¹ An interviewee from Zimbabwe, a neighbouring country, stated the importance of attending community events, including the Sharpeville Massacre commemoration events, because it's their duty as community members.¹¹² The call for council took the form of a *lekgotla*, *kgoro*, or *imbizo* (traditional court); these were instituted to conscientize community members on the cultural legislative frameworks that governed their communities. This instilled and created processes of dispute resolutions, awareness, participation, and expectations, especially regarding the conduct of community members and the traditional leadership as a system of governance.¹¹³

Equally, the gathering of community members at the Sharpeville Police Station should be seen from a cultural lens. This lifelong practice of attending *lekgotla* entrenched a sense of responsibility and expectation of the individual to contribute and, if needed, to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their locality. The materialisation of this responsibility is enforced not only by *ubuntu* but also by the sense of belonging to a community and the need to contribute to its development, protection, and enhancements of communal networks. The community gathering at the police station was stimulated by the communication that a 'big man' would address the crowd.¹¹⁴ This individual took on the familiar demeanour of a chief or traditional authority that would supposedly address them on the elephant in the room, the passes. The setup was all too familiar. Though pass laws were a primary reason for participating in the protest, the nature of the township should be interrogated as a feasible and conducive environment for mobilising high numbers for protest action. Sharpeville, as shown in earlier chapters,

¹¹¹ J. Mabelebele, "Ideological Objectives Underpinning Imbizo as a Model of Communication and Governance," *Communicare: Journal for Communication Sciences in Southern Africa* 25, no. 2 (2006): 104.

¹¹² LTL, OA1, Interview: Ms Bridget, Sharpeville, 3 October 2024.

¹¹³ M.N.R. Rammala, "Lekgotla and Idiomatic Expressions in Traditional Dispute Resolution: the Case of Makapanstad, North-West Province, South Africa," *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies* 16, no. 1 (2021): 226-227.

¹¹⁴ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 58.

was a vibrant and busy township; children played in large numbers in the streets, unmonitored by adults¹¹⁵, whilst other community members walked to the shops, recreational spaces, and other places of interest.

It is expected that many people joined the procession because of idleness and the monotony that encompassed the day, mainly because of unemployment and the inability to access workplaces. Reeves states, "very few Africans had gone to work, and an idle, holiday atmosphere pervaded the town..."¹¹⁶ Based on the photographic evidence presented by Reeves, the children who played in the streets of Sharpeville unmonitored by adults, as stated by Ncala earlier, perceived the gathering with excitement. The robust display of Saracens, marching police, and the low-flying aircraft at 10:00 am entertained young, curious minds. Unfortunately, their bodies can be seen amongst the lifeless bodies that lay on the ground after the shooting. The young could not have arguably comprehended the resistance against pass laws nor the legality and consequences thereof to have encouraged them to participate in the protest. Essentially, the protest had dire consequences for non-participants; these were some of the people who opted to abstain from the protest. Reeves recounts that "one woman in the hospital told me (Reeves) that she was in a shop buying groceries when she was shot, while another woman said that she had been hit while doing her washing in her backyard."¹¹⁷ The consequences of the protest action were felt by non-participants who heard the traumatising sound of gunshots whilst in their homes and other parts of Sharpeville.

Evidence shows that the crowd was peaceful and amicable towards the police, and this continued after the arrest of More, Tsolo, and a gentleman in a red shirt. Before his arrest, Tsolo controlled the crowd to the extent that the crowd refrained from noise when his commanding hand was raised to address the crowd.¹¹⁸ Scores of protesters and bystanders were seen to have waved their headgear towards the police and Saracens that entered the township and the police station's vicinity. In some instances, the police

¹¹⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala senior, Sharpeville, 2 March 2024.

¹¹⁶ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 58.

¹¹⁷ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 64.

¹¹⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 138.

could be seen talking to protesters without any provocation or threat to their lives. Furthermore, the protesters did not arm themselves with weapons; the sight of umbrellas providing shade on a humid day and the sticks carried by older people to assist in their bipedalism were regarded as weaponry.¹¹⁹ The crowd was unarmed; what triggered the shooting?

There are a plethora of theories that supposedly explain the massacre. Firstly, on March 20, during their patrol of the township, policemen "...convinced themselves that they heard shots being fired. This is possible because Sharpeville gangsters used firearms habitually."¹²⁰ Police expected similar conduct from the crowd on the 21st. Secondly, the supposed violent interactions between the police and members of the community and the PAC members on the 20th involved the throwing of stones at the police. These violent interactions could have created an expectation of a violent crowd on 21 March.¹²¹ Thirdly, there is a misconstrued perception that a gunshot was fired from the crowd. Geelbooi Mofokeng, suspected and interrogated for possession of an arms cache, made his way to the police station, reaching the front of the crowd. He saw a familiar face that had interrogated him earlier; he fired in the air. "Someone in the row of police now drawn up into a firing position shouted 'skirt' or 'n' 'skit', either 'shot', or 'shoot' in Afrikaans".¹²² Maylam's analysis points to a similar theory, "a petty criminal in the crowd fired two shots in the air. The police officer at the gate stumbled and a constable next to him raised his gun and fired a shot in the air. This was a signal to other police to open fire".¹²³ What remains is that at 1:40 pm on 21 March 1960, Lieutenant Colonel Pienaar ordered heavily armed policemen with "machine guns, rifles, and revolvers to fire directly into an unarmed and peaceful crowd".¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville*, 58.

¹²⁰ Lodge, *An Apartheid Massacre*, 102.

¹²¹ Maylam, "A Tragic Turning-point," 105.

¹²² Maylam, "A Tragic Turning-point," 2.

¹²³ Maylam, "A Tragic Turning-point," 2.

¹²⁴ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 167.

The police's reaction encompassed the brutal murder and injury of civilians, which must be analysed within the context of apartheid South Africa. The submission of the Bishop of Johannesburg to the Commission of Inquiry Into the Occurrences at Sharpeville (and other places) on 21 March 1960, revealed that:

Sometimes expressed in the police evidence and sometimes implicit in it is an attitude of mind which regards Africans or at least a crowd of Africans, not as fellow citizens whom it was the duty of the police to protect and help, but as potential enemies. This attitude is not merely one of prejudice against the Africans; it is an unhappy mixture of hatred, contempt and fear. The police regarded these people as a "mob", not as a collection of individuals; as a mob which understood only the argument of force.¹²⁵

Hatred, contempt and fear materialised in various ways. The police, according to submissions made to the commission, did not attempt to negotiate with the protesters or engage the leaders on amicable strategies to circumvent deaths and injuries.¹²⁶ Clark and Worger accentuate some of the heinous conduct of policemen entrusted with crowd management. They found that "Pienaar has no respect for Africans. In 1934, as a young sergeant at the Jeppe Police Station in Johannesburg, he was sued for assaulting a pregnant woman and causing her to lose her unborn child".¹²⁷ Under his command, the police killed five Zulu men when they clashed with Basotho in Dube and Meadowlands in September 1957.¹²⁸ Pienaar was adamant that the natives were incapable of a peaceful demonstration or the communication of disgruntlement without violence.¹²⁹ Thus, violence was the only means by which to subdue the crowd. Pienaar's preconceptions of natives encompassing contempt, racism, and hatred clouded his judgement of the scene. This rendered him incapable of differentiating between a peaceful and violent protest. Furthermore, "Regulation 741 of the Standing Orders of the South African Police provides

¹²⁵ Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville*, 159.

¹²⁶ Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville*, 160.

¹²⁷ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 167.

¹²⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 167.

¹²⁹ Reeves, *Shooting at Sharpeville*, 162.

that firing upon the people is a measure which should never be resorted to until every other means shall have failed to ensure the preservation of peace and good order.”¹³⁰ This was not the case; the police were armed with complex weaponry comprising “.303 rifles, .38 revolvers and Sten guns.”¹³¹ The police fired against a crowd running away from their fire. The commission found that:

The figures compiled by Capt. Van den Bergh showed that 11 men with Sten guns between them fired 326 rounds, 46 men with rifles fired 251 rounds, and 15 men with revolvers fired 128 rounds. In addition, two C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) men fired one round each with their automatic pistols. These figures do not take into account any firing by Captain Coetzee’s men outside the perimeter.¹³²

The Police were unmoved by the shots suffered by lifeless and injured bodies fallen on the ground. The policemen were reported to have reloaded their guns and continued their shooting spree. Post-mortem analysis found that “...3 out of every 4 wounds can be said to have been inflicted from behind must be found to have been the result of firing being directed into the backs of a retreating crowd”.¹³³ The crowd immediately began to run upon the commencement of the shooting. None of the bodies were found near the police fence; the few bodies were on the roadway to the south-west and north-west of the police station and in Zwane Street, others near the clinic.¹³⁴

The Police showed little to no remorse and *ubuntu* towards the injured and the deceased, and this was evident in their unwillingness to assist Reverend R. Maja in caring for the injured by provisioning water, basic aid and comfort.¹³⁵ It was the Black policemen who

¹³⁰ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 90.

¹³¹ Commission into the Enquiry into the Occurrences at Sharpeville (and other places) on the 21st March, 1960; Submissions Presented to the Commission on Behalf of the Bishop of Johannesburg. 15 June, 1960, 134.

¹³² Commission into the, 135.

¹³³ Commission into the, 140.

¹³⁴ Commission into the, 141.

¹³⁵ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 65.

later assisted in carrying the injured to emergency vehicles and the deceased to forensic vehicles.¹³⁶ Maja experienced horrific scenes whilst assisting; “many had been hit in the head or stomach and were mutilated. One such man was John Mailane, father of a large family, who had his head blown off while distributing invoices for his firm on his bicycle, some distances away”.¹³⁷ Regardless of the presence of death and injury, the police were determined to fabricate the evidence on the scene. They threw stones at the premises of the police station and collected items deemed weapons, which they would later claim as evidence of insurgence. None of the police officers admitted to having shot first.¹³⁸

The spread of information played a significant role in apartheid South Africa. Spearheaded by the propagandist machine of apartheid ideologies, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (henceforth SABC) was the central communicator of the social, economic, and political realities of South Africa.¹³⁹ Radio, a fundamental wing of the SABC, was, in many African households, a mechanism to connect with the affairs of South Africa and the outside world. News broadcasted in various mother tongues kept residents updated with the latest happenings in their rural homes. Considered a critical luxury, most households, as shown in earlier chapters, congregated around radios to listen to the news and soaps. Radios, for this reason, were pivotal in bringing families together. Like radio, newspapers were closely aligned with class and respectability in many African communities. They contributed to disseminating information that shaped societal discourses on socio-economic issues. Against this backdrop, this section analyses the newspaper publications of the Sharpeville Massacre and the later court proceedings by the *Rand Daily Mail* and how they may have shaped public perception of the massacre.

On October 26, 1960, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported, “19 outsiders killed at Sharpeville”.¹⁴⁰ These were words uttered by Labuschagne, accentuating the prominence of the insider-

¹³⁶ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 95.

¹³⁷ Reeves, Shooting at Sharpeville, 65.

¹³⁸ Lodge, An Apartheid Massacre, 163.

¹³⁹ K. Tomaselli and R. Tomaselli, *Between Policy and Practice in the SABC*, (Lake View Press, 1990), 37.

¹⁴⁰ Vereeniging Reporter, “19 outsiders killed at Sharpeville”, *Rand Daily Mail*, 26 October 1960, 9.

outsider perspective on belonging in Sharpeville. This was further shaped by increased surveillance of township residents and policies determining belonging and association. The normalised laws and customs of group areas influenced Labuschagne. These were purposed somewhat to shift the massacre of hundreds of Africans in Sharpeville to have been influenced by an “outside” element. The presupposition of this rests on the apparent inability of Sharpeville residents to organise political resistance to the political circumstances experienced within and outside the township.

According to Labuschagne, the ‘outsiders’ are seemingly and subtly blamed for the rebellion towards the reference book in a model location uncharacterised by rebellion and political activism. Labuschagne’s analysis, as submitted by the *Rand Daily Mail*, was not sufficiently presented as an argumentative article critically reflecting on the day's events. It accentuated the cross-examination between Labuschagne and Mr P.M. O'brien at the Sharpeville public violence trial without contextualising the story to the efforts of the PAC in mobilising the residents of Sharpeville. Inadvertently, it lacked a robust analysis of the tenets that legally constituted residence in Sharpeville, and these included the processes and determinations for residence, curfews, and the administration of visitors, amongst others. Furthermore, there was no attempt made to mention some of the names of the “19 of the 71 Africans killed, and 40 of the 180 wounded in Sharpeville on March 21...”¹⁴¹ They were apparently “strangers” to strengthen the subtle perception that strangers incited the protest actions that started on 20 March. These protesters or “outsiders” would not have been listed in Sharpeville’s township register, which is assumed to have been in Labuschagne’s possession. On the other hand, they may have been enlisted as visitors or relatives to the residents. Also, it would have been humanely arduous, even for Labuschagne to have known every single resident of Sharpeville to such an extent that “strangers” would have been in his sight at a gathering of what was estimated to have been 5000 Africans.

Labuschagne's utterance veers towards the possibility worthy of debate. The “stranger” element could have resulted from the ease of access into the township, especially from members of PAC in Evaton and sympathisers from neighbouring townships on the 20th and 21st March. If any outsiders were documented, they may have been attracted to the

¹⁴¹ Vereeniging Reporter, “19 outsiders killed at Sharpeville,” *Rand Daily Mail*. 26 October 1960, 9.

township by the rumbling noise of the aeroplanes that flew over the crowd at the police station. In addition, they may have gained privy to the marketing of the protest action by the PAC that took place on factory floors and from relatives employed by local industries, but this cannot be proven. Essentially, the fulcrum for political action stemmed from outside ideological influence, particularly from Evaton. In this freehold, a formidable number of the African National Congress (ANC) comrades splintered away from the party to strengthen the presence of the PAC. Although the ideology may have been an external influence from outside, the manifestation of political ideologies aimed towards the resistance of reference books was influenced by the pragmatic action brewed within the borders of Sharpeville. As the residents made sense of the day's aftermath, newspapers and radio shaped, agitated and directed discourses that shaped fear, panic, and anxiety amongst the residents. This was worsened when Sharpeville was under 'township arrest' by the heavy presence of police enforcement.

The conduct of the police became increasingly scrutinised by the commission following the Sharpeville Massacre. Under pressure to provide a police-oriented reflection on the massacre, the police were determined to underplay their heavy-handedness in crowd management (this has been detailed earlier). The police chief under question was Colonel G.D. Pienaar. Pienaar's reflection on his command's inability to successfully disperse the crowd without the heavy usage of violence rested on the absence of a trained riot squad. "He said riot squads would have had more efficient loudspeakers and better gas. Gas had been used earlier on March 21, and it had blown back into the police".¹⁴² This commentary publicly shifts the conduct and behaviour of the police under his command to the absence of trained personnel and the lack of adequate police units. Read in the context of the massacre, the police present were undertrained or lacked the necessary training for crowd or riot management. Thus, they were allegedly overwhelmed by the situation at the Sharpeville police station. However, at the opportunity to express remorse and guilt, especially after immense moments of reflection post-21 March. Pienaar extended his unshifting positionality on the brutal massacre of Africans after being asked

¹⁴² Staff reporter, "Stronger tear gas is needed Police chief's evidence," *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 May 1960, 3.

if he had learned any lesson from the massacre. He responded, "We may get better equipment. The teargas we have now is not strong enough."¹⁴³

The focus on publishing cross-examinations without robust and critical analysis, 'publish it as it is', exposed to its readership the harsh realities of apartheid policing and its blatant disregard for human lives. This was at a time when the community of Sharpeville was coming to terms with the massacre. Furthermore, Pienaar's inhumane positionality and utterance amid the intense policing, harassment, surveillance, and arrests of suspected PAC members in Sharpeville was a stern reminder of the unapologetic nature of the police command under the apartheid government. The police were determined to justify township management and control through violence and presence.

To this effect and moments before the massacre, *Rand Daily Mail* published the police brutality and harassment experienced by Peter Molefi, a resident of Sharpeville, under the enforcement of pass laws. "Molefi said he was hit several more times. He was pulled forward and handed to a second plainclothes man at the door of the police station. This man also hit him until he was satisfied".¹⁴⁴ Unclear of the policeman's appetite for the infliction of violence upon others, Molefi's experiences attested to the violent nature in which the pass laws were implemented. Whilst many Africans had either abandoned their passes or destroyed them following the PAC orders, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that "Mr Erasmus warned all Africans that they should still be in possession of their reference books or duplicate copies".¹⁴⁵ This message served two purposes: firstly, the apartheid government was in control and defended social engineering mechanisms endeavoured through reference books. Secondly, they had no intent to give in to the demands of the ANC and PAC; to have done so would have weakened their political positionality and influence.

To a large extent, the reporting of the judicial proceedings by the *Rand Daily Mail* relayed to its readers the extent to which the police fabricated the crime scene outside the police station. The crowd was, as mentioned earlier, accused of inciting violence by throwing

¹⁴³ Staff reporter, "Stronger tear gas is needed Police chief's evidence," *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 May 1960, 3.

¹⁴⁴ Staff reporter, "I was hit at Police Station, says man," *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 May 1960, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Staff reporter, "Day-to-day diary of events since Sharpeville," *Rand Daily Mail*, 11 April 1960, 9.

stones at the police. The December 16 issue, months after the massacre, revealed that “an African constable said at the Sharpeville public violence trial yesterday that policemen picked up stones from outside the police station fence and carried them into the building after the shooting on March 21.”¹⁴⁶ Expectedly, for his safety, the African constable could not recollect who had instructed the police to do so. This testimony was monumental; the police, as shown earlier, justified the shooting by accusing the crowd of throwing stones at them.

The *Rand Daily Mail*, in addition to expounding the cross-examinations that exposed police inadequacy and ill-preparedness, also played a significant role in highlighting policemen’s fear and uncertainties. Fear could have been embedded in patrolling unfamiliar environments and people whose conceptions have been predominantly shaped by racial underpinnings and indifference. Upon arriving at the Sharpeville Police Station, Lieutenant Visser, according to the *Rand Daily Mail*, recalls seeing large crowds of people that awoken a grave concern for the safety of the police officers operating the police station.¹⁴⁷ His fears were compounded by the poor ammunition available to the police officers who were expected to manage the protest. His note to Captain Coetzee expressed this fear:

I wrote a note to Captain Coetzee telling him that I feared that if the police were attacked, they would not be able to resist and would not survive.¹⁴⁸

Seemingly, his fear was further exacerbated by the ‘tremendous’ pressure placed on the fence by the protesters. Photographic imagery of the fence was provided as evidence to the commission. The evidence showed that leaning against the fence posed no danger to the police officers or the infrastructural integrity of the police station. The article circumvented this shortcoming by underscoring the unwarranted fear that the police claim

¹⁴⁶ Staff reporter, “Policemen carried stones to station,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 16 December 1960, 11.

¹⁴⁷ Staff reporter, “Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was ‘inflammable’,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Staff reporter, “Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was ‘inflammable’,” *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

to have experienced by accentuating Nyakane Tsolo's ability to control the behaviour of the crowd:

Two or three of the leaders were by then inside the police grounds and seemed to have considerable influence over the crowd. One of them, particularly Tsolo, seemed very influential; he just had to lift his hand, and the crowd would roar and gesticulate. When he told the people to be quiet, they were.¹⁴⁹

The newspaper article emphasised the purpose of the protest, which was a rejection of the pass laws and a wage increment for the *Bantu*. Tsolo's request was evident and void of violence, intimidation, and provocation:

When I asked Tsolo whether he and his people would be satisfied if concessions were granted, he replied that the Bantu would not carry passes and they wanted their wages raised to £35 a month.¹⁵⁰

Tsolo's utterance indicates that the protester's grievances encompassed political and economic groundings heightened by the limitations of the pass laws. The articulation of the demands of the people was once again non-violent in comparison to the stature, presence, and display of the police's arsenal. Sacks' article, *Saracens used in Rand 'Show of strength'*, ironically published on the day of the massacre, reported on the benign reception of Alexandra township residence on the grand display of Saracens in their township. Purposed to inflict fear, control, and weaponry dominance, the Saracens reportedly "cooled tempers".¹⁵¹ In Sharpeville, Saracens, like the aircraft, were a spectacle whose presence was admired. The crowd's reaction amid the pockets of violent interaction between the police and crowds of people on the 20th could have incited a violent approach to the police's demeanour. This was not the case. Instead, *ubuntu* dominated the day, proceeding, at least, from the crowd's side.

¹⁴⁹ Staff reporter, "Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was 'inflammable'," *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

¹⁵⁰ Staff reporter, "Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was 'inflammable'," *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

¹⁵¹ Author unknown, "Thousands riot: police open fire", Monday 21 March 1960, 1. *Rand Daily Mail*.

Gestures of greetings and side conversations took place between the police and the protesters; the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that:

Lieutenant Visser described how an African had entered the Sharpeville Police Station grounds carrying a case of cool drinks and placed it at the feet of a group of policemen standing near a Saracen. I asked him where he came from and for whom the drinks were. The man could not or would not tell me where they came from, but he said they were for our people. I then told him to take the cool drinks out again.¹⁵²

It could have been difficult for Lieutenant Visser to comprehend a gesture of kindness from a person he regarded as a potential enemy and threat to his life and state property. Visser's awe is revealed later in the article when asked about the civilian offering the people cool drinks: "I could not make sense of his attitude or what the point was in bringing 24 bottles of cool drinks for all the men in the police station."¹⁵³ However, it was an act of *ubuntu*. The scorching temperature amid the long wait for the 'big man' to address the crowd required refreshments. However, this was mistakenly a threat, and the man was asked to disperse from the police station.

6.4.3 The Sharpeville Massacre and the unmaking of home

Before the Sharpeville Massacre, the residents of Sharpeville collaboratively reshaped the socio-economic landscape of the township using complex systems of communal networks, sports, culture, traditions and *ubuntu*. The relationships within the house with immediate and extended family members culminated in the broader township through robust, interchangeable experiences that shaped the social landscape of Sharpeville. For many, the township was, as discussed earlier (see examples of Sexton Mabena, Vaal Professionals, Hugh Masekela, amongst others), represented by sports teams and figures that placed Sharpeville on the national and international stage.

¹⁵² Staff reporter, "Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was 'inflammable'," *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

¹⁵³ Staff reporter, "Sharpeville before riots officer says crowd was 'inflammable'," *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 April, 1960, 3.

In the local context, these were opportunities to enhance territoriality, belonging and home. The jazz artists, boxers, gangsters, swimming pool, creche, the stadium, the vibrant streets where children negotiated playing space with commuters and passers, and the homes in which people prided themselves with ornaments and ambiances that situated their sense of belonging and identity gave Sharpeville, a sense of home. The blatant disregard for human lives that culminated in the gruesome murder of innocent civilians repositioned the township from home, a sense of pride for many, to become, in a matter of seconds, a crime scene. Clark and Worger found in their study that almost every street of Sharpeville had either a victim or a participant in the massacre, further nullifying the migrant or outsider perspective presented earlier.¹⁵⁴ The impact of the massacre was, in essence, experienced by the entire community in some way or another, individually and collectively.

Ubuntu, a common thread that sustained community relations and networks, became fundamental in collective mourning and support for the bereaved. This was, however, dampened by the prohibitions imposed by the government for open casket ceremonies and the inability to have seen and performed rituals for the deceased as per African traditional norms. Rituals usually include bathing of the deceased's body, prayer, and pre-burial customs. Some of these traditions require communicating with the deceased and leading their spirits with a small and specific tree branch from the places of their death to their homes for a night and eventually their resting place. These rituals accord respect and honour to the deceased.¹⁵⁵ The burial grounds are in African customs sacred; the digging within which the casket is placed is regarded as a home for the deceased, '*le hae la bofello*' or even '*ntlo*', both can be summarised as homes for the deceased. The arrival of the deceased in trucks ahead of a mass funeral at Phelindaba cemetery on 30 March 1960¹⁵⁶ was alarmingly demeaning, insensitive, and unbecoming. Families were not accorded family-oriented approaches to burial processes that included, amongst others, a night vigil in the presence of the deceased in their house. The government, in essence,

¹⁵⁴ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 91.

¹⁵⁵ This positionality and knowledge derive not only from observations made on funeral rituals in various African communities but from family practices that have similarities with other cultural spaces in South Africa's traditional tapestry.

¹⁵⁶ Hlongwane and Ndlovu, *Remembering Sharpeville Day*, 102.

disrupted traditional burial norms purposed to ensure rest for the deceased. The extent to which this impacted the spiritual connections between relatives and the deceased cannot be established.

Disruptions of the home manifested in various forms. The continued presence of law enforcement agencies after the massacre was a continued assault on the physical landscape of Sharpeville. Also, the “dire shortages of food, fuel to cook with...and persecution by the municipal authorities made life extremely difficult for all the residents of Sharpeville”.¹⁵⁷ For residents, the patrolling vehicles and the towering presence of Saracens were a constant reminder of the atrocity committed by the police. This was made worse by the increased random house searches targeting members of the PAC who were suspected of having in some way contributed to the protest. Clark and Worger vehemently critique the Vereeniging Town Council’s patriarchal approach to housing as pivotal for the disintegration of the community. It furthermore contributed to the disintegration of home and family.¹⁵⁸ Houses in Sharpeville were allocated to employed men who supposedly had families in the urban areas. The death of many patriarchs as a result of police shootings led to the loss of homes and, in essence, made families susceptible to homelessness. For instance:

When 20-year-old Martha Nyembezi’s husband Manesi was shot dead leaving her pregnant and with two young daughters (both under 5) to care for, the municipal authorities ordered her to leave the family home. When she refused, she was arrested at the police station and sent to prison, and when she was released, she found that her family had been evicted from the house and another family with a male breadwinner had been permitted to move in.¹⁵⁹

In addition to the loss of a home due to the death of a male spouse, many homes were disrupted by the absence of a family member who was forced to flee the township upon police suspicions of insurgency and protest action. In many cases where the police suspected the head of the family of insurgency, the entire family would lose their home.

¹⁵⁷ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 208.

¹⁵⁸ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 209.

¹⁵⁹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 209.

Also, many of the injured feared imprisonment and fled to Lesotho and other places in South Africa to evade the police.¹⁶⁰ Those hospitalised after the police shooting were immediately arrested, regardless of their injuries.¹⁶¹ The police brutality that persisted in the aftermath of the shooting and the measures implemented by the municipality in forcefully removing people from Sharpeville attests to the temporality and instability of homes in apartheid-model locations. After the Sharpeville Massacre, the township was disrupted and ceased to be homely. The presence of the other, the police, the physical assault on houses evident in bullet holes, and the death of loved ones slowly eroded sentiments of home.¹⁶² Apartheid's infrastructure and township planning should be considered in the context of the massacre. The proximity of the houses to the streets provided insufficient space or protection from bullets or physical assault on property. The absence of walls or 'stop nonsense', assumably because of cost containment strategies, increased the house's susceptibility to outside attacks. Houses in Sharpeville were, as some remain, porous to outside influences because of the inadequate fence.

Discontent with the administration of the Vaal by the Orange Vaal Administration (later Development) Board (OVADB) and the Lekoa Town Council,¹⁶³ disgruntled community members of Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Boipatong and Bophelong fervently resorted to protests in the early 1980s against circumstances as with those cited in 1960. Rent increment amid the rising costs of living was the cornerstone of their protest:

In the Vaal Triangle, the part of the PWV worst hit by deepening recession in the early 1980s, the OVAB had been exceptionally determined to achieve economic rentals. Rents had risen by more than 400% between 1977 to 1984. Even before a further increase was announced in August 1984, the average rent of R62 per month was already more than double the national metropolitan average.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 211.

¹⁶¹ Clark and Worger, *Voices of Sharpeville*, 211.

¹⁶² LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Tsolo, Sharpeville, 28 January 2023.

¹⁶³ M. Chaskalson, K. Jochelson, and J. Seekings "Rent Boycotts, the State, and the Transformation of the Urban Political Economy in South Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 40 (1987): 50.

¹⁶⁴ Chaskalson, Jochelson, and Seekings, "Rent Boycotts, the State", 50.

Before the then Prime Minister P.W. Botha declared a State of Emergency in 1985, it was clear that the widespread protest action in South African townships would take a violent turn, involving attacks against counsellors, police officials, and government institutions within townships, especially the Vaal.¹⁶⁵ The Vaal Civic Association proposed the protest action¹⁶⁶ as a peaceful one. But the attack on people and buildings associated with governors was a solid message to the council¹⁶⁷ of the residents' solidarity against the high cost of living. Regardless of the state's repressive mechanisms, especially towards mass mobilisation of protests, communities were willing to resort to 'counterinsurgency' to protect their livelihoods, neighbourhoods, and homes.

Petrol bombs and other forms of organised attacks against government property and personnel signal the extent to which previous attempts to communicate community concerns through peaceful means were unproductive. Previous interactions with the police arguably entrenched the normalisation of violence. Albeit the violence persuaded the relocation of counsellors to Sebokeng. Furthermore, continued police presence and the deployment of troops as a measure to subdue insurgency, disrupted the township's homeliness.¹⁶⁸

The attack on government property and personnel should be seen in the context of home, belonging, and people's agency in making homeliness. It was clear from Sharpeville's inception that social engineering prowess was a foundation upon which Sharpeville rested. However, the protest in the region amid growing political antagonism and militancy was a deliberate attempt by residents to contest against the group area, pass laws, unemployment and low wages. This was done to assert their belonging and presence in urban South Africa, ultimately through violence. Elements of state representation in the

¹⁶⁵ R. Franziska, "'Siyayinyova!': Patterns of Violence in the African Townships of the Vaal Triangle, South Africa, 1980–86." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 85, no. 3 (2015): 398.

¹⁶⁶ The section does not intend to provide detailed accounts of the Vaal Uprising but to contextualise it in the processes of homemaking beyond the physical house and how the home was susceptible not only to apartheid laws but also to its reinforcement of strategic control of townships and people through violent measures. The repercussions of township insurgency and violent episodes such as the Boipatong Massacre, not so far from Sharpeville, impacted residents and permeated the house to change homes significantly.

¹⁶⁷ Franziska, "'Siyayinyova!': Patterns of," 403.

¹⁶⁸ Franziska, "'Siyayinyova!': Patterns of," 404

township through counsellors and the police were catalysts for sentiments of unbelonging, which threatened homeliness in the township.

6.4.4 “Sharpeville is not a Massacre”

South Africa’s youth unemployment is at its highest since 1994 with a youth unemployment rate of 45.5%.¹⁶⁹ The youth of South Africa in general and Sharpeville in particular experience abject poverty because of unemployment. The 1960-1980s youth participated in the politics of their time by joining the PAC Task Force and by contributing, in various ways, to the Vaal uprising¹⁷⁰ and the making of home in Sharpeville. The current generation is dismantling the commemoration of the massacre as a form of youth resistance to the socio-economic challenges experienced by their generation. Days before the 2024 commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre, a video captioned “Sharpeville is not a massacre Mar21 Save the Date” made its rounds on various social media platforms (see Figure 6.3).

The video was purposed as a marketing strategy to create awareness of an event at SHIKETA, a local pub in the region. It openly challenged conventionality and traditions embedded in commemoration, especially after 1994. The commemoration of the massacre, as previously shown, was characterised by an inflow of dignitaries, including presidential presence, into Sharpeville to pay homage to the lives lost at the hands of law enforcement. The events of March 2024 had a unique socio-political undertone. Marking 30 years of democracy, South Africa took to the poll on 29 May 2024. Political organisations flooded into Sharpeville using the commemoration as a political opportunity to campaign ahead of the national elections.

¹⁶⁹ Department: Statistics South Africa, Republic of South Africa, 17 May 2024. “Unemployment in South Africa: A youth perspective”. Accessed 8 August 2024. Stats SA <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=17266>

¹⁷⁰ See further information on the Vaal Uprising on page 214.



Figure 6.3: A screenshot of the video titled *Sharpeville is not a massacre*¹⁷¹

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), under the leadership of Sello Julius Malema, hosted its Sharpeville Day Commemoration Rally at the scenic Dlomo dam. President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the residents at the George Thabe Cricket Grounds under the banner “Three Decades of Respect for and Promotion of Human Rights”.¹⁷² ‘The Sharpeville is not a massacre’ video contradicted, disrupted and challenged discourses

¹⁷¹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2024.07.02. Sharpeville is not a Massacre, accessed, 14 May 2025.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/LP1oTDxC1gY><https://www.youtube.com/shorts/LP1oTDxC1gY>

¹⁷² South African Government official information and services, “President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses National Human Rights Day, 21 Mar, 19 March 2024, accessed 14 May 2024.

<https://www.gov.za/news/media-advisories/government-activities/president-cyril-ramaphosa-addresses-national-human>

centred on commemoration in Sharpeville in several ways. The video begins with a deliberate display of paced images of the massacre, notably when the police shot at the residents, including pictures of lifeless and injured bodies. The images are almost impossible to view because of the speed at which they play in the video. The choice of video speed can be regarded as an attempt to either underplay the significance of the massacre or to get to the gist of the message urgently. The gist of the message could not have been any more precise; the narrator mentions:

Sharpeville is not a massacre, Sharpeville is Bull Lehoko, David 'DK' Khunou, Nana Coyote, ke ya go tshayela (I am telling you), it's the sweet trumpet sounds of Bra Hugh Masekela, Sharpeville ke le tamo la Dlomo, mashala a ha Nhlapo, Shavas ke Swingsters madala, there's Philadelphia in Sharpeville, mfana (my boy) there's a flamingo in Sharpeville, Sharpeville ke siltalianeng (a place of Italian fashion), beke le beke (week after week), Shavas ke Machobane street forever buzzing Seiso street connecting to the vibey Dubula drive, Sharpeville ke Shandu with a touch of Lehlasedi, eeh yah mofumahadi (yes my wife), Shavas ke Thibo Touch, its our human right to celebrate the greatness of Sharpeville because Sharpeville is not a massacre.¹⁷³

The narrator's clarion call for thinking about Sharpeville beyond the massacre is vivid in the choice of representations made in the video. The video calls for a positive and current view of Sharpeville by highlighting historical and present positives underplayed by the fixation on the massacre. According to the narration, Sharpeville is not defined by the massacre but by its people and their achievements. Artists such as Hugh Masekela, Nana Coyote, Sharpeville Swingsters and the infamous footballer Bull Lehoko are some of the talents that placed Sharpeville on the map. Thibo Touch, a radio personality, is also mentioned as a modern symbol of the pool of talent found in modern townships worthy of celebrating. It also expresses pride in the larger township, a home for many.

Moving away from people, the short clip recognises the natural landscape, such as the Dlomo dam and the coal found in the region, as pivotal for describing the essence of Sharpeville. The vibrant township streets comprise taxis, cars, buses and scores of

¹⁷³ Sharpeville is not a massacre, accessed 30 October 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/428kWp-zVws>

people making their way to places of interest in the buzzing township. The township youth proudly endorse si-Italiana (Italian fashion) in their quest to make a home in an ever-expanding township. The evolution of Sharpeville from apartheid to democracy displays extensions of commonalities in different contexts. Before the massacre, township identity took form in sports and arts, often leading to territoriality. The massacre fundamentally disturbed Sharpeville's identity by shifting its identity as a place where hundreds of people were murdered. Post-1960, Sharpeville became synonymous with its violent episode that disturbed the identity created over time by the feeling of belonging and homeliness.

This was worsened by the Vaal Uprising in the 1980s and the conflicts that took place in its periphery and neighbouring township of Boipatong. Post 1994, the township underwent a social and cultural transformation under the auspices of democracy, which allowed people to reshape their identity amid the fresh reminders of the massacre. There is a paradigm amongst the youth to shift the discourse from politics towards social issues. The video surprisingly does not embrace the signing of the monumental constitution of South Africa by Nelson Mandela that took place in George Thabe stadium on 10 May 1996. As with other momentous events in the region, this moment made Sedibeng the cradle of human rights and reshaped the township's identity. This has, however, been dampened by service delivery-related echoes during the commemorations and the youth's desire to return to a township that celebrates place, identity, and the achievements of its people. The massacre, in essence, is perceived as an interruption that downplays the plethora of talent and culture in the township that should be remembered.

6.5 Belonging and the making of home in a democratic South Africa

The apartheid epoch created a repressive atmosphere in South African townships that induced both peaceful and violent political reactions. The transition to democracy following the state of emergency declared in the 1980s spared no human violence. The violent episodes between the ANC and IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) in Ekurhuleni's township of Thokoza (early 1990s), like Soweto's student uprising (1976) and the Sharpeville Massacre (1960), contributed to the disintegration and disruption of homes through the loss of lives and the lack of belonging experienced by many. The conflict in

Thokoza is estimated to have resulted in 12000 casualties.¹⁷⁴ The Boipatong Massacre, the murder of civilians in the township of Boipatong in the 1990s, equally tainted South African townships as crime scenes. The Boipatong Massacre is essential in the discourse of a democratic South Africa. The 'homes' of the deceased have found a place in the burial grounds of Sharpeville, Vuka. This has created physical (proximity of both townships) and spiritual connections between the townships because of the shared burial sites. The commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre and memorials of the Boipatong Massacre are notably shared experiences close to both communities. For this study, the commemoration of the Sharpeville Massacre takes centre stage.

Post 1994, March 21 has remained an essential day in the political calendar of South Africa. Annually, scores of people have accessed the township to commemorate and remember the lives lost during the massacre. This was also an opportunity to celebrate human rights in South Africa. Since the mid-late 1990s, the commemoration of the massacre has been closely aligned with sad moments of mourning and remembrance of the deceased. The laying of flowers on the tombstones and the discourse of death exacerbated by the visits to Phelindaba cemetery heightened sadness and despair. Declared a protected site by the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) in 2002,¹⁷⁵ the Phelindaba gravesite is monumental for commemorating the massacre and as a marker of home for residents of Sharpeville and adjacent townships. However, community disgruntlement of inadequate protection and maintenance of the gravesite has been a concern; Ncala noted:

Just look here (pointing at the grass covering the visibility of a grave see Figure 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6), we, as Black people, do not take care of our graveyard. Others here are people who died during the Sharpeville Massacre. For example, back at home, our grandfather would take us to the family graveyard to clean around times like Good Friday and Christmas, and the older adults would show us whose grave is this one and that one. We, Black people, have a problem of not going to our

¹⁷⁴ M.R. Mchunu, "'We Have Finished Them': Ritual Killing and War-doctoring in Kwazulu-Natal During the 1980s and 1990s," *African Historical Review* 47, no. 2 (2015): 58-84.

¹⁷⁵ Hlongwane and Ndlovu, *Remembering Sharpeville Day*, 102.

gravesites; they have a mentality of I do my own thing, you cannot tell me anything.¹⁷⁶



*Figure 6.4: Phelindaba grave site, Sharpeville*¹⁷⁷

The service delivery-related frustrations experienced by Mr Ncala in 2023 resonate with those experienced by many community members of Sharpeville and adjacent communities. Their frustrations are further exacerbated by the lack of protection of gravesites and places of political and historical significance. It is alleged that the municipality manicures the grass and removes the weed-covering tombstones irregularly. One of those irregular moments comprises moments before pivotal days, including but

¹⁷⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Ncala junior, Phelindaba cemetery, Sharpeville, 2 March 2024.

¹⁷⁷ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

not limited to 21 March.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, what is supposedly a protected and preserved site is a sight of squalor and decay, as displayed in figures 6.5 and 6.6.



Figure 6.5: Neglected construction of a 'supposed heritage site' in Phelindaba Cemetery, Sharpeville¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Ncala junior, Sharpeville, 2 March 2024.

¹⁷⁹ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.



Figure 6.6: A Vandalised stone of remembrance in Phelindaba Cemetery, Sharpeville¹⁸⁰

Dishearteningly, images of squalor, dirt, and decay also characterise parts of the Vuka cemetery (see Figure 6.7) where the victims of the Boipatong Massacre have been laid, considerably, their last places of rest. Cemeteries, because of their privacy, are conventionally used by drug addicts, commonly known as ‘nyaopes’, as places to consume drugs. Their presence raises a safety concern. Community members have also complained about incidents of crimes, mostly mugging, that take place at cemeteries that are supposedly home to heroes of the region. The blame for the squalor, decay, and littering characteristic of Vuka and Phelindaba cemeteries is placed on the lack of service

¹⁸⁰ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2023/03/02.

delivery stemming from alleged corruption in the Emfuleni municipality and its disregard for the care of the township.¹⁸¹



*Figure 6.7: Dirt and squalor at the Vuka Cemetery, Sharpeville*¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mrs Regina, Sharpeville, 18 September 2024.

¹⁸² Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba 2024/03/02.

The community's frustration, as highlighted, has found a podium during various commemorations of Sharpeville Day, a 2022 Sowetan newspaper publication on Human Rights celebration noted:

It is quite ironic that Sharpeville – a place of historic significance in the struggle against apartheid – remains a symbol of failure by the democratic government. The area falls under the failed Emfuleni municipality, which has struggled to maintain its sewerage system for years, leaving residents of Sharpeville locked in their homes by sewage spills. There are many other problems that plague the area, including poor refuse collection, lack of tarred roads, unemployment and other service delivery failures.¹⁸³

Similarly, *The Guardian* in 2010 reported on the commemoration event in Sharpeville reported that:

Political freedom has not delivered economic freedom for its residents. The roads are potholed and some still lack tarmac, rubbish is strewn on wasteland and the stadium where Mandela signed the constitution is run down. Unemployment is rife and two schools recently closed.¹⁸⁴

Newspaper commentaries and observations have noted the lack of adequate service delivery. Whilst the oppressive regime and its violent and controlling demeanour were blamed for the loss of home, a democratic consequence is not without influence. The resident's experiences of environmental degradation, squalor and decay have been attributed to a loss of feeling of home in parts of Sharpeville. Home is associated with cleanliness, which is absent in many parts of Sharpeville, leading to a notion that things were better under apartheid.¹⁸⁵ Those concerned about the overall development of the

¹⁸³ By Sowetan, "Sharpeville residents' struggle continues," 22 March 2022, Accessed 7 November 2024, https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2022-03-22-sharpeville-residents-struggle-continues/#google_vignette

¹⁸⁴ Staff reporter, "Sharpeville: at some stage all hell will break loose," *Mail and Guardian*, 20 March 2010, Accessed 16 October 2024, <https://mg.co.za/article/2010-03-20-sharpeville-at-some-stage-all-hell-will-break-loose/>

¹⁸⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Rabohlale, Sharpeville, 18 September 2024.

township are the youth, who have arguably become incurious and somewhat rebellious. Their views are expressed in the following section.

6.6 Reflection

Cultural geographers have tirelessly accentuated the interconnection and interdependence between home and outside influences. Provincial, national, and international interplays influence the immediate locality. This chapter extended its analysis of home beyond the confines of a house to gain a deeper understanding of the making of a home at the township level. Also, at how socio-economic dynamics within the township influence, shape, and determine the sentiments of home. It has been found that people used amenities such as beer halls, cinemas, music, swimming pools, sporting facilities, churches and places of entertainment to create township symbols upon which identity and solidarity were created. Human symbols also united people by stimulating identity and belonging; sports figures and jazz clubs ascertained a sense of social cohesion, though arguably temporary, when they displayed their talents as members of Sharpeville.

The massacre and other episodes of violence may have contributed to cohesion towards a common enemy, especially between the 1960s-1990s. But current discourse in the community calls for a return to appreciating everyday people, cultures, talents, and community progress amid the decay and squalor characterising Sharpeville. The commemoration of the massacre is arguably losing its essence amongst the youth as these events have become opportune moments for the display of contestations and disgruntlement with the local government. The clarion call is to redirect the narrative of Sharpeville towards the appreciation of its physical features, cosmopolitanism, vibrancy, and *ubuntu*. These are no different to the features accentuated during apartheid before the violent disruption of 1960 and the state of emergency of the 1980s. The youth's agency in defining and reshaping home and township identity is seemingly at odds, similarly to apartheid Sharpeville, with unemployment, drug abuse, and other societal ills not covered in this chapter. This, amongst other factors, has increasingly, amid economic developments, led to out-migrations, discussed in the following chapter. The next chapter discusses the physical remnants of apartheid, symbolic connections between townships and suburbia, and the Vaal River City Exchange.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BEYOND SHARPEVILLE: SYMBOLS, CONSTRAINTS, CONTESTATIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

7.1 Introduction

The strong-willed claim of Sharpeville by a segment of its youth was a robust attempt to accentuate the importance of the town's social and physical landscape and an embrace of *ubuntu*. Spearheaded by a people's pride and love for their township, the intention was to embrace the evolving township and its diverse social, economic, and political dynamics beyond the Sharpeville Massacre. The initiative, however, neglects Sharpeville's relevance and influence beyond its social borders. Against this backdrop, this chapter extends this discourse by discussing Sharpeville's evolutionary trajectory and its socio-economic interdependence with neighbours in its proximity. The chapter unpacks the complex interconnectivity and interdependence between Sharpeville and Bedworth Park a former white-only suburb of Vereeniging, constructed in 1923 (see Figure 7.1). This chapter is cognisant that the interdependence between the two localities was economical. This phenomenon is undoubtedly noticeable in the numerous transitions of labour entering and exiting the townships during peak hours. However, the inception of a democratic dispensation has enabled migration beyond employment to permanent residence, leading to the suburb's social, economic, and cultural diversification. In-migration was not limited to Sharpeville, but people from different parts of the country, including students, have since 1994 flocked into the suburb. However, a new innovative development in the area will inevitably disrupt Sharpeville and Bedworth Park.

The planned construction of the Vaal River City, or 'megacity' on empty and unused pieces of land that served as buffer zones, is a stimulant for further changes in the discourse on the landscape of the two localities. The megacity's influence is understood from the interviewee's perspective to project future changes. Conversations have accentuated varied positionalities. These stem from economic underpinnings such as infrastructural inequality, employment opportunities through local economic development

in tourism, and community involvement primarily in decision-making processes and employment in the project.

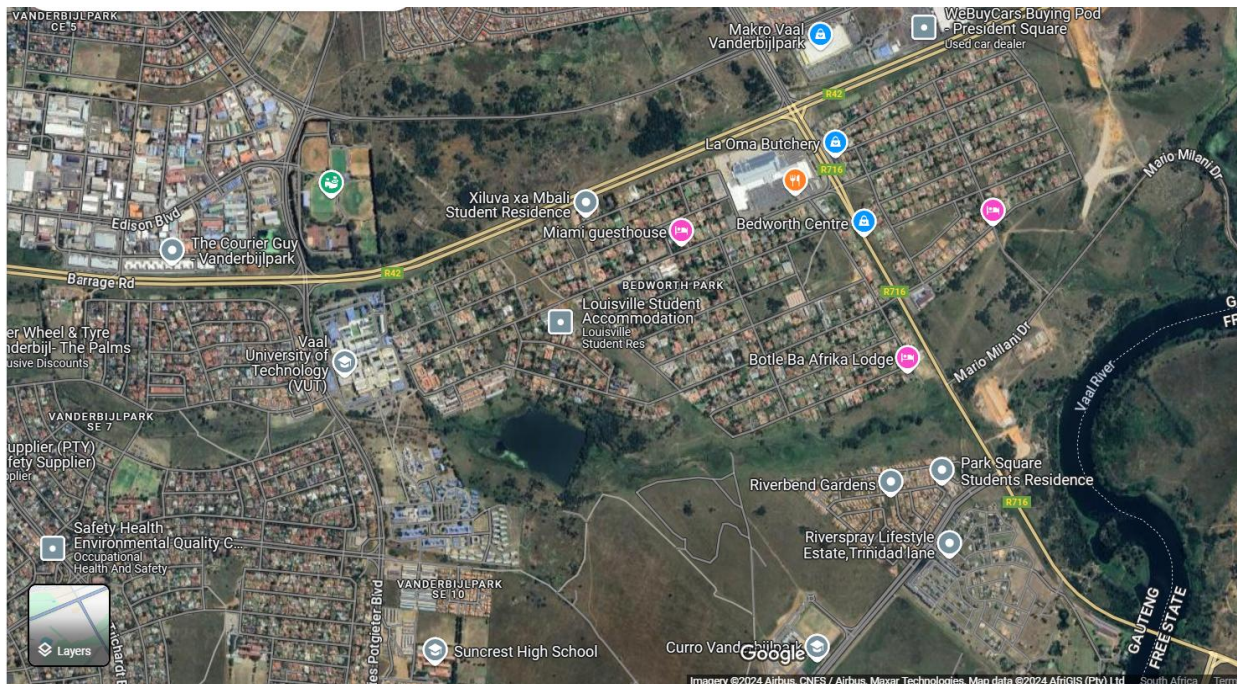


Figure 7.1: An image of Bedworth Park and adjacent suburbs and industrial centres¹

Interviewees also voiced nuances on the state of the Emfuleni Local Municipalities' capacity to manage the region as detrimental to the development of the region. This chapter also discusses the evolving nature of buffer zones as symbols of contestation and the possibilities for a positive heritage if used appropriately.

7.2 Conceptual framework

The chapter's conceptualisation is guided by the notion that *you can take me out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of me*. The origins of these words cannot be traced; however, KO, a South African hip-hop artist, released the hit song *Caracara* in 2014, from which the notion has been taken. KO reverberates the robust connection between the VW Microbus infamously known as *Caracara* and the townships of South Africa. *Caracara* emphasises the inseparability of the self with the material cultures of

¹ Image: Bedworth Park Vereeniging

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Bedworth+Park,+Vereeniging>

space, home, and identity. The human agency creates symbols within space, but migration entails, at times, reinstating behaviours associated with symbols into a foreign/new space. Human migration is therefore critical, especially in what migrates with the human being, Rees and Lomax put forward that:

Human migration is defined as the relocation between dwellings of groups of individuals known as households over time and space. People migrate in small groups (households), which are either a nuclear family unit or a couple or a single person or several unrelated individuals who share some common aspect of life together, such as meals or housework or a set of relationships (husband-wife, child-parent, student-fellow student).²

This chapter conceptualises how people migrate to new spaces and take along in the movement not only their physical belongings but also their attitudes, economic habits, fears, cultures, gastronomy habits, and behaviours, amongst others. These features have been learned for many years within group areas, suburbs, rural areas and other localities. Whilst the physical township/suburbs may be left behind during transitions, the norms and behaviours associated with places find themselves in new environments and contributing to social transformations and possible contestations. The transplanting of social behaviour is inevitable and may lead to changes in the physical environment that reflect the people's aspirations.

7.3 The physical remnants of apartheid: an overview

The inception of democracy in South Africa introduced gradual socio-economic changes that veered from apartheid-embedded political-ideological frameworks to those of a liberated country. Apartheid policies have been discussed throughout the thesis. This chapter is inclined to occasionally reflect on apartheid as an inextricable consequence of the realities of post-democratic South Africa in general and Sharpeville in particular. The physical remnants of apartheid spatial engineering mechanisms and their consequences are widespread in Sharpeville and adjacent communities. In some instances, they are

² R. Philip and N. Lomax, "Ravenstein revisited: The analysis of migration, then and now," *Comparative Population Studies* 44, no unknown (2019): 355.

characterised by statues, housing, monuments, and other tangible and non-tangible objects.

These have since become heritage elements prone to contestation. In the context of South African heritage, most notably, the restoration of what was a haven for human rights infringements and violations, the Number Four Prison³ has been remodelled, repackaged and primarily conserved as a place of heritage significance.⁴ The process of remodelling, construction and deconstruction of monuments and places of racial and political significance is a deliberate infrastructural shift. This process is influenced by the political impetus that enshrines inclusivity, democracy, and accessibility to environments of historical significance.⁵ Remodelling of these places contributes not only to the deconstruction of the landscape. But it is embedded with the remaking of place by reinvigorating symbols of oppression through representations of the past as a necessary aspect of the future.⁶ Ideally, symbols associated with oppression and subjugation should transform with broader societal developments.⁷ “While much racial injustice is deeply embedded and inscribed in the physical urban fabric and functioning of Johannesburg, there are few spaces of symbolic potency to house a place of dialogue for remembering, overcoming, and acknowledging past injustices”.⁸ The transformation of symbols of oppression has been an avenue of contestation within South Africa’s public discourse.

³ Number Four was a section of a high-security prison complex in Johannesburg, South Africa built in 1902 also known as the "natives' jail". It housed Black men and other prisoners including Mahatma Gandhi, Robert Sobukwe, Albert Luthuli, and students from the 1976 Soweto protest.

⁴ N.A. Essa, Building as Artefact: From Prison to Museum, in *Whose Place? Confronting Vestiges of Colonialism and Apartheid*, eds. J. Hilton, A. Lissoni and A. Hlongwane (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2023), 89.

⁵ J. Cheddie, “Embedding Shared Heritage, Human Rights Discourse and the London Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian Heritage,” in *Museums, Equality and Social Justice*, ed. D. Fleming (London and New York: Routledge, 2012): 271.

⁶ N.A. David and A.K Hlongwane, "Public History and “Memorial Architecture” in the “New” South Africa: The Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum, Soweto, Johannesburg," *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Studies* 8, no. 3 (2007): 352.

⁷ G.J. Daniel, "Post-conflict heritage: symbolic healing and cultural renewal," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 20, no. 5 (2014): 506.

⁸ Essa, Building as artefact, 97.

Contestations have questioned the relevance of apartheid statues, monuments and names in public spaces.⁹

Though this has contributed to conscientizing people on the importance of preserving heritage-laden facilities, a more deliberate effort at conserving heritage has been noted from the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. The Voortrekker Monument has remained somewhat immune from the physical attacks experienced in parts of Pretoria, most notably the vandalism on Burgher sentry statues.¹⁰ 100 years after the Voortrekkers' Great Trek the cornerstone of the monument was laid on 16 December 1938, the monument's construction took eleven years and opened on 16 December 1949.¹¹ From its inception, the Voortrekker monument commemorated the Voortrekkers and their struggle, deeply entrenched in Calvinistic traditions of overcoming trial and tribulations on their pathways to a free Voortrekker Republic.¹² The mammoth monument has included the broader principles of democracy and inclusion. Its gardens have been constructed to accentuate the cultures of African communities.¹³ The construction of African huts, pottery, and fashion positions the relevance of African communities in the monument's articulation of history. The African spears at its entrance symbolised the broader representations of cultures and communities in South Africa.¹⁴ Though the dominant perspective and representations are on the people who were part of the Great Trek, the Afrikaner history, its spatial interconnection with Freedom Park and the Union Buildings in Pretoria constantly interconnects the physicality of heritage spaces.

⁹ E. Rankin "Creating/curating cultural capital: Monuments and museums for post-apartheid South Africa," *Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2013): 73.

¹⁰ S. Mabena, "Paul Kruger statue vandalised again in latest attack," 31 October 2024. Accessed 5 November 2024. <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/paul-kruger-statue-vandalised-again-in-latest-attack-20241031>

¹¹ E. Delmont, "The Voortrekker Monument: monolith to myth," *South African Historical Journal* 29, no. 1 (1993): 76-101.

¹² Delmont, "The Voortrekker Monument", 6.

¹³ Researchers observations.

¹⁴ Researchers observations.

Public representations of historical and political monuments and the consequences of belonging in South Africa have received academic attention.¹⁵ Alternative discourse should extrapolate the racialisation of monuments and public spaces. Over the years, juxtapositions of the commemorations that have taken place at the Voortrekker Monument, the Hector Peterson Museum, and the Sharpeville Memorial Precinct have heightened racial and cultural-specific associations with memory and remembrance. This chapter suggests that, as noted in the Voortrekker Monument, the obliteration of this phenomenon is embedded in the inclusion of the supposed 'other' in heritage and cultural representations.¹⁶ The essentiality of commemorative events is perceived as a pivotal propellor of national unity and cohesion. Thus, "the implementation of commemorative projects was a way to break with the past by seeking to include all South Africans regardless of racial or ethnic identification".¹⁷ Politic-imbedded commemoration and infrastructure have the potential to contradict the mandate of social cohesion in a race-conscious country. Apartheid's buffer zones offer opportunities for projects related to social cohesion. An analysis of apartheid conceptualisation and implementation of buffer zones is pivotal in comprehending how these vacant lands, roads, and symbols entrenched separateness and how they have been reconceptualised in post-apartheid societies.

The environment and its features are susceptible to human manipulation and influence. A post-apartheid analysis of the changing environmental landscape is pivotal in understanding changes in the physical environment. Seminal works have accentuated the economic expectations created by the inception of democracy¹⁸ amid the African National Congress' election slogan, "a better life for all." The material realisation of the

¹⁵ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Rhodes must fall," in *Epistemic freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and decolonisation*, ed. S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (London and New York, Taylor & Francis, 2018), 227.

¹⁶ Personal observations.

¹⁷ B.R. Hansen, "Public spaces for national commemoration: the case of Emlotheni Memorial, Port Elizabeth," *Anthropology and Humanism* 28, no. 1 (2003): 45.

¹⁸ B. Jürgen and U. Jürgens, "Johannesburg: life after apartheid," in *Cities in Transition: Globalization, Political Change and Urban Development* ed. Rita Schneider-Sliwa (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2006), 175.

pivotal tenets of the Freedom Charter, which advocated for belonging and access to the country's resources, became increasingly relevant in a new constitutional framework.

Belonging and access entailed fragmenting, if not obliterating, the physical and legislative process that separated the people of Sharpeville from the neighbouring White-only suburb of Bedworth Park. For this to occur, the immediate barrier that entrenched separate development was, as in most townships, buffer zones. Nieftagodien asserts that the “basic principles applied to the siting and planning of African townships were outlined by Verwoerd to the senate in May 1952”.¹⁹ This meant townships were deliberately constructed at an “adequate” distance from the closest European town. Furthermore, townships, a source of employment, “should have a road of its own connecting the location site with the city, preferably running through the industrial areas”.²⁰

In contrast, Sharpeville comprised roads that provided access to Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark, and as shown in earlier chapters, residents accessed industrial areas by bus, bicycle, and walking. Beyond empty pockets of land, other infrastructure, including but not limited to railway lines, farms, and industrial areas, were also used as buffer zones. In Bloemfontein, “the railway line as buffer between white and African is further strengthened by the industrial areas, the premises of the transport services, shooting range, and two cemeteries”.²¹ Nieftagodien outlines Verwoerd’s positionality on separate development by showing that township planning “should have provision for an adequate hinterland for expansion stretching away from the European area”.²² The daily transitions and commute from group areas, buffer zones, and places of employment heightened (un)belonging. Post 1994, buffer zones, especially stretched vacant land, took a different unambiguous demeanour centred on critical questions on their usage.

¹⁹ N. Nieftagodien, “The making of apartheid in Springs during the sixties: Group areas, urban restructuring and resistance.” Seminar paper presented in Richard Ward Building Seventh Floor, Seminar Room 7003, University of the Witwatersrand (1996), 4.

²⁰ Nieftagodien, “The making of”, 4.

²¹ S.T. Tarminder and L. Hayhurst, “Cycling through the buffer zone: Working-class cyclists on Rudolf Greyling Street, Bloemfontein,” In *Urban Forum* 34, no. 4 (2023): 447.

²² Nieftagodien, “The making of”, 4.

Essentially, “what do buffers do? They add distance. They offer protection. But distance from what? Protection from or for whom?”²³ The Barrage Road (R42) adjoins the R59 to Johannesburg and separates Sharpeville and Powerville. In addition, Barrage separates President Hyper and Makro shopping centres from the suburb of Bedworth Park. The empty stretches of land between Sharpeville and Vereeniging, in addition to the factories at the entrance of Vereeniging from Playfair Boulevard, enhance apartheid landscaping centred on separating people according to racial lines. Buffer zones were justified according to racial, health, class, fear and paternalistic thinking. In contemporary society, buffer zones have become psychological and physical remnants of separation within the class framework.

Freedom of movement and the ability for non-whites to acquire property in previously white-only suburbia were more apparent than ever after 1994. Buffers in the region have somewhat maintained their apartheid objective but changed in usage. The empty stretch of land comprising uncut grass on Playfair Boulevard to Vereeniging is increasingly used as a dumping site for rubble.²⁴ The hills of disposed debris from the vast construction of residential areas in the expanding low-cost housing of Miami Sands, Powerville and student accommodations obstruct Sharpeville and Dlomo dam.²⁵ In addition, the offramp from the R59 into Bedworth Park and the shopping complexes mentioned earlier prevent road users from viewing the township. Beyond the Makro robots on Barrage Road, stretches of empty land comprise trees, and once again, debris dumping obstructs the view.²⁶ The function, meaning, and understanding of buffer zones in many parts of the country has evolved.

Buffer zones in the region are not a unique case study. In Ekurhuleni’s township of Tembisa, buffer zones, historically empty stretches of land separating the suburbs of Birchleigh North, Norkem Park, and Birch Acres, have been used for the construction of

²³ Tarminder and Hayhurst, “Cycling through the”, 458.

²⁴ Researchers observations.

²⁵ Researchers observations.

²⁶ Researchers observations.

RDP houses.²⁷ Before the construction, parts of the land had been characterised by the gradual encroachment of informal dwellings. The spread of shacks and low-cost housing demand has led to contestations in the area, prompting the local community to oppose construction near neighbouring Esselen Park.²⁸ The presence of informal shack dwellers in the area accentuated underlying uneasiness from the decreasing physical distances between the suburb and the township. The suburb residents echoed sentiments of distrust. It is common amongst the residents that social ills stem from the township and even more from the shacks. In addition to crime, residents complained about the hard felt knock on property value amid increased strain on the resource capacity to take on a new community.²⁹ Jürgen and Jürgens's reflections on the changing socio-economic landscape of parts of Johannesburg in a post-apartheid dispensation echo a similar sentiment. "In the face of growing unemployment, the youth see themselves deprived of future opportunities. This partially explains the rapidly growing number of burglaries with a tendency towards violence, ranging from attack to murder".³⁰ It was reported that:

The ongoing crisis and nightly criminal reign of terror in Bedworth Park – home to many student residences and thousands of students – was confirmed to MooiVaal Media by residents, the Emfuleni Local Municipality (ELM) and local Councillor Edward von Bodenstein (DA). Now the Bedworth Park crime problem is also spreading to neighbouring areas as far as Riverbend beside the Vaal River and near the North-West University Campus, where streetlights and residents are increasingly falling victim to the same fate.³¹

²⁷ Researchers observations.

²⁸ Author unknown, "Residents threaten court action over housing development, 5 April 2016, Accessed 3 November 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/kempton-express/news-headlines/2016/04/05/residents-threaten-court-action/> Kempton Express Thembisan.

²⁹ Author Unknown, "Residents feel 'bulldozed' by housing developments", 29 March 2016,. Accessed 3 November 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/kempton-express/news-headlines/2016/03/29/residents-feel-bulldozed-by-housing-developments/>

³⁰ Jürgen and Jürgens, "Johannesburg: life after," 175.

³¹ C. Kotze, "Criminals target street lamps and loot in the darkness," 22 November 2023, Accessed 3 November 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/vaalweekblad/news/news-news/2023/11/22/criminals-target-street-lamps-and-loot-in-darkness/>

The discourse on crime, property value, and the proximity of the suburb to environments categorised as low-income and places of decay are consequences of apartheid planning and infrastructure. Suburbs are historically associated with Whiteness and, in essence, cleanliness, security, upright moral fibre, community, family, tranquillity, space, and success.³² Townships are deemed the complete opposite, and the relationship between Sharpeville, Bedworth Park, and the surrounding suburbs of Vanderbijlpark is no different. Firstly, an analysis of the nicknaming of the suburbs by township and former township residents reflects on the unwavering notions of admiration for suburbs. Residents, as accentuated in the thesis, refer to Vanderbijlpark informally as “tiropong” (town) and “dingamleng” (a place of whites).³³ The latter symbolises suburbs in the region as places of Whites, and in essence, a place of the wealthy, “ngamla” (white person) is associated with material wealth and “singamleng” or “digamleng” or “esilungwini”³⁴ is connotated as a residence where the wealthy and middle-class stay.

Posel posits that “...whiteness was a judgement of more civilised ‘manners’, evident in a combination of factors read off a person’s body, lifestyle, community, and social standing”.³⁵ To relocate to these regions is to display evidence of material wealth and the ability to secure a peaceful, opulent, quiet, and tranquil life offered by suburbia. Ndlovu’s study suggests that in the 1990s, “a Black person buying a house in a ‘White’ area would seem to some people, including fellow Blacks of a lower class, to be out of place”.³⁶ On the other hand, escaping the mundane yet robust, vibrant, and non-private spaces of Sharpeville was a marker of success. It meant breaking away from the culture of township life and acquiring what was previously reserved for Whites. Essentially, buffers were

³² A. Mabin, "Suburbanisation, segregation, and government of territorial transformations," *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 57, no. 1 (2005): 48.

³³ Observations of language by some of the residents of Sharpeville during interviews and informal communication.

³⁴ T. Ndlovu, "Shuttling between the suburbs and the township: the new black middle class(es) negotiating class and post-apartheid blackness in South Africa," *Africa* 90, no. 3 (2020): 568.

³⁵ D. Posel, "Races to consume revisiting South Africa's history of race, consumption and the struggle for freedom," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010): 168.

³⁶ Ndlovu, "Shuttling between the," 577.

supposedly to offer distance and protection from the townships' characters. Buffer zones no longer 'split white and black suburbs' but wealthy and poor suburbs.

7.4 Symbolic connections between townships and suburbia

Legislative reform post-1994 delegitimized apartheid and enabled access to infrastructure without the usage of the pass systems. Until recently, no deliberate infrastructure construction symbolically connected Sharpeville with its former White neighbours. In other words, the connection between the environments was made evident by the streams of people flowing into Bedworth Park and adjacent suburbs in the morning and again in the evening for labour. This retained the perspective that townships were purposed mainly to accommodate the pool of labour required for an industry in the regions. No tangible and permanent link accentuated the interrelationship between the areas beyond servicing the suburb. The inflow of Blacks and other races in Bedworth Park and Vanderbijlpark from township environments gradually 'Africanised' the socio-economic landscape of the area. In doing so, they arguably reverberated the infamous notion expressed by KO: *You can take me out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of me*. This resonates with the social and cultural transformations that take place during migrations. This will be discussed in the next section before attempting to understand the symbolic man-made features constructed by private and government organisations that connect and transform Sharpeville and Bedworth Park.

The property acquisition by non-whites in Bedworth Park began the transformation of the place. The permanent migration into Bedworth Park and other regional suburbs was a migration of living patterns, cultures, gastronomy, social complexities, economics, and the transfer of experiences. Whilst the physical movement out of various townships encompassed access to improved services, the implantation of Blacks into suburbs altered suburbs' economic and social cultures. There is no evidence of encroachment and land grabbing of buffer zones separating Sharpeville and Bedworth Park, as in parts of Birchleigh. The in-migration of Blacks into Bedworth Park, however, contributed to the gradual outmigration of White residents. Asked if he considers Bedworth Park to be a family-oriented suburb, an interviewee stated:

It was largely a family area and dominated by White people. But if you can check now, we only have 1% of White people in Bedworth Park. We do have families, but no longer like before. It is dominated by student accommodation.³⁷

Bedworth Park has experienced a gradual population transformation; this trend has been noted elsewhere. In their study of Nina Park and Akasia in Pretoria North, Horn and Ngcobo found that neighbourhood transformation is a product of four stages. These include early invasion, late invasion, domination, and succession.³⁸ Whilst there are no signs of complete domination in their contexts, Bedworth Park has experienced a complete social overhaul since 1994. Jürgen, and Jürgens found that in many parts of post-apartheid Johannesburg, “the white population is abandoning many central residential areas, and non-whites are moving in. As a result, consumer profiles and preferences are changing.”³⁹ The rapid outward movement of the White community in the trajectory of Bedworth Park accentuates this phenomenon. Bedworth was, before the inception of democracy, a family-oriented suburb, and since then, Black middle-class families have found abode in the area. The suburb, according to an interviewee, has also become increasingly commercialised as a student town:

There were many White people in Bedworth, many White families, but now, if you look around, you can count the number of White people; they have all moved out of Bedworth. When someone sells a house, it is immediately turned into a student accommodation, and students do not care about the community or see themselves as part of it. When protesting for improved service delivery, students did not join us. If the protest had occurred in Sharpeville, it would have had more impact.⁴⁰

The area has increasingly gained momentum as a student town, which has led to the construction of mega-student accommodations by private companies for North-West University (NWU) and the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) students (some of the

³⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Gift, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 31 October 2024.

³⁸ A. Horn and J.R.B. Ngcobo, "The suburban challenge: (De)segregation, opportunity, and community in Akasia, City of Tshwane," *Urban Forum* 14, no. 4 (2003): 328.

³⁹ Jürgen, and Jürgens, "Johannesburg: life after", 176.

⁴⁰ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Gift, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 31 October 2024.

student residences appear in image one). An interviewee highlighted the intensity of this development:

Remember, there was a student residence called Mako, just near VUT. So, these new residence houses that we see of students, I could say, started around 2017 there. That is when we started to see people starting to sell their houses, and the people who bought those houses would turn them into student accommodations. So, you see, it is a recent thing. You already know that it will be for students once they move out.⁴¹

Student accommodation facilities are largely informal in some spaces, straining the infrastructure's capacity to provide water, electricity, and other basic services.⁴² The tranquillity, safety, and prosperity sought by Black residents in the suburb of Bedworth was debatably short-lived. This has contributed to the decision by residents, regardless of race and class, to exit in search of conducive environments that reflect their ambitions and lifestyles. The residents of Bedworth have experienced two episodes of outmigration: firstly, the outflow of former White residents because of the inflow of non-whites and, secondly, the outflow of families due to the spread of student accommodation facilities. Out-migration was further exacerbated by the inception of backroom accommodation characteristic of township dwellings in the former Top Location, also commonly found in Sharpeville. The proximity to student life and the developing and uncontrolled slum-like conditions of backrooms in some parts of the neighbourhood have replaced the family-oriented suburb. The rental of the house and backrooms has been preferred by families unwilling to sell their properties when moving out of the suburbs. On the other hand, some families occupy main buildings whilst renting backrooms to tenants.

There are some contrasts of the democratic suburb that share similarities with the old Sharpeville worthy of highlighting in light of the notion '*you can take me out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of me*'. As shown in previous chapters, *Mastands* were instrumental in shaping the physical landscapes of townships. Landlords or the modern-day *Mastand* have, therefore, transformed the landscape and thinking of suburbia. Whilst

⁴¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Gift, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 31 October 2024.

⁴² LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Gift, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 31 October 2024.

the middle class enjoyed access through the purchase of property funded by banks through mortgages; the less fortunate could not do so. Therefore, Bedworth maintained a certain level of class. However, the construction of backrooms amid shopping complexes and Bedworth's positionality between Vanderbijlpark and Vereeniging attracted employees in the region and those from nearby townships. Backrooms and cottages in the suburbs are slightly more expensive than townships. Travel convenience and access to the pleasures of suburbia enabled a different class of people into Bedworth Park.

The large stands in Bedworth are apparent stimuli for construction. Still, the proliferation of accommodation facilities has, according to community members, increased the number of illegal landlords who do not rezone their properties with the local municipality.⁴³ Rezoning enables the municipality to amend land usage according to the 'schedule 2: rezoning application form'. This requires the successful applicant to pay more levies than the typical resident. Rezoning applications are not limited to student accommodation. The process includes structures used for religious practices, bed and breakfasts, industrial areas, offices, crèches, fuel stations, etc. The lengthy, complex and costly application process comprises an advert in the local newspaper and a formal notice on the property gate intended to rezone. Opposition to rezoning must be submitted to the municipality offices. Regardless of the legal repercussions for unlawful operations, businessmen and women continue to accommodate students and adults. The strain on the infrastructure has led to several protests in the area. *Ster Sedibeng*, a local newspaper, published an article entitled: "Bedworth Park residents say no to rezoning and incorrect billing system". Part of the article reads:

The residents of Bedworth Park said they are tired of rezoning, illegal students' accommodation, incorrect billing system when they took to the streets to hand over

⁴³ L. Dithagiso, "Bedworthpark residents say no to rezoning and incorrect billing system," September 23, 2021, Accessed 25 October 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/sedibeng-ster/news/2021/09/23/bedworthpark-residents-say-no-to-rezoning-and-incorrect-billing-system/>

their memorandum to the office of the Emfuleni Local Municipality in Vanderbijlpark today, Thursday.⁴⁴

The presence of students in the area contributes to the making of home and the identity of the region and suburb. Students, temporarily or seasonally, become part of the community and the social landscape. Thus, when student protests or unrest occur, they impact the tranquillity, peacefulness and stability associated with suburbs that many residents supposedly escaped in townships. For instance, the local newspapers have noted the usual student disgruntlement, especially against landlords or their universities. Interviewed by Ster Sedibeng, the Police spokesperson, Captain Fikile Funda stated that:

The students set furniture from the Residence on fire, this includes washing machines, fridges, laptops, printers and CCTV cameras in the guard room and the administration office. Funda reports that the damage is estimated to be around R200 000. We are investigating a case of malicious damage to property and the suspects are due to appear in court soon. Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Student Representative Council (SRC) Secretary General, Ntsako Qhibi said that he was alerted about the incident and rushed to the premises on Monday.⁴⁵

In addition to student protests, the area is increasingly gaining momentum in the number of informal businesses, unconventional in suburbia, purposed to provide services for the growing student body and the evolving residents. These include hair salons, spaza shops, taverns, clubs, restaurants, pop-up restaurants selling from shipment containers, and pot-on-fire trading on street corners. In Johannesburg, it has been noted that “as a result of unemployment, many blacks have been forced to secure an income in the informal sector. This sector has therefore expanded rapidly within a few years and increasingly determines the economy in the CBD (Johannesburg)”.⁴⁶ Fundamentally, businesses have gradually shifted from city centres into suburbs; the other shift noted in Sharpeville is the

⁴⁴ L. Dithagiso, “Bedworthpark residents say no to rezoning and incorrect billing system,” September 23, 2021, Accessed 25 October 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/sedibeng-ster/news/2021/09/23/bedworthpark-residents-say-no-to-rezoning-and-incorrect-billing-system/>

⁴⁵ M. Chaha, “Students arrested after setting Bedworth Park residence building alight,” 20 October 2022, Accessed 25 October 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/sedibeng-ster/news/2022/10/20/students-arrested-after-setting-bedworth-park-residence-building-alight/>

⁴⁶ Jürgen and Jürgens, “Johannesburg: life after,” 176.

shift of informal trade associated with townships into the suburbs. In comparison, Casandra Street (Bedworth Park) has become similar, to an extent, to Seiso Street (Sharpeville). These similarities are evident in the number of informal traders who have established themselves near shopping centres. Traders often provide goods and services absent in shopping centres. For instance, the entrepreneurs who sell traditional food outside the Bedworth Centre complex provide cuisine that cannot be found in the shops. These usually comprise *mala mogodu* (offal or animal intestines), pap, chicken feet, cow head, pig spine, and braaied meat (chicken and some context chicken feet, amongst others). The convenience of purchasing these foods in the township erodes the lengthy preparation and cooking that comprise, for instance, cow head and *mala mogodu*. Cooking traditional African food is timely and costly; the average time required to cook cow head and *mala mogodu* is no less than three hours, and the obvious cost implication is electricity in addition to labour. Street vendors provide convenience.

The informal trade sector in Bedworth reacts to a changing suburb-based clientele that frequented townships to fulfil gastronomy needs (township food) not previously found in the suburbs (see the fieldworker's diary). Chevalier's study on gastronomy in Durban found that "food is a deep symbol of inherited identities"⁴⁷ Furthermore:

By focussing on this movement of people as consumers, linked to what they eat, where and how, we may be able to reveal complex patterns of interaction across public and private spheres as well as old and new forms of social, ethnic and religious identity.⁴⁸

As discussed in Chapter 2, gastronomy traditions are contextual and expressive of people's interests; they cannot be left behind during relocations to new environments. In some instances, "many Black consumers do not hesitate to return to their former townships at the weekend to buy meat or to cross the city for the sake of a special shop".⁴⁹

⁴⁷ S. Chevalier, "Food, malls and the politics of consumption: South Africa's new middle class," in *South Africa's Emergent Middle Class* ed. Grace Khunou (London: Routledge, 2017), 3.

⁴⁸ Chevalier, "Food, malls and," 3.

⁴⁹ Chevalier, "Food, malls and," 5.

Against this backdrop, the proliferation of informal trade contributes nuances to the conceptualisation and usage of space. In the Johannesburg context, many formal traders relocated after the inception of democracy as a response to the gradual socio-economic changes in surrounding suburbs. Jürgen and Jürgens's study shows that "in Yeoville, for example, traditional kosher shops for Jewish clients have closed down, in Hillbrow continental bakeries, butcheries and cafés have left".⁵⁰ Crime, prostitution, and drug dealing made parts of Johannesburg unattractive for business. Crime is but a single factor; the closing of Pick n Pay Hyper after 42 years of operation in Bedworth Park came because of changes in customer types and preferences.⁵¹ *The Herald* reported:

It (Pick n Pay) closed in November 2023 and is unrelated to the current store closure and conversion programme announced by CEO Sean Summers as part of the group's strategy to restore its core Pick n Pay business. This decision would've been made months, if not years, prior to Summers returning to the retailer. The surrounding areas have changed significantly over the last few decades, which means the overall market the store serves is very different now from when the hyper was opened.⁵²

An interview further stated that Pick n Pay approached the community and informed them that they would be replaced, most likely, by franchises such as Boxer and Shoprite.⁵³ The centre's current renovation is geared towards two giant grocery shops on the opposite ends of the centre. The competition will benefit the consumer but the impact on informal traders cannot be established yet. Boxer and Shoprite stores are predominantly found South African townships, rural areas and city centres, their entrance into suburbs is recent. A report by *Business Day* accentuated the objectives of the Boxer franchise by stating that:

⁵⁰ Jürgen, and Jürgens, "Johannesburg: life after," 190.

⁵¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, Bedworth Park, 31 October 2024.

⁵² Money web, "Pick n Pay shuts first hypermarket," Accessed 20 December 2024, <https://www.herald.co.zw/pick-n-pay-shuts-first-hyper-market/>

⁵³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, Bedworth Park, 31 October 2024.

Boxer's strategy also involves capturing a portion of SA's informal grocery sector, which represents 34% of the market. With plans to roll out more stores in underserved regions, it seeks to formalise grocery shopping in these areas by offering a structured, competitively priced alternative to informal vendor...⁵⁴

The construction of these shops in Bedworth Park increasingly accentuates the connections and preferences of a new clientele whose consumer aspirations follow them. Boxer and Shoprite stores are reacting to emerging customer behaviour in the suburbs. Bedworth Park is increasingly populated by students and sojourner tenants whose cost containment strategies encourage them to purchase food within their limited budgets. The cost-efficiency of Boxer and Shoprite stores will be accessible students and the residents of Sharpeville, Riverbend and other parts of Vanderbijlpark. Boxer and Shoprite will contribute to employment opportunities in addition to other businesses nearby such as KFC, Cashbuild, La-Oma Butchery, Builders Warehouses.⁵⁵ This will, in essence, impact the social-economic landscape of the region. Property owners are concerned that Shoprite and Boxer stores' business model and culture conventionally attract low-income consumers in South Africa and might potentially stimulate a third out-migration. This, in turn, may heighten the sale of properties and increase student accommodation and backrooms that will accommodate the workers who prefer to be near the workplaces.⁵⁶ In addition, this may contribute to what an interviewee labelled 'the kasification of the suburb'. This is a gradual process of turning the suburb into a township.⁵⁷

The thesis cannot quantify the number of accommodation providers in Bedworth Park nor estimate how many adhere to the municipal bylaws. However, fieldwork enabled visitations to some of the student buildings that have been recently constructed. These buildings have been noted to be of impeccable standards. The high-rise building culture has beautified and mystified the undesired pothole-laden streets of the area. Some

⁵⁴ Author unknown, *Business Day*, 28 October 2024, Accessed 25 November 2024, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/companies/retail-and-consumer/2024-10-28-boxer-targets-r106bn-retail-whitespace-as-it-ramps-up-expansion>

⁵⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, Bedworth Park, 31 October 2024.

⁵⁶ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, Bedworth Park, 31 October 2024.

⁵⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, Bedworth Park, 31 October 2024.

buildings contribute to the economy by employing locals as security guards, cleaners, gardeners, and student shuttle drivers. The shift from average housing to complex structures with pools and infrastructure for students might be considered too fancy. The COVID-19 pandemic encouraged many businesses to diversify their product offerings and avoid overreliance on one product.⁵⁸ The episodes of load-shedding and blackouts have encouraged many landlords to either go off the grid or seek alternative energies as a cost-containment strategy.

In Bedworth Park, to circumvent economic loss due to market saturation and electricity problems, landlords have built structures that can be slightly modified to accommodate tourists and other types of visitors beyond the student population.⁵⁹ Mindful of the historical social and economic transformations and contestations in this area, it is undergoing a continued transformation, possibly heightening existing problems into opportunities. The recent presence of construction vehicles and the construction of roads ahead of the construction of the Vaal River City, which was supposed to have begun in 2016, has invigorated a buzz in the region. It has encouraged many student accommodation providers to build multi-purpose structures. The following section discusses the transformation of buffer zones in the region, the construction of the Vaal River City and its relation to the existing nearby communities, and a catalyst for possible development in the region.

7.5 The Vaal River City Exchange

The Department of Road and Transport projected that construction of the Vaal River City Exchange (project number 297) would begin on 9 September 2016 and be completed on 31 March 2027.⁶⁰ As mentioned earlier, construction vehicles began appearing only in early March 2023. The interchange's construction costs are estimated at R208.6 million.⁶¹ The interchange will connect traffic from the R59 to the Vaal River City or 'Mega River

⁵⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Evans, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024.

⁵⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Maphisa, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024.

⁶⁰ "Vaal River City Interchange, Vulekamali," Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://vulekamali.gov.za/infrastructure-projects/full/8788-vaal-river-city-interchange-gauteng>

⁶¹ "Vaal River City Interchange, Vulekamali," Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://vulekamali.gov.za/infrastructure-projects/full/8788-vaal-river-city-interchange-gauteng>

City'. An US investor, Citigroup Inc., and the Gauteng provincial administration spearhead the initiative.⁶² President Cyril Ramaphosa has identified the construction of the Mega City as part of the "five corridors or sites where it wants to boost economic development and create jobs..."⁶³ The project will comprise "a mixed-use metropolitan city development, an international airport, along with logistics, manufacturing and agricultural hubs."⁶⁴ The Mega City will furthermore comprise "...400 000 square metres of commercial office space; 60 000 square metres of retail and leisure component; 20 hectares of park areas including a bird sanctuary; and 5,000 residential units" (see Figure 7.2).⁶⁵

⁶² Staff Writer, "New R30 billion 'mega-city' for South Africa," 26 May 2023, Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/691427/new-multi-billion-rand-mega-city-for-south-africa-draws-us-investment/>

⁶³ Staff Writer, "New R30 billion 'mega-city' for South Africa," 26 May 2023, Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/691427/new-multi-billion-rand-mega-city-for-south-africa-draws-us-investment/>

⁶⁴ Staff Writer, "New R30 billion 'mega-city' for South Africa," 26 May 2023, Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/691427/new-multi-billion-rand-mega-city-for-south-africa-draws-us-investment/>

⁶⁵ Staff Writer, "New R30 billion 'mega-city' for South Africa," 26 May 2023, Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/691427/new-multi-billion-rand-mega-city-for-south-africa-draws-us-investment/>



Figure 7.2: The planned Vaal River City mall⁶⁶

7.5.1 Bridging the physical

The migration patterns that affected Bedworth Park led to the economic and social changes discussed earlier. The announcement of a megacity, The Vaal River City, in 2016 is an additional catalyst for more changes in a constantly evolving community. But what happens when a government builds a new community next to an evolving one? What impact will this have on the township of Sharpeville? Lastly, what does the construction of an interchange symbolise amid existing symbols?

⁶⁶ Staff Writer, "New R30 billion 'mega-city' for South Africa," 26 May 2023, Accessed 14 November 2024, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/691427/new-multi-billion-rand-mega-city-for-south-africa-draws-us-investment/>

7.5.2 Infrastructural renewal

Construction has the potential to benefit the community's aesthetics by improving its infrastructure. The deconstruction and improvements of roads at the corner of Hendrick Van Eck Boulevard and Ascot on Vaal and Mario Milani Roads, passing Dickinson Park into Vereeniging, was the first tangible evidence of aesthetic and infrastructural improvement. This is a result of the ongoing construction. Mario Milani Road from Ascot on Vaal, generally a backroad, was largely unpreferred by road users. The road comprised potholes, isolation, safety concerns from the bush-like environment and illegal garbage dumping. Ster Sedibeng reverberated Captain Fikile Funda's warning, stating that:

Business owners are warned to tighten security on their premises. We further want to warn persons driving in Mario Milani Road between Ascot on Vaal Street and Dickinson Park Vereeniging about two coloured ladies stopping motorists. These ladies have car keys in their hands. They will tell you that they need help with their car in the forest. Once you go with them you are going to be hijacked and robbed.⁶⁷

The construction of the Vaal River City on this historically unused land will obliterate environmental concerns stemming from illegal dumping. Furthermore, it will contribute to alleviating crime related to high-jacking in the area. Also, it will end land-grabbing opportunities that prelude the development of slums and residential contestations, as was the case in Birchleigh (Kempton Park, Johannesburg). The Vaal River Interchange (see Figure 7.3) is most notable over Barrage Road near the President Hyper shopping centre. Though there is substantial evidence of road renewals, it is hoped that this will trickle beyond the immediate suburbs and into townships and neighbouring suburbs. The community's responses to the construction yielded varied perceptions towards tourism opportunities as a catalyst for local economic development, infrastructural inequality and renewal, and distrust in the municipality. These are expounded upon in this section.

⁶⁷ L. Chaha, "Car theft rises in Three Rivers, 18 October 2016, accessed 16 November 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/sedibeng-ster/news/2016/10/18/car-theft-rises-in-three-rivers/>



*Figure 7.3: The Vaal River City Interchange (K174/R42)*⁶⁸

7.5.3 Township tourism development potential

The development of township tourism in South Africa increasingly became a priority in the 1990s when the histories of townships such as Soweto and Alexandra became tourist attractions. Booyens contends that township tourism developed because “those who did visit townships typically were activists and journalists who sought to raise political awareness of the plight of Black residents with respect to poor living conditions and human rights abuses, in addition to the ongoing violence in the township”.⁶⁹ Notably, Tony Blair visited Alexandra in 1999, Oprah Winfrey visited Soweto in 2005, and Michelle Obama visited Soweto in 2011.⁷⁰ These visitations by prominent figures undoubtedly placed some South African townships on the map and contributed to making South Africa a tourist destination.

⁶⁸ Photo: Lesiba Tumishang Ledwaba, 18/10/24.

⁶⁹ I. Booyens, “The evolution of township tourism in South Africa,” in *Tourism, Change and the Global South* eds. Jarkko Saarinen, ed. Jayne M. Rogerson (New York: Routledge 2021), 4.

⁷⁰ Booyens, “The evolution of,” 6.

The Sharpeville Struggle is designed to connect tourists and excursionists to places of historic and political significance in the Vaal region. These places include the Sharpeville Memorial Museum (Seiso Street), situated a stone's throw from the Sharpeville Police Station, where the Sharpeville massacre occurred, and Boipatong township. The Boipatong Museum is situated on the corner of Lekoa and Umzimvubu streets. Like the Sharpeville Memorial Museum, Boipatong experienced a massacre in 1992.⁷¹

The signing of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa at the George Thabe Stadium on 10 December 1996 was a watershed moment that placed Sharpeville on the map. The construction of the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct in 2002 and the SAHRA 2002 approval of the Phelindaba burial site propelled moments for tourism development in the region.⁷² Rachoene and Mokoena's analysis of perceptions of visitors towards the Vaal River Carnival in 2004, which attracted 10,000 visitors, was a pivotal sign of the area's tourism potential in the early 2000s.⁷³ On the other hand, De Wit stressed the Vaal River's potential to draw tourists to the region.⁷⁴ De Bruyn's study on the constraints of tourism development in the region mainly focussed on tourism stakeholders.⁷⁵ This chapter provides an alternative analysis by lending an ear to the perceptions of the community. Community members emphasised the importance of local economic development in creating employment opportunities. The construction of the Vaal River City was associated with the potential to generate employment opportunities. How these employment opportunities trickle(d) down to the community level remains unclear to the community members and students interviewed. However, the critical assumption/forecast

⁷¹ Sedibeng Tourist Routes, Accessed 15 October 2025, http://www.sedibeng.gov.za/tourism_vaal.html

⁷² A.K. Hlongwane and S.M. Ndlovu, "Remembering Sharpeville Day and Fashioning Contested National Narratives: The Sharpeville Memorial Precinct and the Langa Memorial,," in *Public History and Culture in South Africa: Memorialisation and Liberation Heritage Sites in Johannesburg and the Township Space*, eds. A.K. Hlongwane and S.M. Ndlovu (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 101.

⁷³ R.P. Tlake and B.A. Mokoena, "Exploring attendees' perceptions on service quality provided at the Vaal River Carnival in South Africa," *International Journal of Business and Management Studies* 9, no. 2 (2017): 176.

⁷⁴ L. de Witt, "The importance of an eco-efficient tourism industry surrounding the Vaal River: a tourist's perspective," *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure* 3, no. 2 (2014): 2.

⁷⁵ C. de Bruyn, "Developing a baseline for a tourism revitalisation strategy tailor made to a local region: The case of the Vaal Triangle region," *Journal of Contemporary Management* 19, no. 2 (2022): 8.

was the potential for the resuscitation of tourism because of the new development. De Bruyn's study found that:

All the respondents were of the opinion that the community should be active in developing tourism in the Vaal Triangle region and various respondents further suggested that the community should take a leading role in this development process.⁷⁶

Interviewees emphasised the importance of inclusion in the construction phases of the Vaal River City and its tourism potential to draw tourists and other visitors to the region. New residents will form a new population in the residential area to be constructed, these may be communities from the region and elsewhere. They may become potential consumers of local tourism offerings in the area. Interviewees highlighted community inclusion as paramount in decision-making processes during the construction of the Vaal River City project. A student residing in Bedworth Park claimed:

Because even the way the economy of South Africa is designed, we are in an economic system whereby you cannot want to have a project in the Vaal and go take people of Tembisa to work here; it would be unfair. Because the opportunity came to this side, it must benefit the people of this side. You know, you cannot take people of Wits to come work here whilst we have an institution of higher learning.⁷⁷

Sharing similar sentiments, another student resident of Bedworth Park responded:

When the project started last year, we had a strike of tenderpreneurs who protested the project. They even blocked the roads, and we could not even pass to campus, which shows how dissatisfied members are in decision-making. And there were no public meetings conducted about the project. Nothing was done to inform the community that this was happening. So, we just heard an announcement from the president saying they are going to build cities. But how the message conveyed was not directly to the people; we hear it from radios and

⁷⁶ De Bruyn, "Developing a baseline", 10.

⁷⁷ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Evans, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024.

televisions. No proper leadership is provided to get different views and ideas on how to build this project together. In a way, it is like the state and the people are not involved, it is a company involved there. It looks like it is a private thing. But in those circumstances, the people will revolt in the future against that because you have not included them. What if it harmed the environment?⁷⁸

The students, referred to as sojourners by a community member earlier, displayed an interest in the economic and environmental well-being of the community and the potential harm because of insufficient consultations with the community. Students also emphasised the North-West University's agency as a community member in the region:

We were omitted when these things were unfolding and everything. As I mentioned, we just heard from social media and television nothing was done to include the students as much as we are also affected by the project/construction. Because if you check, this thing is not far from the institution; it is not far from where we are staying; anything can happen there, and it will affect us. And affects us, affects our studies, so I feel like such should also be considered; say, students must also be educated about this project and how they will benefit from it.⁷⁹

The students used the opportunity to emphasise the importance of collaborations between university departments associated with environmental issues, tourism, agriculture, and engineering, amongst others, with the developers of the Vaal River City.⁸⁰ It was emphasised that this should include internships, volunteer opportunities, and other educational and empowerment endeavours that will contribute to a pragmatic teaching and learning approach. Furthermore, respondents alluded to the importance of voice and agency in naming the interchange as a symbol of interdependence and unity between environments separated for many years by apartheid policies. Though students were unable to identify tourism potential beyond the Sharpeville Massacre, an interviewee highlighted a few tourism potential sites:

⁷⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Maphisa, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024.

⁷⁹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Maphisa, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024

⁸⁰ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Evans, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 24 October 2024.

I think Sharpeville since it has this huge history that is known globally, but now it is being neglected, but if the mall is there, new people will come. Because of the new development, Sharpeville will benefit a lot because now people will start to know about the culture and the history of Sharpeville. Meaning when people come to Sharpeville before they leave, they might want to experience those apartheid symbols/museums. I think the way it is being constructed, there is a huge interchange that will connect people to go through Sharpeville for them to go to the mall, or after they visit the mall, they can go to Sharpeville. So, it is a powerful symbol connecting both parts of the new development and the township.⁸¹

According to the interviews, the tourism experience would be incomplete without visiting the township. But what is there to visit in Sharpeville? The Sharpeville Struggle Route encompasses visits to the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct and places of political and historical significance in the region. Beyond this, the Phelindaba cemetery, discussed in the thesis, requires extensive construction and remodeling to make it a tourist product. The cemetery's incomplete and now dilapidated structure prone to vandalism (see chapter 6) is purposed for a tourist experience. Reinvestments in the structure and safeguarding of the burial sites are pivotal for tourism development and growth. Efforts towards rehabilitating and revitalizing tourism in the region must be invested in beautifying through purposeful maintenance of the Sharpeville Human Rights Precinct as a focal point in the region's tourism. However, tourism cannot be limited to these two places, which resonates with the clarion call #Sharpevilleisnotamassacre. Sharpeville has much more to offer in addition to political history.

The thesis agrees with De Bruyns' findings that alternative products must be developed to boost the existing offering. These include additional activities for the family.⁸² These may include picnics and fishing training at the Dlomo dam and swimming at Sharpeville's oldest municipal pool in Vuka (discussed in the previous chapter). Visits to the houses of prominent figures such as Sexton Mabena (the boxer), George Thabe, and Hugh Masekela, amongst others have tourism potential. These houses would need to be developed into tourism products. There are further opportunities for dark tourism in the

⁸¹ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mr Mzwakhe, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 21 October 2024.

⁸² De Bruyn, "Developing a baseline," 11.

region.⁸³ Dlamini's house (discussed in the method section), still covered with controversy and mythology, should be considered a product of dark tourism. However, this will require community and family buy-in. Furthermore, Sharpeville boasts of many *Shesa nyamas*, such as Rhythm Lounge on Seiso Street, which can offer similar entertainment as establishments in Vilakazi Street, Soweto.

Bicycle tourism led by tour guides to places of tourist interest, starting from the Vaal River City can benefit tourism. Fundamentally, the development of bicycle tourism has enabled a green approach to tourism and can enhance the township tourism experience. But a bicycling culture needs to be revitalized in a community seemingly disembarked from it. Community members and road users must be receptive to the idea amid changing attitudes towards cyclists by road users. During apartheid, many residents cycled from Sharpeville to Vereeniging and other places of employment and leisure as a means of transport; this was implemented as a cost-efficiency mechanism.⁸⁴ But the health benefits cannot be sidelined. The following benefits of cycling are noted in Taiwan:

Bicycle tourism can enhance personal health and well-being and therefore create a healthy environment for a healthy society. Bicycle tourism also encourages people to participate in exercising activities whilst at the same time help improving the social health and reduce the expenditure of medical expense. Promotion of bike riding or walking can reduce the dependency on automobiles and achieve the goal of being healthy cities. Besides, bicycle is the most efficient transport mode in getting to the destination within 10 km of city vicinity.⁸⁵

For many years, the iconic George Thabe Stadium has been a missed tourism opportunity; mainly used for sports and commemoration events, the stadium's heritage has not been taken advantage of beyond its naming. Aspects of the stadium should be used, this thesis suggests, to articulate its significance in facilitating the signing of the Constitution. Furthermore, its premises should comprise a mini museum commemorating

⁸³ Tarminder and Hayhurst, "Cycling through the," 455.

⁸⁴ Tarminder and Hayhurst, "Cycling through the," 443.

⁸⁵ H.W. Chang and H.L Chang. "A strategic study of bicycle tourism in Taiwan," *Journal of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies* 5, no. 8 (2003): 1681.

the day and articulating George Thabe's achievements in forming the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL). The thesis also suggests erecting Mandela, Sobukwe, and Thabe statues outside the stadium. This will be a symbol of aligning the place with the achievements of its people in addition to achieving social cohesion. The Human Rights Precinct's representations of Mandela and Sobukwe are increasingly necessary to educate tourists and visitors on the contributions of different political parties towards achieving democracy.

Hlongwane and Ndlovu have reiterated the contestations between the ANC and the PAC since 1959 and how these have trickled into claims of ownership of the massacre and region.⁸⁶ They have also shed light on the divisions within the PAC itself that have culminated into factions that individually lay claim to the ownership of the massacre. Tourism's success in the region depends on representations accentuating political stability and unity. Physical symbols of Mandela and Sobukwe, preferably holding hands as a sign of unity, may contribute an alternative narrative of struggle history in Sharpeville that embodies unification and patriotism. Marschall's study found that "in the present context of South Africa's eagerness to attract foreign investment, flashing the Mandela card serves to protect an image of peace and stability to an international investor community affected by widespread Afro-pessimism".⁸⁷ But this requires political will and compromise from the community, stakeholders, politicians and the national government. The public display of political figures is typical in South Africa. Sandton Mall for example has a statue of Mandela, OR Tambo International Airport comprises OR Tambo's statue, and Paul Kruger's statue is in Church Square, Pretoria.

The region's history is not limited to contestations stemming from apartheid. The history of the Anglo-Boer or the South African War with reference to the Vereeniging Concentration camps and the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging on 31 May 1902 is a potential tourism product that can broaden tourism.⁸⁸ However, the Vaal Teknorama Museum requires substantial investments and facility management to be considered a

⁸⁶ Hlongwane and Ndlovu, "Remembering Sharpeville Day," 111.

⁸⁷ S. Marschall, "Making money with memories: The fusion of heritage, tourism and identity formation in South Africa," *Historia* 50, no. 1 (2005): 114.

⁸⁸ LTL, OA1, Interview: Khumalo, Vaal Teknorama Museum, 21 October 2024.

tourism product. Furthermore, the history of forced removals in the area must be articulated. A critical tangible aspect of this history is the brick remains of the demolition of houses in Top Location, previously situated at the Vaal Teknorama. This requires intense research and the collection of artefacts and other personal belongings to make it a meaningful tourism experience. These include photos, tables, clothes, etc., that can assist in presenting a narrative of the past and the making of a home in group areas.

7.5.4 The Vaal River

The Vaal River, a key attraction and stimulus for constructing the Vaal River City, has been an environmental concern. Xaba's study concerned with water quality in the Vaal River noted salinization.⁸⁹ Mnguni states that the Emfuleni "is where the majority of the failed wastewater collection networks and wastewater treatment plants are located".⁹⁰ Moss, in addition to the criticism levelled against inadequate infrastructure maintenance, states that:

Community members litter the stormwater channels, contaminating the Vaal River, which is said to be the only supplier of water specifically for the Emfuleni Local Municipality area. Water contamination at the riverside can result in some people developing diseases such as cholera and related illnesses.⁹¹

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) also noted the pollution of the Vaal River as a "violation of human rights" in its interventions during a meeting on 3 October 2018 at Stonehaven Vanderbijlpark.⁹² De Bruyn's respondents "pointed out to the issue of pollution, especially in the case of the Vaal River. The Vaal River is regarded as the region's major drawing points in terms of tourism development. Therefore,

⁸⁹ X. Kholiswa, "A critical assessment of the causes and impacts of water pollution-the case of the Vaal River in Emfuleni Local Municipality" (PhD diss., University of the Witwatersrand, 2020), 23.

⁹⁰ E.S. Mnguni, "Pollution of the Vaal River System in South Africa: A Case Study." *Waste Manag. Environ. Impact* XI 257 (2022): 18.

⁹¹ N.E. Moss, "The impact of community-based organisations on waste management service delivery: the case of Emfuleni Local Municipality" (MA diss., North-West University, 2013), 74.

⁹² L. Dithagiso, "Vaal River pollution discussed at length," 3 October 2018, Accessed 20 October 2024, <https://www.citizen.co.za/sedibeng-ster/news/2018/10/03/vaal-river-pollution-discussed-length/>

maintenance and sustainability are paramount”.⁹³ Water pollution threatens the development of tourism potential.

The recent growth and spread of algal blooms in parts of the Vaal River, often associated with the Hartbeespoort dam in the North West province, will impact tourism growth if unabated. Rivers, seas, and other forms of water tourism are admired for their aesthetics. Algal blooms do not add value to the tourism experience because of their unattractiveness and tendency to dominate the water. Tourism decline for example, has been noted in the North and Baltic Seas after experiencing a severe spread of algal blooms.⁹⁴ When asked about the Vaal River's efficiency in attracting tourists, a respondent vehemently stated that, in addition to algal, “it doesn't smell nice. Yes, it doesn't make sense.”⁹⁵ The construction of the planned Vaal River City should spearhead collaborative efforts with stakeholders, government, and the community to implement sustainable initiatives to reduce the problems associated with the Vaal River, which is central to its longevity and the making of the community. Most respondents alluded to the Vaal River City as a possible gateway to the ‘nice’ parts of the river. But a smaller number reflected on the possible costs of accessing the river via a mall and the cost implications thereof.

7.5.6 Infrastructure inequality

The region's inward and outward movements heighten the preference for certain localities over others. The decision to move to the suburbs is often influenced by the need to access better schools and infrastructure (roads, hospitals, service delivery, etc.).⁹⁶ South and Crowder's study on some of the localities inhabited by Blacks in parts of the United States of America is characterised by residential instability, low income and high crime rates.⁹⁷ Movement accentuates the infrastructure inequality embedded in suburbia and

⁹³ De Bruyn, "Developing a baseline," 11.

⁹⁴ J.H. Nilsson and S. Gössling, "Tourist responses to extreme environmental events: The case of Baltic Sea algal blooms," *Tourism Planning & Development* 10, no. 1 (2013): 35.

⁹⁵ LTL, OA1, Interview: Gift, North-West University, 31 October 2024.

⁹⁶ S.J. South and K.D. Crowder, "Residential mobility between cities and suburbs: Race, suburbanization, and back-to-the-city moves," *Demography* 34, no. 4 (1997): 626.

⁹⁷ South and Crowder, "Residential mobility between," 626.

townships. Based on its town planning, the Vaal River City will comprise the latest and most complex infrastructural development, which will undoubtedly deepen inequality in a region facing infrastructure dilapidation. De Bruyn's study heightened the need to improve infrastructure, including, but not limited to, refurbishment of roads (potholes), service delivery, and consistent and reliable electricity.⁹⁸ This thesis suggests, especially in Sharpeville, practical and accessible disposal of sewage. Rabali's dissertation found that:

Illegal dumping is driven by factors such as infrequent or lack of waste services, thus the waste ends up being dumped in public spaces. The waste is then eventually burned for eradication purposes. This then leads to the emission of detrimental pollutants into the atmosphere. The pollutants are not only detrimental to the environment, however also to the public health.⁹⁹

The unpleasant site of waste and compromised air quality may create an unpleasant tourism visit and can negatively influence tourism in the area. Waste disposal is necessary to circumvent unlawful dumping sites in the township. In addition to waste management, streetlights, tarred roads, and signage installations for road users and places with tourism potential are also necessary. The 2024 Draft Vaal Regional Spatial Development Framework prioritises the "repair and maintaining of existing roads throughout the Vaal River Region (Viljoenskroon, Kroonstad, Steynsrus, Frankort, Villiers, Cornelia, and Tweeling). Most of the roads have severe potholes and other road hazards which make travelling dangerous and slow".¹⁰⁰ Should bicycle tourism gain traction, considerations for bicycle lanes should be made mindful of the narrow lanes that comprise the roads of Sharpeville. Fundamentally, investments in repairing tourism-potential facilities and waste disposal mechanisms in the region are pivotal.

⁹⁸ De Bruyn, "Developing a baseline," 13.

⁹⁹ O.P. Rabaji, "Waste dumping in Sharpeville (Emfuleni Municipality): an investigation of the characteristics and the potential impacts on air quality" (PhD diss., North-West University, 2019), 79.

¹⁰⁰ "Phase 3: Draft Vaal River Regional Spatial Development Framework," January 2024, 125 https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/images/Branches/spatial-planning-and-land-use-management-services/planning-facilitation/draft-vaalrsdf_public-comment.pdf

7.5.7 Distrust in the government

The Emfuleni Local Municipality, responsible for infrastructure development and maintenance, has received backlash from the community. Dilapidation amid service delivery dissatisfaction expressed by residents during the commemoration of the massacre is evidence of distrust. Research has shown that:

Over the years, many municipalities in South Africa have been soundly criticized for poor services. Owing to the importance of local services that they provide, they are subjected to a daily barrage of questions and complaints directly in the press, civic organizations, community based organizations, etc.¹⁰¹

Allegations of corruption, misappropriation of funds, and the overwhelming dilapidation of infrastructure have contributed to calls for the Emfuleni Municipality to be placed under administration.¹⁰² The interviewees reiterated that:

Poor governance and service delivery can be huge threats in Emfuleni. I wish to see the construction end and the building successfully opened. Some of the things that might delay are construction mafias and elements of corruption. So, we hope for the best.¹⁰³

Further to this, De Bruyn emphasised a growing distrust in the political will of the Emfuleni municipality to maintain the region. Distrust is “exacerbated by the misallocation of funds.”¹⁰⁴ Maladministration and municipal debt resulted in the placing of Emfuleni under administration in June 2018, the reason for this was that:

The municipality's debt currently stands at around R4,6 billion, with the largest creditor being Eskom which the municipality owes R3,2 billion as at the end of

¹⁰¹ A.O. Akinboade, K.E. Chanceline and P.M. Mokwena, “An analysis of citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in the Sedibeng district municipality of South Africa,” *International Journal of Social Economics* 39, no.3 (2012): 187.

¹⁰² I. Nkadameng, “Put Emfuleni municipality under administration: Bosa’s Ayanda Allie,” 19 November 2024, Accessed 23 November 2024, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2024-11-19-put-emfuleni-municipality-under-administration-bosas-ayanda-allie/>.

¹⁰³ LTL, OA1, Interview: Mzwakhe, North-West University, Vanderbijlpark campus, 21 October 2024.

¹⁰⁴ De Bruyn, “Developing a baseline”, 10.

January 2021, of which R2.7 billion is older than 90 days; Rand Water R1.3 billion, of which R880 million is older than 90 days; Red Ants R35,7 million.¹⁰⁵

In March 2020, the court sheriff seized the Emfuleni Local Municipality property on behalf of Eskom in its bid to recuperate its debt from the municipality.¹⁰⁶ Broadcasted in the news and social media; this dented confidence in the municipality to manage the region's tourism. Furthermore, respondents were distrusting of the municipality to facilitate infrastructure development to cushion the broader inequality that will be much clearer between Vaal River City, Bedworth Park and Sharpeville. How Bedworth Park is to benefit from the Vaal River City beyond property value increments and the refurbishment of BnB's and accommodation for tourists is unclear.

7.6 Reflection

The construction site of the Vaal River City Interchange and the Vaal River City has reignited discourses on the state of Bedworth Park and Sharpeville and surrounding areas. This discourse has encouraged this chapter to conduct a historical analysis on the region's growth trajectory as a mechanism to project future trajectories due to the construction of the mega city. The chapter found that human agency has transformed Bedworth Park from a White only residence to a diverse society which reflects complex social and economic complexities. This complexity, the chapter argued, will undergo further changes with the completion of the Vaal River City. These changes will furthermore enhance the economic divide and infrastructure inequality between Vaal River City, Bedworth Park and Sharpeville. Though there has been improvements of roads and infrastructure, this has taken place on roads that connect to the Vaal River City. Little to no infrastructure development has taken place in Sharpeville and Bedworth Park. Sharpeville, as the interviewees argued, is positioned to complement Vaal River City with its tourism potential. However, environmental concerns, infrastructure dilapidation, distrust in the municipality, and vandalism, amongst other issues, have

¹⁰⁵ R. Marubini, "Gauteng steps up interventions in rescuing Emfuleni Municipality," 2 February 2021, accessed 20 November 2024, <https://www.gauteng.gov.za/News/NewsDetails/AC9A04DF-A667-42E7-A555-BBB74724400F>

¹⁰⁶ Z. Qodashe, "Emfuleni municipality's attempt to halt assets seizure over Eskom debt fails," 12 March 2020, Accessed 18 November 2024, <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/sheriff-of-court-seizes-emfuleni-municipalities-assets-over-eskom-debt/>

disabled tourism in the region. Its resuscitation requires the political will of the municipality, people's agency and buy-in, and investments from project funding spearheaded towards economic development.

The next chapter reflects on the arguments made by the thesis on the changes experienced in the evolution of Sharpeville.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

I have spent prolonged periods living in the Apartheid-established township of Thembisa in the East Rand, the so-called “White” suburb Birchleigh (Kempton Park) and attended a double medium (Afrikaans/English) Model-C school in Kempton Park. I regularly visit family and friends in rural areas and townships in many parts of the country. I have interacted with local people in the Vereeniging region and observed social processes in post-Apartheid South African townships. I spent many hours in conversation with elderly individuals in Sharpeville. They have shared their memories and impressions on the move from Top Location to Sharpeville, the Sharpeville home, homelessness, homeyness, regional identity, as well as things they enjoyed and treasured, and changes they observed in the community. These exchanges, in particular the number of in-person interviews I conducted, opened my eyes to historical processes in the twenty-first century, many of which there is no trace in the existing literature. I also learned about the ways in which people talked, remembered, explained, and experienced their local and personal histories. The wider changes in Sharpeville often sat rather uneasily with my own analytical categories and narrative structures. I found a reluctance in the discipline of physical anthropology to engage with its history as a racial science and the continued research that has put the discipline at odds with the local township communities and the post-apartheid government. To deal with the challenges of writing a history of Sharpeville, I decided to rely not only on the available archival sources and secondary sources but also on personal interviews.

In Chapter Two, my research diary, and literature on the model township, forced removals, and regional history are discussed against the backdrop of South Africa’s socio-economic development between the 1950s and 2020. To add to this, literature on the apartheid ‘Model Townships’, forced removals, regional history and in particular, the socio-development of Sharpeville and the massacre were analysed.

The establishment and economic development of Vereeniging (1892), the influence of the South African War (1899-1902), as well as the settlement process and removals from Top Location, was covered in Chapter Three. This chapter accentuated the traces and

analysis of the historical processes that shaped the vast socioeconomic changes in Top Location and later in Sharpeville. It required an in-depth interrogation of the macro and micro variables contributing to place-making in specific contexts. In the context of Top Location, the township, was found to have become increasingly cosmopolitan and vibrant. This was stimulated by local manufacturing industries, the growth of Duncanville, and the council's ability to position its business potential on the international market. Most initiatives culminated in the economic presence of British and local private companies in the Vereeniging region. The manufacturing industry contributed to the employment of labour that was not only accommodated in compounds but provided living space in the nearby Township of Top Location, and later in Sharpeville.

The histories of Top Location and Sharpeville remain a melting pot for nuanced historical inquiry, specifically on community making, identity, and the contentious political relations between freehold locations, their residents, and officials, as well as local councils and regional governance policies of the ruling national government. The latter, a gap in the thesis, could have been explored better at the micro-level to expound key debates within councils and their intricate relations with the national government.

However, in the context of Top Location and Sharpeville, the thesis veered towards extrapolating people's broader experiences through the philosophical lens of *ubuntu*. It was beyond the thesis' scope to expound a deep analysis of relations between the diverse races that formed an integral aspect of the social landscape of Top Location. This limitation, however, is enforced by the narrow focus of the thesis on accentuating the experiences of a specific race and their gradual removal to a group area, Sharpeville.

The few literary works on the historical development of Top Location essentially highlight the presence of other races in the area. This was made vivid by evidence of inhabitants by Indians, Coloureds, and, to a lesser extent, Whites. The oral recollections of some of the older people also pointed to interactions with especially Indian shop owners in the location. This hiatus, the thesis found, was onerous to tackle because of finite secondary sources, the depth in which material is presented, and the absence of witnesses that outlived Top Location. In revisiting the past through the articulations of the present generation generated through family histories, the thesis has managed to enunciate these 'second-hand' narratives to understand the region's history.

The discourse on Top Location and Sharpeville is not alien to articulations of migrant labour in South Africa. The thesis has shown a fusion of cultural and traditional evolutions amid the gradual loss of land and, in essence, subsistence farming within and outside South Africa's borders. This contributed to the altruistic decision of many men to move to paid labour in urban areas. Scores of men and women found abode in Top Location and later in Sharpeville, arguably temporarily, to access employment opportunities and remittance to sustain the rural homestead. The presence of women in urban areas, the thesis argued, contributed fresh nuances, shifts and destabilisations towards positionalities of urban areas as places for men. Families could live together as a unit in Top Location and Sharpeville instead of the single-sex compounds occupied by labourers in their local employer's proximity. The presence of family, anchored by wives, inevitably contributed to the prevalent conception of Top Location and Sharpeville as an additional home, evident in the tangible material and non-tangible traditional practices of instilling a culture sense of home.

The consumption of *umqombothi*, traditional beer, was ritualistic in the context of African customs. The extension of this practice in townships in urban areas contributed to bridging the gaps between rural and urban life. Doing so contributed to the increased policing of the former Top Location and Sharpeville for contraband and illegal conduct. Other adaptations included communal living in backrooms by large families and associated with typical slum environments. In addition, stokvels were established to enhance communal living and cushion economic difficulties experienced by residents. This practice was firmly embedded in *ubuntu*, a community-based concern for neighbours and the well-being of others, which, in some instances, contributed to social cohesion.

The intimate, everyday communal interactions between races that possibly veer towards miscegenation and the multiracial occupation of property, is a study worthy of academic interrogation. The opportunities here reflect how people's identities and intimacies became moments for legal scrutiny during segregation. Filling these lacunae is not contextually limited to Top Location; conversations, at the least, with older residents of Sharpeville alluded to the presence of non-Blacks in the township, especially in the houses near the police station. More research on this is needed. This materialisation will require oral histories in communities such as Evaton, Roshnee, and Rus Ter Vaal.

Vereeniging's footprint is not limited to industrial presence. The Boer deliberations on the peace treaty that concluded the South African War (1899-1902), were conducted in Vereeniging. Earlier, the site of the newly established post-war Top Location, was first used as a combined concentration camp for both whites and people of colour during the war. This parochial perspective normalises the misconception that the war was fought by the British and the Boers (Afrikaners). Ultimately, it detaches the significant histories of non-Whites and their broader contribution to the war and the cultural production of a sense of place.

Mindful of the link between African spirituality and the environment, most respondents could not derive any symbolic relevance from the South African War and its local concentration camps. Furthermore, the historical connection between parts of Vereeniging and Sharpeville predominantly has a bearing on industrial development (places of employment) and abode. Tourism potential is strongly linked to the struggle history of the region. The academic lens should envisage mechanisms to accentuate the footprint of the South African War and its relevance to the broader community of Vereeniging by purposefully transcending the racialisation of historical episodes.

The causes for the disconnections, unfamiliarity, or even disinterest towards the South African War and its consequences on the socio-economic nature of the region are worthy of study. Furthermore, suppose tourism, heritage centres and museums are purposed to articulate the region's history for residents. In that case, it must be a complete history representative of the entire community regardless of race. Chapter 3 was pivotal in accentuating the environment and people's realities as a propelling point to understanding the dynamic changes that people experienced. Chapter 4 continued this trajectory by relaying residents' experiences. Specifically, those who moved to Sharpeville and the many mechanisms implemented to make homes from apartheid structures and built environments.

In Chapter Four, Sharpeville as a 'Model Location', contested spaces, house allocations, and community identity was described. This included children's spaces, gardens, house plans and construction, township management, and the control of labour. The construction of houses in Group Areas adhered to the legislative framework historically guided by the Housing Act, number 35 of 1920. This act, amongst the plethora of acts that followed, assisted in determining the structures occupied by Black people. The

chapter was not hellbent on accentuating or unpacking the legislative frameworks that shaped the infrastructural landscape of townships. Its primary objective was to frame the legislative framework as a bedrock in the chapter's determination to articulate housing from the perspective of the spatial occupant. The residents' voice was often silenced by municipal council boasts of providing 'model locations' for local Black communities. This chapter further argued that the minimum standards were framed outside the realities of the social lives of Black families and their housing needs. In addition, the thesis is also cognisant of the financial constraints experienced by locals.

Regarding housing, living spaces amid family size, storage facilities, house designs and cultural practices, and play areas within the house for young children, amongst others, were highlighted as concerns. Cross-comparative analyses between houses in Top Location and those in Sharpeville before its construction were avoided by the Vereeniging Town Council. To their defence, this was insubstantial amid financial constraints caused by cost-containment strategies that envisioned the construction of cheap, but quality housing. The outcome of a cost-reductionist approach led to a downgrade in the size of the houses previously inhabited by some residents of Top Location. This was evident in the amount of personal belongings that residents had to leave behind or discard.

The construction of Group Areas by the 1950s, in essence, contributed to multilocality that contradicted the notion that the presence of Blacks in White areas, was for the sole purpose of providing labour. In terms of accessing labour to places of employment, Sharpeville was not overly geographically distant from the White areas of Vereeniging, but the separation was explicitly vivid. Also, notions of multilocality were inspired by the fact that the VTC contributed financially to the construction of Sharpeville under the guidance of standard housing and legislative frameworks. The financial constraints caused by the recessionary conditions of the post-Second World War (1939-1945) profoundly influenced the cost and affordability of appropriate housing. Consequently, the construction of housing in Sharpeville not only met the cardinals of apartheid but also the minimum living standards of the local African population. For this reason, profits derived from the municipal beerhall in the country's Group Areas also financed the construction of facilities essential for the community's well-being.

Male hegemony, a common feature in capitalist apartheid, oscillated between the home and industry. It normalised hegemony through the predominant employment of men and

dependency on men by women by issuing houses solely to married men. This not only normalised gender roles, limiting women to the domestic sphere, but it also limited women's aspirations beyond the domestic boundary. Women played a critical role as homemakers through domestic labour and providing care and stability to the household. The thesis also criticised the lack of adequate space for the large family, evident in the transformation of spaces such as the kitchen to benefit additional usage. Shifts in space transformation were cited as memories that instil a sense of cohesion within families. The additional critique stemmed from the realisation that the premises of housing units were not ideal for children to play, due to limited space. The repercussion of this formalised spatial confinement is still evident in most townships; scores of children and adults prefer to be outdoors to avoid the confines of a small house. One advantage is that the small confinement contributes to the vibrance of the township that stems from vibrant interactions between people.

The Sharpeville Creche was aided essentially by the government. It alleviated the strain caused by the absence of play facilities at home. It provided a multifaceted approach to childhood development by combining play facilities and elementary education. Additional research is required on the curriculum offerings of the creche as a prelude to understanding the interrelationship between childhood experiences in the creche and the making of community and home. In primary and secondary level schooling, the onus of future research could be geared towards unpacking the parallels between the community and pedagogical approaches. Sharpeville's schools were, for many years, run by religious organisations whose histories are under-explored in Sharpeville's social landscape.

The Sharpeville Creche and the Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society were the cornerstones of apartheid Sharpeville. Furthermore, it would be interesting for historical inquiry to be conducted to analyse former teachers' perceptions of schools such as Lekoa Shandu and Maritime School. These organisations were instrumental in creating a sense of community and belonging. On stokvels and other informal societal organisations, additional research is required on how societies contributed to the well-being of the people. A detailed analysis of the functionality of the Sharpeville Women's Friendly and Assistance Society, Vereeniging, though lacking substantial archival material, is necessary for determining the extent to which organisations alleviated poverty and hardship during apartheid. They are particularly worthy of consideration because the donations were directed towards women, instead of the men who derived incomes from

the manufacturing industry. Their functionality, as determined by their constitution, accentuated *ubuntu* that culminated with the government outlining the nation's oneness. The government was often critiqued for its social engineering policies that were seemingly disinterested in the well-being of its people. On the other hand, the Department of Social Welfare's initiative enhanced notions of care and will to alleviate hardship and poverty. However, if this is analysed in the broader context of apartheid as a policy, it was the low wages, pass laws, job reservation measures, and other repressive measures that placed an economic strain on Black families.

In Sharpeville, the superintendent became increasingly central in the discourse of the massacre. Future research in the region should focus on the experiences of superintendents' functionalities, authority, municipality limitations and interactions with the residents.

Chapter five dealt with how the 'model location' houses became contested spaces and how housing allocations shaped the Sharpeville community identity. The inception of a democratic dispensation in South Africa after 1994, reshaped and changed the country's socio-economic landscape. In Sharpeville, it stabilised a sense of permanent belonging and access to economic opportunities curtailed by a repressive regime. Local investment opportunities, previously deterred and policed by apartheid stringent policing, became liberated and materialised in backrooms, shebeens, and social clubs that resonated with economic self-determination.

Fundamentally, the inception of democracy eroded the buffers that geographically separated people according to race. Sharpeville residents became liberated to reposition themselves beyond the constraints and boundaries of Sharpeville. Whilst others left Sharpeville after 1994 to diversify the previous White suburbs in the region, others remained to reshape the social, economic, and political landscape. The thesis discussed how people used their financial muscle to deconstruct old apartheid houses in Sharpeville because of its regression. Others made minor renovations to modernise the structures and to ascertain individuality. Essentially, seemingly monotonous houses in a bland environment became accentuations of class and expressions of sophistication. This stemmed from the desire to attain material wealth, displayed in the collections of Tupperware, Addis kitchenware and complex domestic pieces of machinery that lessened the demand for physical household maintenance.

Chapter six focused on ways the feeling of belonging in Sharpeville stretched far beyond the physical house structure, or home. The social landscape and cultural trends included education, children's spaces, beer halls, cinemas, beauty contests, music, sport and religion. To add to this, the Sharpeville Massacre, which was instrumental in re-evaluating the sense of belonging in Sharpeville, was also discussed. The government displayed its centrality and robustness in determining belonging and 'citizenship'. Post the massacre, local PAC residents suspected to have contributed to the massacre were forcefully removed from Sharpeville. As mentioned in the thesis, their families suffered the brunt of a male hegemonic system. The eviction of a male head of household resulted in the eviction of the entire family, leaving many destitute. Similarly, a case study showed that failure to pay rent would result in evictions or the inability to bury the deceased. This was a stern reminder that residents were tenants who did not enjoy the benefits of security, associated with home ownership and land in the African philosophical framework of *ubuntu*. For this reason, many kept the upkeep of their homes in Lesotho, Lebowa, and other places deemed desirable places of retirement.

The thesis considered an alternative view of the agency displayed by community members towards their resistance of pass laws. It argued that it was customary for the residents to attend community meetings. The historicity of this phenomenon is embedded in the tradition of imbizo. Thus, the resistance against pass laws should be analysed in the context of a community having actively claimed belonging and permanence to an environment established to house labour. Fundamental sentiments of belonging can be derived from unfavourable or undesirable environments. In the context of apartheid South Africa, a sense of belonging may not have been enjoyed by some residents. Still, the apartheid house was a haven, even though it was considered, for others, a tool of oppression and a crime scene. Regardless of the loss of lives and the destabilisation caused by trigger-happy policemen in Sharpeville, the community defended and reaffirmed their legitimacy and sense of belonging to the township. They would do so once again in the 1980s during the state of emergency.

In Chapter seven I described Sharpeville today, as a physical remnant of apartheid interdependent with its surroundings in complex ways, especially with Vaal River City and Bedworth Park. The growing discontentment towards the Emfuleni Local Municipality and the deterioration of the township since 1994 – is a matter of grave concern. The lack of service delivery ultimately even watered down the memorialisation of the 1960 Massacre.

Instead, residents have used Sharpeville Day to accentuate the municipality's inadequacy to maintain places of historical and political significance. Despondency amongst local youth advocates for resuscitating a Sharpeville known for its great people, environment, township culture, and vibrancy to instil pride and a sense of belonging that is diminished by the massacre and, in essence, to embrace the reality that academics need to embrace the call for, #Sharpevilleisnotamassacre.

The interconnection and interdependence between Sharpeville and neighbouring communities became increasingly accentuated, especially from the early 2000s when the tourism potential in the area was evident. However, township tourism has not experienced a tourism growth trajectory because of dilapidated heritage sites and a malfunctioning Emfuleni Local Municipality. The lack of a political will to invest in tourism development by widening tourism products beyond the struggle route and the Sharpeville Memorial Complex, in addition to community distrust, has the potential to deter any future tourism in the area.

The Vaal River City and the changing social, economic, and cultural landscape of Bedworth Park are signs of development. This development, the thesis argued, will enhance infrastructure inequality between Sharpeville and its neighbours, especially if roads, water systems, tourism infrastructure and the like are not developed in Sharpeville. Lastly, Chapter 7 showed that urban areas are prone to change due to human agency. Bedworth Park, for example, has experienced substantial population shifts that have reshaped its economic and social culture. Deliberate efforts by the local municipality and national government should be based on accentuating local economic development beyond the planned Vaal River City, its jobs in construction, malls, and airports. More effort towards heritage and cultural tourism is needed to develop township tourism in a township rich in social and political history.

The history of Sharpeville between the 1940s and the 2020s, as with the South African political discourse, revolves around struggle, poverty, inequality, cheap labour and unemployment. When discussing the apartheid 'model township', the socio-economic effects of the apartheid government's ideology of separate development and group areas were evident, also in Sharpeville. The government's paternalism, policing and superiority attitude towards the urbanisation of the African people, played a major role in the formulation of class and racial discrimination policies on the grounds of Social Darwinism

and their solution to the so-called sanitation-syndrome. However, the effect of music and sports on Sharpeville residents, as well as several religious denominations' church congregations were valuable. Importantly, humanitarian attempts to restore a sense of humanism, education, care and upliftment of the poor have all played a major role in creating a sense of belonging and identity in Sharpeville between the 1940s and the 2020s.

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Annexure A: informed consent

Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

DATE:

BaSSREC Authorization

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of the research project	A history of socio-economic change in Sharpeville, South Africa, 1940s-2020s.
Ethics number	NWU-01040-22-S7
Principal investigator	Mr LT Ledwaba
Student number	31372953
Address	53 Meeu Street, Birch-Acres, Kempton Park, 1619.
Email address	Tumi.ledwaba@nwu.ac.za
Contact number	0724407538

You are being invited to take part in a research project that forms part of my Doctoral studies in History. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask the researcher any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you could be involved.

Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part. Prior to publication

of the study's results (or the point that publication is in process), you may also withdraw the data you generate.

This study has been approved by the Basic Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of the Faculty of Humanities of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of the international Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010) and the ethical guidelines of the National Health Research Ethics Council. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or relevant authorities to inspect the research records to make sure that I (the researcher) am conducting research in an ethical manner.

What is this research study all about?

- This study is an investigation of a history of socio-economic change in Sharpeville, South Africa, 1940s–2020s and will involve the use of oral interviews.
- The researcher has been trained to use the methods mentioned in the previous sentence.
- Approximately 40 participants will be included in this study.
- The objectives of this research are:
 - To examine the fundamental aspects of model locations (1950s) and to assess the changes that have taken place in Sharpeville post-1994
 - To analyse the allocation of houses in Sharpeville and the peoples' perceptions towards the community, home, identity and space between 1940 and 2020
 - To investigate how the township society changed from apartheid to a democratic dispensation
 - To evaluate the economic realities of Sharpeville before and after 1994, including the impact of political dispensations on the development of businesses, and the economic well-being of Sharpeville residents
 - To assess how the Sharpeville community transcended political epochs, and their perception of a township in a democratic South Africa.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to participate because you are a resident of Sharpeville who is knowledgeable on the socio-economic development of Sharpeville
- You have also complied with the following inclusion criteria: you are knowledgeable on the history of Sharpeville because you have lived in Sharpeville during apartheid and therefore experienced fundamental social, political and economic changes that have shaped the landscape of the township post 1994.
- You will be excluded if you are not willing to participate in the research.

What will your responsibilities be?

- You will be invited to participate in the noted study by the interviewer through telephonic contact.
- You will be expected to participate in an oral interview that will be audio-recorded.
- You will have 5-7 days to indicate whether or not you would be willing to participate in the interview.
- You will be requested to sign this Informed Consent Statement before the commencement of the study.
- The consent form will either be emailed or hand delivered to you by the researcher.
- You will be contacted telephonically after seven (7) business days to establish your interest/disinterest in the research and for arrangements to be made for the collection of the consent form.
- Alternatively please email the consent form to the researcher at tumi.leta@nwu.ac.za.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

- The interviewees will be issued recordings and transcripts of the recording for their personal archives and the narration of personal histories for their families.
- The indirect benefit will probably be your contribution to the enrichment of the discourse of the history of Sharpeville.

Are there risks involved in your taking part in this research and how will these be managed?

The possible risks in this study, and how these will be managed, are summarised in the table below:

Possible risk	Mitigation strategy
COVID 19 risk during face-to-face interviews.	Strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines that include wearing of face masks throughout, social distancing and regular hand sanitising
Emotional distress of the participants.	This is not anticipated but in the event of emotional distress the interviewees will be assisted in accessing professional support.
Tiredness and discomfort.	Comfort breaks depending on the length of the interview will be taken, the interview will be rescheduled in the unexpected event of extreme discomfort and lethargy.
Lack of privacy and comfort during interviews due to old age and other factors.	The interviews will take place in the interviewees' residents and they will determine comfortable spaces for the duration of the interviews. If interviewees prefer alternative communication mediums the interviewee will adhere to their recommendations.
Loss of anonymity	Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained if the participant requests so. Interviewee's details will only be mentioned if approval is granted.

- However, we do believe that the benefits to you and to science (as noted in the previous section) outweigh the risks we have listed. If you disagree, then please feel free not to participate in this study. We will respect your decision.
- Should we learn, during the research, that someone is harming you, or that you are intending to harm someone, then we must tell someone who can help you/warn the person you are intending to harm.

Who will have access to the data?

- The *handling, storage, security and analysis of data* is critical in ethical considerations. I will ensure data in both hard-(printed) and soft copy (electronic) are safely locked away and password-protected, respectively. The PhD candidate and the supervisors will have access to the data. At the analysis stage, as will be the case throughout, the use of coding will reinforce participants' non-identification, hence upholding the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity.
- *Anonymity* will be ensured by choosing your own fictitious names/I will assign a fictitious name to you before the interview starts. Only this name will be used in the research process.
- *Confidentiality* will include the use of pseudonyms/codes for participants, organisations and locations. It involves not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual.
- *Privacy* will be ensured by not probing unnecessarily if you do not wish to discuss particular matters.
- I will not use a *transcriber* for the purpose of the transcripts after the interview. I will be responsible for transcribing the data – no other person except the PhD candidate and supervisors will have access to the data.
- The data will be *stored safely in electronic form* for a period of five years after which it will be destroyed.

What will happen to the data?

The data from this study will be reported in the following ways: To my promotor and co-promotor, before submission to internal and external examiners, to receive my PhD.

In all of this reporting, you will not be personally identified. This means that the reporting will not include your name or details that will help others to know that you participated (e.g., your address, contact numbers or name and surname).

Data may be re-used in the form of peer reviewed journal articles, book publications, as well as national and/or international conferences.

Will you be paid/compensated to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

No, you will not be paid/compensated to take part in the study. If participating in the research means that you have to travel especially for the purpose of participating, then your travel costs will be paid. There will thus be no costs involved.

How will you know about the findings?

- The general findings of the research will be shared with you by the researcher in a follow-up visit if you agree to it.
- If you would like feedback on your personal results, the interviewer will provide the feedback.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Tumishang Ledwaba at 072 440 7538 and or via email at tumzatoleta@gmail.com if you have any further queries or encounter any problems you can contact the chair of the School of Governance: Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs (AGOPA) (Prof. Costa Hofisi) at 0169103662 or costa.hofisi@nwu.ac.za or the Chairperson of the Human Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Prof Erharbor Idemudia) at 018 389 2899 or Erhabor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the researcher.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in a research study entitled: "A history of socio-economic change in Sharpeville, South Africa, 1940s–2020s"

I declare that:

- I have read and understood this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person obtaining consent, as well as the researcher (if this is a different person), and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I understand that what I contribute (what I report/say/write/draw/produce visually) could be reproduced publicly and/or quoted, but without reference to my personal identity.
- I consent to an audio and/or audio-visual recording of the interview.
- I am aware of the fact that I may request that the researcher does not continue with said recording if I request it.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

Signature of participant

Signature of witness

- You may contact me again ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like a summary of the findings of this research ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I would like feedback on my functioning/wellbeing as reflected in the questionnaires I completed ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

The best way to reach me is:

Name & Surname: _____

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

In case the above details change, please contact the following person who knows me well and who does not live with me and who will help you to contact me:

Name & Surname: _____

Phone/ Cell Phone Number /Email: _____

Declaration by person obtaining consent (if not the researcher)

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of person obtaining consent Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) _____ declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to _____
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I did/did not use an interpreter.

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 _____

Signature of researcher

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher and participant

Personal face-to-face interviews during [Covid-19](#) restrictions

Additional declaration by participant in those instances where the participant requests to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview:

By signing below, I _____, acknowledge the following information related to the required measures regarding Covid-19:

I declare that:

- It is my personal choice and preference to participate in a personal face-to-face semi-structured interview with the researcher.
- This requires that I consent to the following strict measures to safeguard the personal health and safety of myself and that of the researcher/interviewer/primary investigator:
- I consent to the researcher taking my temperature before the interview using a thermometer. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I confirm that my temperature measured at _____ degrees. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I consent to use the three-ply mask provided by the researcher. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I consent to wear the three-ply mask for the full duration of the interview.
☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I consent to the researcher sanitising the interview context using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before the commencement of the interview.
☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**
- I consent to the researcher using a sanitiser with an 80% alcohol content before and during the interview if required. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Signed at (*place*) _____ on (*date*) _____ 20 ____

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher