

A Younger Perspective: Young people's representations of Langa Township

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Word Count:

Abstract: 206

Main Body: 9,899

**Figure 1.** The fence of disgrace



“So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,  
And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!”

excerpt from *The Blind Men and the Elephant*

John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

### **Abstract**

This study explored Langa Township in Cape Town, South Africa from the perspective of eight 12 year old Black South African children who participated in a Photovoice workshop for two months. There were seven sessions, five of which were focus groups. The focus groups and Photovoice techniques were used to attempt to raise critical consciousness via self-reflection and action. The data was analyzed through the lens of social representations theory and supported by thematic analysis. A mini case study was done to investigate whether critical consciousness was elicited as a result of the research process. This study illustrates the relevance of social representations theory to construct young people's representations of their lived context and of Photovoice as a type of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Its findings supplement current discourse on young people, Langa, and poverty in general by highlighting how representations influence perspectives. Findings suggested that representations from the broader social context influenced representations of the community. Some of these representations impacted common identities and resulted in a lowering of aspirations while other resources were regarded as positive symbols and helped the participants combat stigmatizing representations. There were also contradictory representations about certain resources which were characterized as both symbols of self-reliance and issues for change.

**Keywords:** young people; Photovoice; social representations theory; critical consciousness; social change

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### **Acknowledgements**

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this Honours dissertation possible. I am sincerely grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Shose Kessi for her support, patience and guidance throughout my dissertation writing despite her other commitments. Her ideas made my Honours research process a thought-provoking experience. I would also like to thank the University of Cape Town's Department of Psychology for its information resources.

To Dr. Debbie Kaminer, and the Children For Tomorrow Foundation (CFT) I would like to extend the deepest gratitude for allowing me to be a part of their project. I am sincerely grateful to thank the students of Thembani Primary School who participated in the Photovoice project for the enthusiasm with which they approached the activities and their openness to sharing during our discussions.

Finally I would like to thank my mother, Dr. Florence Baingana, for her contributions, financially and otherwise. Without her, none of this would have been possible. Many others provided support in a myriad of ways that helped to improve this dissertation. Although I cannot mention them all here I am grateful for their time and support as well.

## **Background**

Communities are an inescapable part of a person's life that act as a foundation for common identities and influence the social construction of meanings. Meanings are multifaceted because they are dependent on the community in which they are understood. These communities are themselves a patchwork of dissimilar but interconnected features (Howarth, 2011). For instance, some of the biggest differences between communities today are a result of unequal distribution of wealth (Wesley, 2008).

It is important to understand that poverty is more than a lack of material necessities. The United Nations has recognized that the focus of the definition of poverty on a lack of material conditions fails to properly reflect individual and community overall well-being (Bradshaw et al., 2003). This has resulted in an active effort to expand the definition so that it includes other facets of life. Expansion of the definition would allow for different forms of community development to become possible, since low income is correlated with other social issues. (Bradshaw et al., 2003; Kamanou et al., 2005).

This study sought to create knowledge about young people's representations of their environment by looking at the young people in Langa, Cape Town. In South Africa, 55% of the population make up the poorest households (Armstrong et al., 2008). Given South Africa's skewed distribution of resources and the resulting significant disparity in socioeconomic status, a study like this is imperative in order to illustrate the lived context of underprivileged individuals. This study's results could complement poverty discourse by providing new and critical insight. There is also the present recognition that understanding each situational context in its own right is important (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). The current top-down approach that expects less developed societies to catch up to developed societies fails to recognize the differences in context that influence local resources and challenges (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Kessi, 2011). Therefore Langa's particular context must be properly examined in order to understand what its local resources and challenges are.

Each stage of life, from infancy to late adulthood also offers unique insight into meaning (Kolb, 1984). It is important to recognize and include how people at different stages of life interpret experiences because of this fact. Since the relationship between meaning and the lived context is at the heart of social representations theory via its examination of the production and maintenance of culture and identity, using it as a theoretical framework can

be beneficial (Howarth, 2004, 2010). The self-reflection and photography involved in Photovoice methodology can be processes of examining meaning as well (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000). This makes it an equally beneficial tool for the exploration of meaning in Langa. The focus on individuals at particular life stages and the use of Photovoice are an acknowledgement of the other facets of life that could be influenced by poverty. After all, some presidents of the American Psychological Association (APA) have called for a socially engaged discipline emphasizing that part of psychology's tenets is to promote human welfare (Manning et al., 2007). Part of promoting human welfare can be through helping to address issues of poverty by complementing the current poverty discourse.

### **One Township's Perspective**

Our contexts influence and define our experiences (Howarth, 2011). For the young people who participated in the study this was true as well. Langa is a township twenty-five kilometres outside the city of Cape Town. It was created just after World War I (Boudreaux, 2008). It is named "Langa" for two reasons. First it means "sun" in isiXhosa and second, it was also named after a Black African activist imprisoned in Cape Town after rebelling against the Natal government (Boudreaux, 2008; *Langa*, 2008). Cape Town officials, created the township to cater for the Black informal workers after the 1923 Urban Areas Act which segregated urban residential space and created "influx controls" to reduce access to the cities by Black Africans based on the belief that the Africans were only temporary citizens of the cities (*Encyclopaedia*, 2011; Parnell, 2003). Today, the predominant race in Langa is still Black African possibly because separation of the races generally occurs along socioeconomic lines in South Africa (Boudreaux, 2008). The policies of the Apartheid era are directly responsible for this skewed distribution and bridging the gap is a difficult task reflected in the present day civil unrest as a result of perceived poor service delivery to the economically disadvantaged (Carter & May, 1999).

The citizens of Langa have both a vibrant and struggling community. The majority of the population work in the informal sector and are subject to inconsistent pay (Boudreaux, 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2003; Youngusband, 1996). Common representations of the township depict widespread poverty, housing shortages, inadequate drainage, alcohol and drug abuse, crime, insecurity and high unemployment rates. Langa is also said to be characterised by a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, and the highest Tuberculosis rate in the world. The change in government has allowed for some development to occur (Armstrong et

al., 2008). More housing has been provided to cater for some of the people who were living in the squatter camps and there has been an increase in social grants. Private community projects have also flourished or emerged. Langa has tried to take ownership of its development reflected in cultural life, traditional celebrations, clubs, societies, sports and activism (*Background*, n.d.; Boudreaux, 2008; Bradshaw et al., 2003; Younghusband, 1996). Its positive transformation and change is reflected in its young people's opportunities as well. Non-governmental and governmental programs to improve the township are experienced by the children if not actively then through observation and signal possible change for the better (Younghusband, 1996).

### **The Young People of Langa**

The nature of our experiences is especially important during adolescence, one of the most demanding periods of an individual's life-span (Chinman & Linney, 1998). Children's perspectives, while unique and filled with remarkable insight are not often used to examine poverty discourse. The young people of Langa have particularly challenging experiences to deal with given that common representations depict them as being at high risk of engaging in harmful practices such as substance abuse and violent gang activity (Medical Research Council, 2010). Wadsworth and Santiago (2008) note that although there are a number of economic stress models "children's own experience of the stress of poverty is generally unaccounted for... (yet)...children and adolescents are also aware of and affected by the stressors created and maintained by economic hardship" (p.399). Given this situation doing a study that focuses on the perspective of young people sheds more light on what difficulties they face and what features of their context they find beneficial. This would help to construct knowledge about children's experiences of poverty.

For instance, Chinman and Linney (1998) suggest that the lack of meaningful roles from which to participate in life is a possible cause of the social and behavioural problems of adolescence. A Photovoice project that examined how adolescent boys negotiated and integrated multiple voices of masculinity in Alexandra Township revealed that some boys were conflicted in their roles, choosing a contradictory in-between position where they could juggle multiple masculine identities depending on the context (Langa, 2010). This is proof that Chinman and Linney's (1998) ideas were accurate when it came to the boys in Alexandra.

If a lack of roles is the issue then finding ways to supply meaningful roles is necessary. It has been found that participating in a Photovoice project can be one way to

accomplish this (Mitchell et al., 2005). A Photovoice project gave its child participants an active voice through which they illustrated their perspective of issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexual violence and poverty. Being part of a change process through this kind of dialogue was a positive experience for the young people to be engaged in and fostered positive identities (Mitchell et al., 2005).

### **Eliciting Action and Awareness through Methodology**

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a type of research where participants are engaged in the research process by participating in the collection and analysis of data, which is then implemented in a way that promotes change in the lives of the parties involved (Kidd & Kral, 2005, p. 187). Ponterotto (2010) describes PAR as a means of gathering necessary knowledge through self-reflection and action about a problem in such a way that it incites intervention or change that is directly useful to the community. Purcell (2007) summarizes PAR by stating that essentially the local people become the subject of their own investigation rather than the object of external agencies' concern. Photovoice is a form of PAR that makes use of a combination of both photography and narratives (Graziano, 2004). Wang and Burris (1997) describe it as

a process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique... (using) ... the immediacy of the visual image to furnish evidence and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing expertise and knowledge (p. 369).

Photovoice has three main goals. Firstly, it enables people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns. Secondly, it promotes critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs. Thirdly it aims to inform policy decisions with evidence-based information (Wang & Burris, 1997).

For example, Graziano (2004) examined how Black Gay men and Lesbians view themselves in relation to their White counterparts here in South Africa. Graziano's (2004) research showed some of the benefits of Photovoice such as the researcher's opportunity to see the world from the context of the participant and affirmation of the ingenuity and perspective of society's most vulnerable populations, to name but a few (Wang and Burris,

1997). His research also did as Wang and Burris (1997) suggest which was attempting to reach policy makers with evidence-based information by highlighting the need to create safe spaces for Black Gay men and Lesbians in South Africa.

### **Aims**

There is an essential need for more in-depth and sophisticated knowledge about individuals in less privileged circumstances. This knowledge is necessary to improve interventions aimed at reducing poverty, supporting livelihoods, and socio-economic development and growth. One of Photovoice's aims is to effect change and this translated in to an aim of the study as well. Through self-reflection and photography, this study attempted to raise critical consciousness within the community and create knowledge that can be used by policy makers and other people in positions of powers. In addition, the act of creating representations is unique to each research project that focuses on meaning so the information acquired from this study will be new and thus useful (Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000; Jovchelovitch, 1997; Kessi, 2011). Photovoice could provide participants with a chance to develop critical awareness of their realities and allow them to represent themselves in more positive ways (Mitchell et al., 2005).

This study attempted to understand what young people's representations of their community are. It hoped to contribute to the poverty discourse by increasing the knowledge about young people in less privileged circumstances.

The research question was as follows:

“What are its young people's representations of Langa Township?”

### **Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this research, both social representations theory and critical consciousness were used to interpret the data obtained from the study.

**Social representations theory.** Moscovici (1984) defines social representations theory (SRT) as systems of values, ideas and practices that establish an order which allows individuals to orientate themselves so that they can master their material and social world. These systems also enable communication between community members by providing a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying the various aspects of their world, individual and group history (Moscovici, 1984). In essence, for SRT, an individual's critical engagement with the representations that filter into and thus constitute their realities is the focal point. The theory has potential to be used in the critical analysis of social events such as

oppression and social change because it attempts to analyze and interpret the on-going relational and fundamentally contest nature of meanings in the lived context (Howarth, 2004).

Looking at the meaning found in objects, people and places and how they are internalized could provide insight into how Langa is truly faring. That information could be helpful because it could illustrate the relationship between the individual and society. It could address the broader issues relating to the lived context of South Africa by looking at the lived context of one community. According to Campbell and Jovchelovitch (2000), looking at the meanings that make up the various aspects of an individual's lived context is important because illustrating the relationship between person and society is a central tenet of social psychology. Thus, broader issues could be better understood within a social psychological dimension.

**Critical consciousness.** A major flaw of SRT is that in focusing so much on representations it offers a limited view of the individual (Howarth, 2004). Essentially with the use of SRT comes a suggestion that people lack power and yet although meaning is context dependent people *do* have the capacity in and of themselves to effect change. It would be better to say that representations make up the first step in understanding individuals. Jovchelovitch (1997) states that social institutions make up one facet of dialogue. By social institutions she refers to one facet of meanings reflecting her awareness that there is another feature that plays a significant role in the lived context of the individual. It is thus she introduces agency and through it the role of critical consciousness. This is because in order to make alternative representations that can combat the stigmatizing representations created by social institutions, a higher level of consciousness is needed (Jovchelovitch, 1997).

Freire (1970) discusses critical consciousness as recognition that people have the ability for critical reflection that results in the ability to make choices and thus transform reality. Pedrinho and Jovchelovitch (2004) highlight that the important part of consciousness is that it occurs in the process of making sense of events. Dialogue is constructed and renewed and through this process themes evolve. To Freire (1970) gaining critical insight incorporated interpretation which occurred through dialogue. It is this critical dialogue, in all of its various forms, which enables individuals to go beyond their respective contexts and create a greater understanding as a community (Kessi, 2010).

Freire (1970) had two main stages of consciousness, semi-intransitive consciousness and transitive consciousness. Semi-intransitive consciousness describes an awareness that is survival based. Perceptions of objects and challenges are confused meaning true causality is never understood. Hence, magical explanations are the primary solutions. Transitive



consciousness is further broken down into three stages, naïve consciousness, fanaticized consciousness and critical consciousness. Naïve consciousness is a state of awareness where the individual is prone to oversimplification of problems, gregariousness, and fragile arguments. Magical explanations also continue to be the key explanation for causality. Freire (1970) describes the third stage, fanaticized consciousness, as a level of thought processing where reason is defeated and men are defeated and dominated although they do not know it. Although they attempt to make their own choices, these choices tend to follow general formulas making them directed objects rather than creative subjects within their context. Freire's (1970) final stage of consciousness is critical consciousness. This stage is characterized by:

“...depth in the interpretation of problems; by the testing of one's “findings” and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analysing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old – by accepting what is valid in both old and new.” (Freire, 1974, p.14)

One of critical consciousness' aims is to create social change through self-reflection and building awareness (Freire, 1970). This is directly applicable to the use of Photovoice, a PAR technique in the study. Drawing and building on critical consciousness theory helps to interpret the process of self-reflection as it happens during the study.

Both SRT and critical consciousness are appropriate for this study. Together, they provide an analysis of social change that takes into account both the lived context's influence and the individual's capacity for critical awareness. They complement each other, which results in a clearer picture of human behavior.

## **Methods**

### **Design**

Qualitative research's main focus is on human experiences, constructions and meanings (Willig, 2008). It looks at the on-going events and situations in life acknowledging that there are multiple truths and that our lived context directly and indirectly influences our experiences (Parker, 2005). Qualitative research involves the exploration of the emotive and cognitive aspects of individuals' experiences interpreted from their socially constructed world views (Ponterotto, 2010). It is distinctive for a number of reasons. Researchers are able to achieve personal contact in a way that leads to the suspension of previously held stereotypes through close interaction. Given its 'discovery' goal, qualitative research is also better suited to exploratory and descriptive research because it provides significantly in-depth information. Furthermore, qualitative research is very effective when it comes to explaining complex psychological phenomena because it is not limited by preselected variables.

What is especially significant about PAR which was used in this study is its ability to give disempowered, marginalized, and silenced groups a voice through the research endeavour by allowing for the levelling of the power hierarchy (Wang & Burris, 1997). It does this while respecting that such groups share their worldview and lived experiences in their own words, in their own way, and under conditions set forth through co membership (Ponterotto, 2010). Willig (2008) also notes that the key aspects of qualitative research are its flexible techniques that can accommodate any new and unanticipated information that comes up during the study. She states that the research question is open-ended, identifying the phenomena being investigated through descriptions and explanations in such a way that it informs the methods that will be used (Willig, 2008).

Qualitative design was appropriate for this study because it emphasizes constructions, experiences and meanings, and these were the subject of the research question. Additionally, the theoretical framework's views and the characteristics of qualitative research are similar. SRT looks at meanings and their relationship to the lived context while critical consciousness focuses on critical awareness of events. Both consciousness and the role of the lived context are aspects that qualitative research seeks to illustrate as well. Given that similarity it was apparent that in order to suitably explore young people in Langa's representations of their context a qualitative research design was important. For the purpose of this research, the researcher incorporated Photovoice techniques and focus groups.

**Photovoice.** Photovoice, as mentioned earlier, is a process by which participants identify and represent aspects through photography in an effort to enable and initiate critical dialogue about aspects of their lived context (Wang & Pies, 2004). It is a way of getting information from the individuals who are directly involved in the events researchers are investigating. It is also a source of constant education because its subject matter, photos and narratives are unique to each context. Research questions can sometimes limit the participant's response. Photovoice attempts to resolve this through its photography feature which gives a human face to the questions. The narrative reflects the participant's interpretation of what the photograph signifies. Integrated they provide a versatile and more intricate answer to the research question.

Photovoice also builds technical skills directly through the use of a camera and exhibitions that recognize the participants' knowledge (Wang & Burris, 1997). Besides the above Photovoice could also foster a sense of community and place among the community. It might create a space for interaction that allows for critical insight into events, acknowledgement of local expertise and lets the participants define their own context (Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Pies, 2004). Using Photovoice to elicit the young people's representations of Langa is beneficial to the researcher because it could provide unique information. It could also be empowering to the participants because it will recognize their position as experts of Langa. These encourage self-esteem and community involvement and support making Photovoice a good tool for social psychological practice, which looks at the relationship between the individual and the social context.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups were also used as a data collection method for this study. The idea is to have a variety of opinions and dialogical interactions so that new knowledge about meanings and agency can come out of the process (Parker, 2005). Focus groups are contextual in their recognition of that fact that individuals are members of a social group and that their interactions with other members are equally instructive. In addition, focus groups reduce the risk of exploitation given that the researcher's influence is diffused by the presence of a much larger participant group (Raby, 2010; Wilkinson, 1999). Kitzinger (1994) emphasizes that group work ensures that priority is given to the participant's hierarchy of importance, language and concepts and frameworks for understanding the world.

The research was about the social context. Since focus groups are more naturalistic they allow for interaction dynamics and power is balanced to some extent between the researcher and the participants making it is the most suitable for this research. Their emphasis on meaning as a shared event was part of what the research sought to explore in its focus on

the young people of Langa. The discussion about the participants' community aimed to reveal information about the participants' shared perspectives of their environment, and how these perspectives related to broader perspectives and the collective sense-making of this group of individuals.

## Participants

**Table 1**

*Participants' Demographic Characteristics (N= 8)*

Name	Gender	Age
Buzwe	Male	12
Lifa	Male	12
Anele	Male	12
Viwe	Male	13
Mandisa	Female	12
Thandiwe	Female	12
Nkosazana	Female	12
Nomhle	Female	12

*Note. M = 12*

The study included eight participants selected in collaboration with a school in Langa Township, Cape Town. The even number was a contingency in case the researchers required the participants to work in pairs. With regards to gender, there were four boys and four girls. All the participants were Black South Africans between 12 -13 years in Grade 7. Their demographics are shown in Table 1

## Materials and Procedure

Sessions ran once a week in Langa, at the participants' primary school. The participants' cameras were provided for by the Children for Tomorrow Foundation (CFT). There were a total of seven sessions that lasted 90 minutes each. Five of these sessions were focus groups. The other two were a preparatory session for an exhibition and then there was the exhibition itself. Sessions were primarily on Wednesdays after school for approximately two hours. Each session also included a brief break of about ten minutes with snacks. Participants were given two disposable cameras each; one to take photographs of *things you like about your community* and the other to take photographs of *things you want to change*.

Each camera could take 27 photographs and three photographs per camera (seven per participant) were allowed for personal photography. The researchers used an empty classroom with enough space for group activities and for sitting in a circle as a focus group. A board to write down notable points and a clear wall space to hang posters were also available.

**Learning how to use cameras.** Materials included books, pens, a voice recorder, a disposable camera, a computer to show examples, and magazines. A professional photographer was asked to talk to the participants and train them in the using cameras. The session began with the researchers handing books and pens for the participants to use as diaries during the study. The group then did an ice-breaker. Following the ice breaker, the researchers introduced the photographer. The photographer then taught the participants the basics of taking a good photograph.

**Finding story ideas.** Materials included a voice recorder, and 16 disposable cameras (two each per participant).

The second session was a focus group session where the participants and researchers discussed possible story ideas. The session ended with each participant getting their cameras.

**Photography time.** The participants were given a period of two weeks to take their photographs.

**See your photos and choose your best ones.** Materials included the printed photographs of each participant.

This session focused on letting the participants see their photographs. They also chose the photos that they would present at the next session. Each participant shared their photographs with the rest of the group. At the end of the session, the participants were asked to write in their diaries narratives about each of the chosen photographs. These would be presented to the group at the next session.

**Story-telling about photographs.** Materials included poster board paper, sticky tack, and a voice recorder.

During this session, participants prepared for the group presentation. Then each participant presented their stories to the group. After the presentations there was a focus group discussion on the possible themes and what they meant. Participants were allowed to lead the discussion but some questions to initiate dialogue asked were:

- What do you think a lot of the photographs are saying?
- How could you change this?

At the end of the session, the participants' stories were collected by the researchers to be typed.

**Preparing presentations.** Materials included poster board paper, and sticky tack or glue. This session focused on preparing for a community presentation. Larger poster boards were prepared.

**Talk about changing our community.** Materials included the participants' typed stories, glue, and clips to hold up the posters. People from the community were present. Presentations looked at the *things they like* and *things they want to change* that the participants photographed. The participants presented to representatives from CFT, the school and a group of Study Abroad students from the United States.

**Tell us what you think about the project.** Materials included a voice recorder. This last session focused on debriefing. Participants shared their experience of being a part of the study.

## **Data Analysis**

For the purpose of this research, Thematic Analysis was used. Thematic analysis can be a method which reports the experiences, meanings and reality of the participants or it can be an examination of the ways in which events, realities, meanings and experiences are a result of the ranges of discourses going on in society (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith & Firth, 2011). It can also be a bit of both, recognizing, both the individual's meaning of their experiences and the broader social context's influence on these meanings. In essence, thematic analysis seeks to depict reality and understand how that reality has come about. It is an interpretive process involving a systematic look at patterns that provides rich insights into complex events. It can be applied to a range of different theories and be used to test existing theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith & Firth, 2011).

In exploring young people's representations, it is necessary to look at the pattern of themes that the participants will share with the researcher during the research process. For this reason thematic analysis was chosen. In addition, the fact that thematic analysis can be used in relation to a range of different theoretical frameworks made it a suitable form of analysis given this research's focus on social representations theory and critical consciousness. These theories in combination with this form of analysis provided rich insight into the lived context of young people. Table 2 illustrates the themes found in this study.

**Table 2***Themes from the Photo-stories and Focus groups*

Themes	Explanation	Codes
Self-reliance and self-determination	Resources in Langa that	Ownership
	were symbols of pride and	Pride
	ownership	Education
	Participants' recognition of	Employment
	their community's local	Religion
	initiatives	Employment
Pessimism	Participants' positive coping	Community initiatives
	strategies	
	Participants' representation	
	of their community and	
	themselves as independent	
	Participants' concern about	Physical concerns
	the realities of their lived	Health concerns
	context	Housing shortages
	Participants' view of their	Poor service delivery
	communities' attitude	Community apathy
	toward change	
	Participants' own attitude	
	toward change	
	Participants' views of	
	governmental involvement	

**Reflexivity**

Reflexivity refers to paying attention to historical and personal aspects in respect to their institutional location. Parker (2005) describes it as attention to the power dimensions in the research relationship and the broader implications of the study. Essentially it is a moment for critical acknowledgement of how I as the researcher influenced the process of the study. Thematic analysis sometimes ignores context but context should still be taken into

consideration (Parker, 2005). In respect for Parker's (2005) cautionary statement, for the purposes of this research not only was the broader social context kept in mind but also the daily lived context of the participant.

As a female, English speaking foreigner (Ugandan), my experiences influenced the interpretation of the information obtained. Participants might not have responded openly because of this however, my position as a foreigner could also have been positive. I could have brought a different perspective in to the dialogical process. I also recognize that there is a considerable age difference between the participants and I which could signify a position of power. Since I was aware of this, I tried to use my power in a way that benefitted the participants. The final information that was reported was filtered through my perspective. As a result, my goal was to acknowledge the influence that I have on the research process and make an effort not to overtly manipulate the events. I paid careful attention to see how the research was influenced by its context. I agree that my perspective has directed the final information but it was based on the participants' descriptions of events and not my own.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as specified by the Health Profession Council of South Africa (HPCSA), as well as the University of Cape Town (UCT) Codes for Research. Ethical approval was obtained from the Psychology Department's Research Ethics Committee at UCT. Two separate consent forms were used for the parents/guardians of the participant and participant himself/herself. These are attached in appendixes A and B respectfully. With regards to confidentiality, all information given by the participants was kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of the study. The risk for participants as part of the study in general was low however taking photographs may have been risky. The participants were asked to get permission from anyone they took photographs of. In addition, Participants were asked to take photographs in the company of an older friend, teacher or guardian to ensure safety. How to take photographs without revealing identifying information about non-participants was discussed. This limited the results of the study but the participants' safety was vital. Photographs that compromised human dignity or safety of the people photographed were excluded.



## Findings

This analysis is based on the themes extracted from the participants' accounts. Since the methodology involved the use of photographs, stories and focus groups this particular construction will focus on the representations. The use of Photovoice techniques is also directly related to more participatory-focused research therefore there will also be an analysis of agency. This section seeks to offer fresh insight about the lived experience of those living in Langa. That information might also be useful in discussion about poverty or how young people are influenced by their environment. It is recognized that this interpretation of the information is one perspective and that there could have been many different ways of understanding it. I am hoping to illustrate what their lived experience of Langa is. Langa is described as a place plagued with crime, squalor and deprivation in much of the current discourse about the township today (Kiewietz, 2011). Whether or not that idea is shared by its residents is what will be discovered.

The analysis will focus on how the participants expressed what they thought of Langa in terms of what the environment is like, how this environment has been influenced by their current social influences, their interpretation of how *change* is approached in their community, and the contradictory relationship that certain factors have within their community. Themes discussed will be those of *self-reliance/self-determination*, and *pessimism* as shown in Table 2. There will also be an evaluation of elicited consciousness during the study.

Extracts provided will not include the use of the participants' real names. Instead, pseudonyms have been given to each of the participants. The only relation of the pseudonym to the real name will be respect for gender. Extracts will be given from the photos, and the focus groups, with neither methodology having any precedence over the other.

### Self-reliance and self-determination

**Ownership and pride of the community.** There was a sense of pride about certain features of Langa. These features represented a reason to be proud and in discussion about the pride instilled, Langa was owned by the individuals. There was the Cheshire home for the disabled, art centres, the community hall, church and the youth centres:

*Love life centre. I've heard that it's made for kids that run on the streets so they can play together or run together so they don't do bad things outside here. So they built a centre for us to play inside it. (Lifa, 12)*

*The place [Johnson Gwevela Hall] is full of the history of Langa if we need to learn and find out about Langa history and to know who Johnson Gwevela is. This hall is the most important thing in Langa. (Thandiwe, 12)*

**Figure 2.** Our home for disabled people



### **Our home for Disabled People**

This is Langa Cheshire Home. It is for disabled people. The person that built this house has done a good job. In this picture these are married people and they are sitting together in their wheel chairs. These people have been taken care of by Dineo. She is a caring person.

– Mandisa, 12

These facets of the community instilled in the participants a sense of pride about themselves, their culture, their community, their religion, in general their outlook on life. These facets also represented parts of the community that the participants could take proud ownership of as their own as opposed to having feelings of shame.

Participants also recognized these positive features of Langa as a reason to expect more from the township and its residents:

*If they used their minds they would recycle these things. Because there is Guga S'thebe centre, because there are better things to be done. (Nkosazana, 12)*

Thus, not only were these positive aspects of Langa a representation of a side of Langa not usually depicted in the media or acknowledged in poverty discourse but to the participants'

these representations were also a representation of the fact that Langa has positive possibilities as well.

**Education as beneficial.** When talking about Langa and the world outside Langa, the participants were agreed on certain ways to escape poverty. Education, employment, and religion were seen as channels through which the participants could literally move beyond the more negative realities of Langa. They were also seen as the positive aspects of sharing with their community. Education was set apart first:

**Figure 3.** My lovely school



### **My Lovely School**

This is my school and *I love this school because I get a lot of education for my mind*. This school has the most there and I have 7 years in this school. This school is beautiful for me and I love this school.

– Buzwe, 12

School represented how education was considered important for the participants. It also illustrated how in the community education was so important that it filtered into perspectives of people in education. Teachers and other people with high levels of education were viewed positively. When asked to share with the researchers which people they considered role models, Nkosazana and Thandiwe named their teacher.

The link to this positive impression was based on the perceived returns that came from education, most importantly a way to elevate social status through employment in the formal sector. Such employment was more easily gained through education. Thus, employment was also seen as both a seen a source of pride. The participants' conversations of accomplishment always included employment:

**Figure 4.** The suburbs lifestyle



### **The Suburbs Lifestyle**

This place is a suburb. It is healthy and people live in fancy houses like double stories. Most people who are living here are Ladies and Gentlemen. They are people who like clean places and *they are educated and skilled*. I'm talking about people who have a future. They keep their community clean, healthy and safe. They breathe fresh air because they've got many healthy and green trees. Their environment is beautiful and it is one of the most clean and beautiful places in Langa. It shows so much development.

– Nkosazana, 12

**Informal employment and tradition.** Employment was also seen a necessity. Participants shared how people in the community engaged in whatever was necessary in order to make money so they could take care of themselves and their families. Some of these sources of employment were not healthy but the money they generated was essential:

**Figure 5.** Our traditional beer



### **Our Traditional Beer**

This is our traditional beer. I think it is made at home when there is something happening. But nowadays it is made in the street and all of the people are buying and selling our beer. I think other families are just surviving on the money that is made with the beer.

-Mandisa, 12



Participants illustrated the resourcefulness of the members of the communities to generate income that was essential for survival. Using facets of culture usually restricted to traditional purposes to generate income reflected a form of self-reliance despite the circumstances. This focus on the self-reliance of the community members illustrates an understanding of how the negative representation of townships residents as victims of their circumstance is contradicted in by real life events.

**Religion.** All of the participants were Christian and as a result church played an important role. It was widely recognized as a place where the people could come together as a community:

**Figure 6.** HIV church care centre



#### **HIV Church Care Centre**

This is a church where people mostly and I also go. This church is a HIV/AIDs care church. They give love, care, peace to them and they also say you are not alone. They help them.

Thandiwe, 12

Church was also a place where the people could find shelter from the more negative aspects of the community.

*Interviewer: Why do you go to church?*

*Mandisa: To pray*

*Nkosazana: To pray to God so that everything of ours can go straight*

*Nomhle: And protect ourselves*

*Interviewer: Are you proud of your religion? Is it something good about Langa?*

*Thandiwe: Yeah*

*Interviewer: Are most people going to church here?*

*Thandiwe: Yes*

*Interviewer: Do you think it helps in terms of fighting crimes and drugs? And things like that?*

*Nkosazana: It helps*

*Interviewer: It does?*

*Nomhle: Some of them*

*Church is the important place because you can solve your problems and if you have nothing to do you must go to the church... It keeps you away from the criminals.  
(Viwe, 13)*

Church was a place for hopes, healing, and security. The stories the participants shared demonstrated positive feelings, one of which was pride. Church also gave the participants a sense of solidarity. When describing the positive aspects of their community it was the one of the first things eagerly discussed. It was a place to escape, to be with others and a way out for those who were already involved in the negative aspects of street life.

**Local activism.** Participants also recognized that as a community it was their responsibility to change some of the things which they were dissatisfied with:

*Thandiwe: We must fight for this*

*SH: How?*

*Thandiwe: Toi toi*

*Anele: Maybe to tell our government*

*Mandisa: We must have a meeting in our community so that we can talk to them...*

The participants' proactive response to change is directly contradictory if one considers that current discourse uses a deficit model. A deficit model represents those whom are being discussed as victims of their situation and thus unable to critically engage and change events. The participants' response to questions of change challenges this assumption. They had solutions that were based on an understanding of how their context created change, and an understanding of what was necessary for them to do as their part of the process.

## Pessimism

**Langa's environment.** The central focus of this research question given to the participants was the environment. The issues the participants raised about their surroundings were in relation to how external factors influenced the lives and activities of people living in Langa and how the participants viewed this influence. The features illustrated the relationship that the participants' had with the physical reality of their lived context. Key was the recognition that Langa struggles majorly with neglect.

**Neglect.** Recognizing flaws outside ourselves is something that we as human beings seem to do easily. During the focus groups and in the photographs, the participants discussed what their community looked like and how it had come to be this way. Most of them agreed that there were a myriad of concerns. The participants kept coming back to neglect as the reason Langa looked the way it did. Their discussion included recognition of the fact that neglect was partly responsible for the danger in Langa. The danger was in two ways, physical danger:

*Behind this fence dirty things and shacks are filthy and need to be fixed \_People live in a dirty place like this. They burn plastic, paper and bottles. This is a way of getting malaria because this place is so dirty. Also children will be hurt by things like small glasses. This place is dangerous for children to play. (Lifa, 12)*

The participants' representations of their environment as neglected reflect its true state. Their understanding of the causes for this neglect appears to be directed and dominated by the current representations of township life in the media. This was apparent in their discussion of the dangers of living in Langa. The participants' discussion of gangstarism centred around the idea that gangstarism occurred partly because of neglect to public spaces. They blamed people in the community for these problems without understanding the broader context of inequality:

**Figure 7. People who live with crime**



**People who live with Crime**

This is a dirty environment where people live with diseases. It is near a church and a shebeen. *Gangsters also live near here. They climb the trees and jump on people passing by. Many people were raped and killed. Even now gangsters and people are dumping rubbish.*

Viwe, 13

The dirty environment outside was not a place that residents could escape from in their homes. The participants also marked the lack of proper or enough housing as a challenge for Langa. People are forced to build shacks because there is not enough housing and these shacks are less than suitable in many ways:

*...when it's raining, in their houses the water goes in their houses. (Thandiwe, 12)*

Even with those who had government housing neglect was an issue. Participants noted how little care is taken of the buildings which are being used. They also noted how gang activity has spread so that certain divisions of housing are controlled by the gangsters in that area:

*Those flats were painted and clean. Some people come ... and then they spoil it...yes they live in those flats. They throw rubbish. (Mandisa, 12)*

And for those who are not in government housing and cannot afford to build a shack, their only option is the streets regardless of their circumstances. Since there is a considerable housing shortage in the township this means that a variety of people are on the streets.

The housing shortage was also associated with poor service delivery. The government fails to properly provide for the residents of Langa. Even when it does make a gesture



towards the community, this move is usually badly organized, implemented and lacks both forcefulness and effectiveness:

**Figure 8. Stones**



**Stones**

These stones are thrown on the side of the road. *They were fixing roads but the workers didn't know what to do with them so they threw them on the side of the road.* They make our community look filthy. It needs to be fixed.

Lifa , 12

The participants' pictures illustrated a reality. How they explained it revealed how pervasive the discourse of the broader social context is. Since discourse is largely based on a deficit model and this model inadvertently represents people living in impoverished communities as victims that representation influenced the perspectives through which the participants represented themselves and Langa as well. Their view of Langa directed by discourse about politics and difference in socio-economic status as a result of a lack of a critical awareness about what role the broader context of inequality played for them.

**Views of change.** The participants' had their own cognitions about change. These cognitions included the participants' perspectives of their community's attitude toward change and what role government should play. When talking about the possibilities for change in Langa the participants expressed pessimism about community involvement. The participants were of the opinion that other people in Langa would not and were not willing to change their behaviour.

*Viwe: Even the people don't think about children who are playing there*

*Nkosazana: They don't care*

*Nomhle: They just dump*

*In my area, some people don't like to clean and when people tell them they must clean they abuse them (Viwe, 13)*

The pessimism about community involvement demonstrated how pervasive the stigmatizing beliefs based on the current poverty discourse affected the way they viewed their community, themselves and their social capital. What constitutes social capital is still ambiguous however the varying definitions at the moment agree that it is a positive means of fostering trust, cooperation and integration within a social network (Weller, 2010). Instead the participants' discourse was individualistic and focused on sharing blame. Nkosazana's reference to the mothers specifically as some of the people who don't listen also illustrates a certain gendered approach:

*No, because there are many things to stop. Even the mothers, even the community, you're talking to them but they didn't listen. (Nkosazana, 12)*

It suggests that more is expected from women. Such a belief is based on the beliefs about women's roles which are based on ideas from the broader social context (Wesley, 2006). Representations of what it is to be feminine colour the discourse. Representations of what it means to live in a township do so as well. The result is pessimism during discourse about change because these representations are largely negative.

Having their perspective directed and dominated by the broader social context's stigmatizing discourse was also illustrated in the community response to the participants' photography. Nkosazana, Mandisa and Anele were verbally abused for taking pictures.

*It was difficult because when I was taking a picture there was, remember that I was taking a picture of a dirty place, so there were people who were standing there. Then they swore at me "why do I make myself better? Why do I take a picture just because they are staying in a dirty place?" on and on. She was talking everything so I didn't take. (Nkosazana, 12)*

The shack owners' response reveals how they did not want to be represented negatively, testimony to the fact that poverty is negatively represented and thus evokes feelings of shame for those currently faced with it. The shack owners' negative response to the participants' photography effort was an attempt to protect themselves from being represented negatively.

**Detachment within the community.** Another issue that threaded its way through the participants' conversations was the detachment the people within Langa had from the community as a whole. This detachment was illustrated through an apathetic government and community and revealed through the norms that are currently upheld. In their conversations about why there was so much litter, it was revealed that everyone littered in Langa. It was just the way things are done despite what they are taught at in school:

*Lifa: At school we talk about recycling, whatever, but here in the street, we just throw the paper away*

*Interviewer: But tell me why, explain to me 'why'? You learn at school not to do it and yet you still do it. Tell me why*

*Nkosazana: Some of us, neh? There's like, for example if you throw a paper I will also because I'll think it is a right thing to do*

*Interviewer: So it's by seeing somebody else behave that way then you're imitating?*

*ALL: yes*

This way of living was accepted as the norm and it was reflected in the current behaviour of individuals. The representations of township life in the media are largely negative. They paint a picture of a place where members are indifferent towards the community's welfare. The participant's description and admission of their own adherence to activities that are detrimental to the community such as littering illustrates how the media representations dominate and direct the communities they portray.

The government was also perceived as indifferent towards Langa's issues:

*I was gonna say that the government, he is lazy. He doesn't care about us because that's why we live in shacks. He's not building more houses for us to live in. (Lifa, 12)*

Representations of government favour towards township in the media are negative and the participants' opinions of their community seemed to reflect this feeling of being sidelined.

### **Evaluating Photovoice's link to critical consciousness**

Part of this project's purpose was to attempt to raise critical consciousness within the community. To showcase whether or not, critical consciousness was raised, Viwe's development during the project was analyzed to assess whether or not critical consciousness

was actually elicited. At the beginning of the project, in the first focus group, while talking within the focus group about responsibility for Langa, Viwe strongly believed that the government's neglect was to blame for Langa's issues. His solutions for Langa's issues were also external and the actions he suggested gave others responsibility for the change:

*Interviewer: So what would you do? What do you think they should do to stop getting in to crime?*

*Viwe: I think the police need to train for longer time because they're going to shoot for peace*

...

*Viwe: They must write a letter to the government*

*Interviewer: Who must?*

*Viwe: We must*

*Interviewer: we must \_ what would you say?*

*Viwe: We say, we must tell them about what we are telling you of the flats and what can they do to help us.*

*Interviewer: What do you think the government can do?*

*Viwe: They will send the police and you will find the police to help*

Viwe's thought process is possibly at the third stage of Freire's (1970) proposed four stages of consciousness, fanaticized consciousness. Viwe's suggestion was based on the government increasing its presence in Langa. This is a general formula for dealing with crime and does not place Viwe in an active role.

In the focus group after the participants had taken their photos, presented to each other and were discussing themes, Viwe's perspective had changed:

*Interviewer: ...Tell me what would make a difference*

*Viwe: All of us, we must try to clean and live together*

This changed perspective was apparent once more in the final focus group, two weeks later:

*Interviewer: So what do you think you could do to change this? To change all these problems?*

*ON: [tell] the community to help us*

He changed from expecting the government to effect change to recognizing that he was a necessary part of the change process. Viwe's solutions for change after the photographs and then again at the end of the whole project demonstrate a revision of opinions about who needed to do what. It also illustrated a rejection of his previously passive position in the change process due to his transformation and appeal for the community, himself included, to facilitate change.

### **Contradictory roles of certain symbolic resources in Langa**

One of the interesting cases in the stories the participants told in their stories was how certain symbolic resources were seen as both positive and as issues that needed to be changed. On the one hand, employment such as trade in traditional beer and sheep's heads provided employment but on the other hand, they were the reason for some of the issues of concern in Langa, for instance, the unhealthy environments and alcoholism.

**Figure 9.** Sheep's head s business



#### **Sheep's heads Business**

This place is near New Flats. This picture tells about the life of these people because these people are selling sheep's heads (smelly). *I think these people survive by doing these things. Also, this is a dirty place but they are selling in this place.* We have a president. He must give these people a job, not just eat our money.

– Mandisa, 12

**Figure 10.** About the tavern



### About the Tavern

This is inside Lick's Tavern and these people are eating their money. *I don't think they even pay for food money. These people come here early in the morning. And they are not even going in their house. They love drinking alcohol every single day.*

-Mandisa, 12

Mandisa's stories illustrate recognition of the concomitant role that certain factors elicit from people in Langa. There is the resourcefulness of the people in Langa, by demonstrating how people are willing to generate income. But they also illustrate the dangers that some of these income generating activities propagate. The contradictory nature of these factors illustrates Mandisa's understanding that some of these activities, while necessary are also dangerous for the people directly and indirectly involved. Her representation of how informal employment is a complex situation both advantageous and detrimental for the community reflects a critical awareness about employment in Langa. Mandisa's stories have a proactive voice which contradicts the label of victim that she is labelled as within the broader social context via her awareness that social symbols can be multifaceted.

## **Discussion**

The key findings of this study were as follows; that participants were keenly aware of the self-reliance and self-determination of the people in the community in the face of Langa's deficiencies. However, despite this pride in their community's self sufficiency there was also pessimism concerning initiating change through local community action. Finally, critical consciousness was elicited to a certain extent.

**Self-determination and self-reliance.** The young people in this study discussed two things, the self-sufficiency of their community and the issues that are attached to poverty, be they material, psychological or socio-cultural. The former ascribes cognitions of themselves and their counterparts in Langa as self-reliant and this is something that occurred in other studies as well (Howarth, 2002; Kessi, 2011, Langa, 2010, Mitchell et al, 2005). Social representations enable people to understand and communicate with each other using common values, ideas and practices (Howarth, 2011). Some of these representations can be used as symbolic resources to combat other stigmatizing representations (Howarth, 2002). In reference to the positive aspects of Langa, its young people's illustration of self-reliance and self-determination is confirmation of Howarth's (2002) premise. It also corroborates Kessi (2011), Langa (2010) and Swartz' (2007) findings.

**Pessimism.** The issue of pessimism was the second key finding. Langa's young people were distinctly pessimistic about community involvement. That dominant groups in societies determine representations has been established (Jovchelovitch 1997). Howarth (2001) describes it as an unequal placement in the broader social context that results in stigmatization and marginalization of the people who live in communities lower on the social construction rung. Certain studies have found that one result of the domination of social construction by more powerful groups is that these stigmatizing representations direct individuals belonging to marginalized groups' representations as well (Langa, 2010; Kessi, 2011; Mitchell et al, 2005; Swartz, 2007).

The reason for pessimism observed in this study's participants could be an internalization of media representations of township residents as well. Studies have shown that people's aspirations are influenced by their expectations, their sense of self-efficacy, their self esteem, confidence and motivation hence marginalized individuals tend to have reduced aspirations or an unwillingness to communicate them (Kamphuis et al, 2010; Kintrea, 2009). Consequently, the participants' pessimism about their community's openness

to change could be an illustration of lowered aspiration based on a self-efficacy that has in turn been influenced by the stigmatizing representations of the broader context.

### **Charting social meanings**

SRT's main goal in the sphere of social psychology is to use social meanings as a way of linking psychological processes to social practices (Howarth, 2006). Social meanings were a link between social practices and psychological processes in this study. The participants' views and beliefs about themselves were based on meanings attached to symbols within the shared context. For instance, Kalampalikis and Haas (2008) underscore that part of SRT's focus is on illustrating how an individual's identity is an assortment of a diversity of roles adopted in order to accomplish certain intentions. For instance, when Nkosazana stressed a need for women to be more socially conscious through the symbol of womanhood she illustrated the beliefs attached to this role. As a girl, her attention to this symbol suggests that she is using current representations in order to create her own female identity.

With regards to the resources that act as positive symbols which were helping the participants combat some of the stigmatizing representations, psychological processes such as coping strategies were directly influenced by the meaning ascribed to certain resources in the community. Bauer and Gaskell (2008) called this a "framing of diversified common sense as creative resistance" (p. 351). They describe this as a process where SRT highlights the process of transformation as ideas move in society. Here the participants took the idea of what it is to live in Langa and transformed it by highlighting other symbols within Langa such as the church, school, and community centres to combat the stigmatizing representations. Religion, education and community are positive symbols in the broader social context illustrating the creative resistance of the participants who used positive symbols constructed by the groups in power in Langa to represent themselves as self-sufficient and combat the broader social context's representations of Langa as a place of squalor, deprivation and crime.

### **Eliciting Critical Consciousness**

One of the core principles of Photovoice is that as a type of participatory action research, it endeavours to elicit critical consciousness in the participants it works with. A mini-case study and a general glance suggested that critical consciousness was elicited in the participants. Viwe's consciousness altered considerably during the project. His awareness of Langa became more open to revision, more action-oriented, in general more critical in its



analysis of the various elements of the community. This finding supports other projects that used Photovoice techniques (Kessi; 2010; Langa, 2010; Mitchell et al, 2005).

After the photographs were taken, the participants spoke of individual action for change but they also continued to insist on governmental involvement in the change process. This could suggest a lack of critical consciousness however it could be another facet of these young people's critical consciousness. Muwanga-Zake (2009) asserts that in order to acquire valid outcomes in research that involves Black South Africans it is imperative to articulate the research experiences from within an Ubuntu paradigm. Recent research has shown that Ubuntu as a philosophy is a vital viewpoint from which young people interpret and participate in social interactions (Bonn, 2007).

Given the above it possible that the reason the young people continued to include governmental involvement in their talk of change as a result of the belief that as shared beings, the government is also a relevant and important part of the change process. Nelson Mandela described it thus:

“Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question is, are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?” (Mandela, 2006).

The ANC ideology is democratic centralism and SACP is communism (Posel, 2010). These were the two most important parties in the transition to freedom. Both these ideological systems view the government as key to the provision of services. They have impacted the culture and as result many of the Black South Africans still believe in them today (Posel, 2010). Subsequently, the participants' illustrate a critical awareness based on their own paradigm. That paradigm's definition of agency includes the participation of all that the individual is interconnected with, be it other people or social institutions.

## **Conclusion**

### **Limitations**

It is important to note that this study was limited in its ability to generalize to other populations. Although Kamanou et al (2005) find that individuals in under privileged communities go through similar experiences it is also true that each context is distinctive. Langa has its own characteristics that make it unique and different and these characteristics cannot be said to exist in other townships in South Africa let alone other less privileged

communities around the world because the socio-cultural context is different and its influence on the participants' responses was the main focus of the study.

This study was also limited by its use of Photovoice techniques. The meanings and the critical dialogue that were elicited by this particular study reflect what these participants chose to share with each other and the researchers. The issues raised might be completely different at another time or with the involvement of different participants. It is also difficult to assess whether or not the study stimulated social change because the act of policy change itself is a long-term process. In spite of this Campbell (2003) notes that there is a definite need for short to medium-term interventions that run parallel to the long-term projects to effect change so this study's position as a short-term project was not completely without merit.

### **Closing statements**

Communities continue to struggle with issues created and maintained by poverty. They often do so from a position of little power as agencies, organizations and governments control both the dialogue and the action. At the moment, discourse is focused primarily on the problems that individuals face in townships. In addition, there is not a lot of research that has been done from the perspective of young people. The purpose of this study was to explore one group of young people's representations of their community. The findings highlighted the fact that representations do influence how people perceive their environment. They also supported Freire's (1974) stages of consciousness and previous research that analysed for critical consciousness indicating that Freire's (1974) theory still has some relevance today.

This study did illustrate that the representations created by dominant groups in the broader social context are dominant and direct individuals' representations in marginalized communities. It also substantiated the belief that this domination of the broader social context's stigmatizing representations results in individuals lacking high aspirations as a result of a stigmatized view of themselves and their communities. Conversely, this research also illustrated that individuals could make use of available positive symbolic resources to combat the aforementioned stigmatized representations. In addition, Photovoice was found to have a positive effect in eliciting critical consciousness. Further research to see how Photovoice and positive symbolic resources can both be used simultaneously to elicit change would also be beneficial. The fact that the findings in this study corresponded to other research using Photovoice gives the technique relevance as a research tool in future research.

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### **Notes**

1. Desmond Tutu (2000) defines Ubuntu as a state of shared being that is affirming of others and is not threatened in the face of other's skill and well being, because it based on a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that you belong in a greater whole that is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are humiliated, diminished, tortured or oppressed.

## Appendix A



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



Dear Parent,

The University of Cape Town and the Children For Tomorrow Foundation (CFT) in Langa are conducting a research study at your child's school. The aim of the study is to hear about how children see their community, including things that they are proud of and things that they want to change. This information will help CFT to create community projects that will teach young people how to have a positive impact on their community.

**Taking part in the study is voluntary.** This means that your child can choose not to take part at all or can stop taking part at any point during the study. Your child will be asked to fill in a form in which they will tell us if they do or do not want to be part of the study.

If your child takes part in this study, they will have to do the following:

- 1) Receive some training from the researchers about how to take photographs
- 2) Take some photographs of their neighbourhood with a free disposable camera (after school and on weekends / public holidays). An adult must go with them when they are taking photographs. The photographs will be printed by the researchers.
- 3) Attend 6 meetings at Thembani Primary School with the researchers. The meetings will take place once a week during April and May 2011, from 2.00 – 3.30 pm. The meetings will be tape recorded. Snacks and cool drinks will be provided.

If you give permission for your child to take part in this project, that means you agree that their photographs (but not their names) can be used by the researchers for research reports and for academic publications and presentations. If the researchers want to use the photographs for any other purposes, you and your child both need to give permission.

Permission to do this study has been given to us by the principal of Thembani and we will also request permission from the Western Cape Education Department.

**Please turn over**



If you **agree** that your child can take part in this project, please fill in below:

Your child's name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions please contact **Joyce Ngezana** at Thembani Primary School (021-6941829) or Dr **Shose Kessi** at the University of Cape Town (021-6504606 or 021-6503417).

## Appendix B



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



**Children For Tomorrow (CFT) and the University of Cape Town are doing a research project called:**

### **MAKING MY VOICE HEARD - THINGS I AM PROUD OF AND THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE IN MY COMMUNITY**

#### **What is this study about?**

Teenagers don't often get a chance to tell adults what they really think about things! This project is interested in hearing what people your age think about their community. We are interested to hear about the things that you are proud of in Langa, and also the things that you would like to change. We also want to hear your ideas about HOW to change things in Langa that need changing, and HOW to make the things in Langa that you are proud of become even stronger.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

You have been chosen from the Grade 7 class at Thembani Primary to take part in this study. But you do not have to take part in it if you do not want to. And if you decide to join, you can stop taking part at any time. You will not get into trouble if you do not want to be part of this project.

#### **What do I have to do?**

If you take part in the project, this is what you will have to do:

- 1) Meet six times with two researchers and a small group of other Grade 7 learners from Thembani. The meetings will be at school once a week, from 2.00 to 3.30 in the afternoon, and will be about 90 minutes long. There will be snacks and cool drinks at all the meetings.
- 2) Listen to some ideas from a professional photographer about how to take good photographs. The photographer will come to one of the meetings to show you some good photography tricks.
- 3) Take some photographs of things you are proud of and things you would like to change in Langa. You will get a free DISPOSABLE CAMERA (this is a camera that you throw away after you have finished using it). You will have 2 weeks to take photographs. You will take the photographs after school, on weekends and on public holidays. You must have a friend or an

older family member with you when you go to take photographs. The researchers will pay for printing the photographs after you have taken them.

- 4) Tell the researchers and the small group of other learners involved with the project about the photographs you took. What you tell us about the photographs will be used by the researchers to help them understand how young people see their community.
- 5) If you want to, you can choose to show your photographs at a public event later this year, so that everyone can see them. But you can choose NOT to show your photographs if you do not want to.

### **Will what I say be kept private?**

Everything you say in the group meetings will be heard by the other group members. Group meetings will also be recorded on a digital audio recorder and then saved on a computer where it will be stored securely with a password. The stories you tell us about your photographs may be used in the reports that the researchers write and present for other researchers, but your real name will not be used. If you decide to show your photos at a public event, you do not need to put your name on them if you do not want to.

### **Who will the photographs belong to?**

You will be able to keep a copy of all your photographs. If you agree to take part in this study, this means that you agree to also let the researchers use a copy of your photographs in the reports that they write or present for other researchers. But your real name will not be used with your photographs. If we want to use a copy of your photographs for anything else, we have to get your permission.

### **Why should I take part in this study?**

This is a chance for you to express your opinions about things that are important to you in your community. Your opinions will help us to think of ways that we can help young people to have a positive impact on their community. It is also a chance for you to learn more about taking photographs and how to use photographs to tell a story.

**If you would like to be part of the research project, please sign this form below and return it to Joyce Ngezana at Thembani before the end of term (1<sup>st</sup> April):**

**Name:**.....

**Signature:**.....

**Thank you!**

### **Plagiarism Declaration**

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.
2. I have used the *American Psychological Association (APA)* convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this research report from the works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.
3. This research report is my own work.
4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
5. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this is my own work.

Date: 27 October 2011

Signature: .....

Full Name: Yvonne Zabu