

The Cultural Significance of Burial sites among Africans: A Case Study of Inanda

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DECLARATION

I, Nokuzola Ayanda Ngcece declare that:

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ABSTRACT

Currently, South Africa is faced with the shortage of burial space to cater for the vast number of deaths due to a growing older population, increasing communicable and other non-communicable diseases. It has been announced that most grave sites in KwaZulu-Natal and the Gauteng Province are full. Efforts by municipalities to use alternative solutions to the grave crisis were met with firm resistance from cultural and religious groups. Many people regard cemeteries as more than a place for burial, but of spiritual and cultural significance. Recently, government authorities have been working tirelessly to encourage families to adopt cremation as a space saving strategy. Cremation is an act of disposing the deceased by burning the bodily remains. However, cremation is widely rejected and unpopular among the Zulu people. In the Zulu culture, death is considered as a transition to the afterlife of ancestors, therefore cremation is seen as contradicting with the Zulu culture and can result in a curse for the surviving family. The main objective of the study is to determine whether the community prefers alternative burial methods to the conventional ones. In addition, the study investigates the influence of culture, and its role in determining the choice of burial method amongst the Zulu people. For this study data was obtained from face to face in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. The in-depth interviews and key informant interviews were held in Inanda Township. The findings of this study suggest that culture and religion play an important role in determining the manner in which people want their deceased to be buried. In addition, the Zulu people of Inanda indicated that they were against the proposed alternatives to burial as they regard them to be disrespectful of the deceased and their cultural beliefs in the ancestors. The participants emphasized the need for awareness and education on the scarcity of burial space. The study suggests the need for educating people about the burial space crisis and the possible alternatives to burial. The study recommends the involvement of the community in identifying alternatives that will not compromise traditional and religious beliefs.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CRL	Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
SA	South Africa
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPA	South African Press Association
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

According to Miller (2006), burial grounds are inseparable from the human environment. This aspect of mortality has compelled human societies to learn to cope with the death of a loved one. Alekshin et al. (1983) argue that graveyards as well as burial customs undergo transformation from culture to culture and accordingly, ancient burial sites differ remarkably from modern ones. Dambudzo (2012) note that non-religious cemeteries were began as early as the nineteenth century. This era witnessed spaciouly planned burial sites with grounds purposefully landscaped to accommodate human remains (South African Local Government Association [SALGA], 2016). However, the past few decades have witnessed an unprecedented scarcity of land specifically meant for burial (Zwane, 2011).

In recent years, the shortage of land for burial has become topical in so far as it has pervaded the South African media with the generality of the reports focusing on the need for adequate land for the development of new cemeteries as well as an exploration of possible alternatives to burial. In South Arica, burial remains the most popular choice for many people, and it is by the same token the most preferred method amongst the different religious groups and traditional faiths (South African Press Association [SAPA], 2010).

When the Municipality of eThekwini became aware of the shortage of land for graveyards, it engaged local communities in discussions with the hope of finding alternative burial methods (Zwane, 2011). Leuta and Green (2011) assert that for different religious faiths and cultures, burial symbolises respect for the departed and a way of treating the dead with dignity and love and these are expressed in the desire to find an appropriate gravesite that can be visited. Cultural ties underpin the way people perceive and think about death, burial and life after death (SALGA, 2016).

The issue regarding the inadequacy of burial space is of critical importance. The shortage mainly stems from the expansion of urban settlements, high population density as well as cultural burial preferences that tend to preclude other forms of burial such as cremation and restricting the re-use of graves (Moresele, 2011). Although alternative burial methods have been suggested, these have been received with mixed attitudes. In South Africa, new

regulations governing cemeteries have been proposed to legalise the re-cycling of graves despite public disapproval (Zondi, 2015).

From the perspective of the Zulu people, death is synonymous to the beginning of an inevitable relationship with creation in which human remains have to be returned to the ground where they supposedly came from (Mhlongo, 2017). As such, a slight deviation from such conventional practices is regarded as outright disrespectful to the ancestors. This perception is widespread especially among the rural Zulu populace that still adheres to the traditional customs, which forms the spiritual backbone of the nation (Msimang, 1991).

Research has shown that Africans are determined to inter their loved ones even if the funeral and burial expenses surpass the normal costs. As a result of the exorbitant expenses, poor families are often left with few alternatives; either to opt for a pauper's burial, that is a government funded burial arising from the inability by the deceased's family to afford burial costs or chose to bury the corpse outside the legal stipulations (Dambudzo, 2012). From the African traditional religious view point, cemeteries are not merely burial spaces but they are highly revered spiritual sanctuaries where the deceased experience a transmutation into the domain of after-life where they are then referred to as ancestors (Mhlongo, 2017). From this perspective, conventional ways of burial are the only dignified sendoff of a loved one as they have been traditionally practiced by their ancestors.

According to Bazzell (2004), only humans bury their dead, a ritual that is not only exclusive to the human species but that which is representative of a cultural bond with the family of the deceased. While the use of cemeteries has been the main method of disposing of the dead since time immemorial, the importance of these cemeteries has been varying from being part of the rituals that involve death to a representation of wealth and good fortune (Leuta and Green, 2011). According to Mhlongo (2017), the existing cemeteries get to their full capacity quickly and identifying virgin grave sites has often turned out to be a nightmare in the majority of urban centres owing to a number of reasons bordering on unavailability of suitable and well-located land, environmental impact assessments and geotechnical assessments. Interestingly, the lack of land for burial space contradicts what transpires on the ground because whenever land is required for the erection of malls or other business infrastructure, municipal authorities always seem to find readily available land (Davids, 2011).

1.2 The importance of the study

This study is motivated by the need to understand the emotional and personal attachments that people often associate with gravesites and the way the bodies of the deceased are treated. The above mentioned is relevant in understanding the lack of burial spaces, which has become a major concern and a controversial issue amongst people from various socio-economic and political backgrounds. The research intends to investigate people's attitudes towards burial sites and the need to consider alternative methods of burial and their benefits. While shortage of burial space is not new to the eThekweni metropolitan, alternative burial methods have been met with firm resistance by the African population especially in Durban which comprises of diverse cultures and religions. Most families struggle to locate a well suited gravesite due to graveyards being full, this has led to families burying their loved ones on the outskirts of the city. It is also important to note that grave-recycling has gained popularity within South African townships as the only acceptable alternative to conventional methods (Zwane, 2011). The research aims to shed light on an issue that has the potential to impact negatively on the livelihoods and developmental issues in urban areas. The study is particularly emphatic on the fact that, sooner than later, adopting alternative methods of burial is a choice taking precedence over traditional ones. Most literary work has focused on conventional burial practices as being the only method of burial recognized by the Zulu culture, therefore the research has also been motivated by the desire to contribute to the very scanty literary works in terms of research on the lack of land for grave sites and the cultural perspectives on the idea of incorporating alternative burial methods.

The main objective of the study is to determine whether the community will accept alternative methods of burial as substitutes of the conventional ones. This involves the exploration of the alternative burial methods and options which include the second interment, the sea burial, the alkaline hydrolysis method, the green or natural system, the recycling of graves and cremation. These alternative methods are investigated in detail.

To answer these questions, the study has a number of objectives. The specific objectives are to:

- Ascertain people's attitudes and personal attachments to burial sites in Inanda.

- Examine perceptions of alternative sites and methods of interment in Durban.
- Assess the role space plays in influencing the choice of the burial methods in Durban.

The study is interested in the following key questions:

- Is there an understanding of the shortage of burial sites in Durban?
- What are the views on alternative methods to burial such as cremation, second interment and upright burials?
- With the diminishing land available for burial sites, which of the above mentioned is used other than traditional burials?

In order to answer these key questions the study used key informant and in-depth interviews in Inanda area. The sample population consists of twelve in-depth interviews with residents of Inanda and eight key informant interviews with traditional and religious leaders. The findings are drawn from both in-depth interviews and key informant interviews which assist in gaining an insight into their perceptions on the shortage of burial space as well as the proposed alternative burial methods.

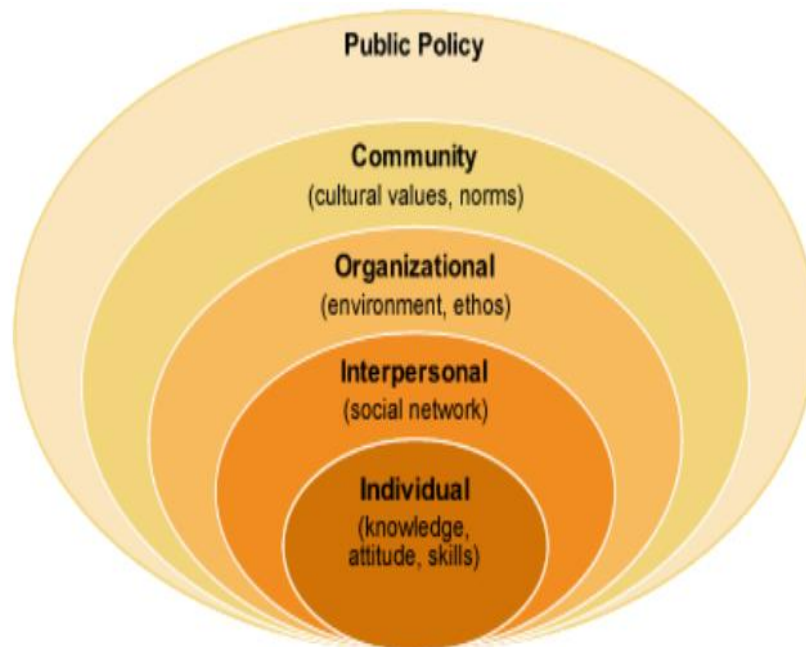
1.3 Theoretical framework

According to Zwane (2011:22), “individuals vary in how they perceive and think about the world around them”. This common place observation implies that one needs to be aware of the major ways in which people differ from one another. The aim of this study is to explore perceptions of alternative methods to burial and how culture and tradition influences the choice of a burial method. The study has adopted a descriptive paradigm which takes into account a distinctively in-depth observation of people in their natural settings for the researcher to be able to understand and interpret the manner in which people create and maintain their social worlds (Neuman, 2006). The study uses Bandura’s social cognitive theory and the social ecological model to explain people’s behaviors and attitudes.

Bandura's social cognitive theory (1989) acts as a lens that enables the researcher to study the manner in which people behave and interact with their surroundings as well as coping with the departure of a loved one into the afterlife. Bandura (1989) asserts that human beings learn certain behaviours through a combination of observations and imitation of the behaviours exhibited by groups close to them. Since people do not live in isolation, it is important to note that learnt ideas and observed actions form part of the theory and culture. The social cognitive theory considers the individual within a cultural context and seeks to understand how and why they act or react in certain ways (Ndlovu, 2013). Cognitive theories maintain that humans perceive the world through cultural discernments (McGee et al., 2004). Echoing the same interpretive paradigm, Serrat (2017) reiterates the point that the society's peculiar ideas, beliefs, values and body of knowledge are the tenets of culture through which humans make sense of their environment.

McGee et al (2004:395) argue that the theoretical school of cognitive anthropology examines how people perceive the world around them. Cognitive anthropologists argue that each culture has its own system of classification. People perceive and organise phenomena such as materials, events, behaviours and emotions. The social cognitive theory can also be linked to the social ecological theory which helps to understand factors affecting behaviour. The social ecological model emphasizes multiple levels of influence such as the individual, interpersonal, community and public policy (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The social ecological model is used to explain people's beliefs and attitudes towards burial sites and how these attitudes are influenced by society and groups close to them. The principles of the social ecological model are consistent with social cognitive theories which suggest that people are influenced by their social environment, in which observational learning forms part of the decision-making process.

Figure 1.1 Social Ecological Model



Source: Bronfenbrenner (1977)

1.4 Organisation of the dissertation

Chapter one serves as a brief introduction to the subject matter that has necessitated the research, as well as the motivations behind the chosen topic. The aim and major objectives of the study are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter two consists of a review of related literature particularly topics that dwell on conventional burial, culture and religious concerns with regard to alternative methods of burial.

Chapter three gives a detailed history of the study area supported by a description of all the methods that were used to collect data for this project. The limitations of the study are also mentioned.

Chapter four details the results drawn from the data collection and the subsequent analysis of this data. It further affords an evaluation of the data, establishing links between the data itself and the information drawn from the literature review as well as the theoretical framework.

Chapter five provides a detailed discussion of the main findings of the study. It provides a summary of the research study; as well as the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

South Africa is characterised by numerous townships which were borne out of the apartheid migratory labour set in motion by the by-laws of the British administrative traditions (Bond, 2003). It is no secret that South Africa is faced with the growing need for burial space due to a high number of deaths as a result of natural occurrences, communicable and non-communicable diseases (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Most of the areas are also experiencing diminishing plots designated for burial. So tremendous is the rate at which they are diminishing that it is now difficult for them to accommodate the increasing amount of bodies that require burial. According to Attwood (2005), in KwaZulu-Natal and Soweto, for instance, some graveyards are too full to accommodate all the bodies. It has been announced that most of the graveyards in KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg are full. Uslu (2010) believes that cemeteries are a huge and crucial element of the urban surroundings and vastness can be attributed to the availability of public open landscapes which are the custodians of the history of the society, at the same time depicting a fascinating architectural and exciting panoramic cultural sight.

2.2. Urbanisation and land development

Democracy in South Africa, over the past two decades has been subjected to dealing with issues of high unemployment, persistent poverty and inequality. Urbanisation has become an additional concern having its origins in the apartheid institutional racism that resulted in urban exclusion and deprivation of rural areas (Arndt et al. 2018). This explains the recent high rate of Black rural-urban migration. More than 70% of urban dwellers today are Blacks. South Africa is becoming more urbanised with more than 70% of its population living in urban centres. The five major cities in South Africa account for over 15 million residents. According to Statistics South Africa [Stats SA] (2018), the mid-year population estimate for South Africa was estimated at 57.7 million as from the 1st of July 2018. South Africa is also estimated to receive a net immigration of 1.2 million in 2016-2021.

Urbanisation in South Africa has been accompanied by the erosion of traditional customs and values (Ngubane, 2004). One of the consequences of urbanisation is the failure to provide the

basic necessities and infrastructure required in cities. The unprecedented increase in rural to urban migration has resulted in decreased agricultural productivity in rural areas (SALGA, 2016). The migration of rural folk is often propelled by the hopes for greater employment opportunities leading to improvement in wellbeing (Leuta and Green, 2011). Cox et al. (2004) asserts that the main motivation behind rural-urban migration is better job prospects being promised by the city and these have inevitably led to the rapid rise of abject poverty within urban areas. According to Lueta (2017), in society graveyards perform a number of functions which are religious and sacred, cultural and psychological. Cemeteries present the possibility for remembering the deceased.

Mhlongo (2017) views urban populations as increasing rapidly due to the movement from rural to urban areas and this has given rise to pressures related to unplanned development and the increasing demand for land suitable for a variety of land uses, adding that land is unequivocally a scarce resource in the urban set up. Cox et al. (2005) argue that rural to urban migration gives rise to informality in the city, resulting in the sprouting of shanty dwellings, a scenario that further exacerbates the scarcity of land. The unprecedented increase of rural to urban migration has strained limited municipal resources (SALGA, 2016). A report by SALGA (2016) indicated that from time immemorial, the inhabitants of South Africa have been guided by their traditional customs and practices as they buried their dead. The past decade has seen cemeteries evolving from the traditional to modern funeral and burial practices being promoted by emerging funeral firms (Ngubane, 2004). Since cemeteries serve communities, they need to be included in the history of the community. Rugg (2000) maintains that cemeteries are sacred in that they enable the family and friends of the deceased to embark on a pilgrimage and therefore their protection is imperative. Failure to protect cemeteries is deemed as being disrespectful. Illegal burials and vandalism of gravesites around South Africa have been necessitated by the shortage of land earmarked for burial (SALGA, 2016; Leuta and Green 2011).

The shortage of burial space in South Africa is currently a topical issue that calls for concerted effort from academics, researchers and cultural and religious experts in the pursuit of justifiable solutions (Hallam, 2005). The inadequacy of burial space remains a sensitive problem. In light of this view, municipalities have to be instrumental in providing alternative means of burial that will not create conflict within the established cultural traditions of society (Zwane, 2011). The Municipality of eThekweni expressed its awareness of the

escalating population and the corresponding shortages of graves by taking it upon itself to conduct discussions with the local populace with the aim of exploring alternative ways of burial (SALGA, 2016). It is also important to note that burial is strongly connected to culture, religion and beliefs (Mhlongo, 2017). Landau (2012) asserts that the challenge relating to the inadequacy of burial sites is not confined to Durban as other municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal, including uMhlatuze are also affected. According to Mhlongo (2017), the Municipality of uMhlatuze is also seized with, inter alia, matters pertaining to the scarcity of land for burials, the timeous development of cemeteries, alternative burial methods and the overall management of cemeteries.

In the post-apartheid dispensation, spaces in the urban centres have necessitated new forms of racial interaction, negotiation and conflict transformation within the context of the nature and experience of these places. The rediscovering of the importance of place, not as a bounded unit, but as a node where a variety of processes intersect and connect has been given precedence by scholars like Massey (2010). The challenges mentioned above is ascribed to poor development planning in urban areas that are currently experiencing a shortage of land meant for cemeteries or burial space. The situation seems to stem from a lack of land specifically reserved for new cemeteries or those in use if they become full, and the last point resembles the situation being experienced currently (Davids, 2011). Surprisingly, the land required for the construction of new buildings which include shopping malls is always readily available, but the scenario is the opposite when it comes to availing land for cemeteries. The contradiction comes to the fore when land for economic projects is a matter of priority (Cox et al., 2004). Amid the forgoing, Leuta and Green (2011) offer various optional burial methods for consideration by municipalities as a way of mitigating land scarcity. City authorities in various urban settings are continuously engaging with stakeholders encouraging them to consider and adopt alternative burial methods. However, although the depletion of land is occurring at a much faster rate than expected, most of the available land is exploited for economic benefit by a few individuals (Davids, 2011).

In urban areas people live on scanty designated spaces or pieces of land as evidenced by fenced houses, densely populated houses, flats and overall, people hardly own the land on which they reside (Mhlongo, 2017). While, living in urban centres presents a comfortable and secure environment where the dwellers feel safer and have the opportunity to attain social mobility, drawbacks manifest themselves through the inadequacy of burial space within

these urban areas. Ngubane (2004) argues that burials that occur in the urban environments have been impeded by the scarcity of land compounded by the disproportionate increase in population, adding that the situation in the urban areas has been exacerbated by the quest for a more comfortable and secure environment in close proximity to their workplaces. The urban setup does not provide a conducive environment for cultural and religious practices especially traditional burial systems (Ngubane, 2004).

2.3 The state of cemeteries in South Africa

According to Leuta (2017), the planning of graveyards and the provision of land meant for this use in the South African context is riddled with a number of problems which implies that other land uses take precedence, particularly at a strategic level. Zondi (2015) argues that the inadequacy of burial sites in urban environments is not peculiar to KwaZulu-Natal since other municipalities across South Africa have not been spared from the same challenge. The state and location of cemeteries in South African settlements is vital to understanding the lack of space to bury the deceased. Dambuzo (2012) asserts that the centrality of the condition of the cemeteries and the way they are situated in South African urban settlements is quite clear in putting into perspective the fundamental challenge bordering on a lack of space needed to bury the deceased. It is further acknowledged that even in rural areas, graveyards are situated in areas that are not only incompetently developed and maintained but are also unsuitable and do not conform to present environmental policy stipulations. Another major problem is that in South Africa, cemeteries are not expertly maintained (Dambudzo, 2012).

Suffice to assert that on the one hand, the above mentioned issues threaten the process of building improved livelihoods and more friendly and sustainable environments, but on the other hand, optional burial methods present more complex issues with culture playing a significant role in influencing the choice of the type of burial and cemetery space (Moreosele et al., 2011). The demand for burial space and the development of cemeteries continues to increase against the background of the declining available land (Moreosele et al., 2011). According to the Johannesburg City Parks (2010) as cited in Leuta and Green (2011), about 27 of the 35 cemeteries were reportedly inactive and they were reserved for second burials and reserved graves. The same scenario is occurring in other countries that are facing land challenges related to the development of cemeteries, but it is imperative for South African

authorities to engage with the relevant stakeholders in a bid to find possible methods of disposing of human remains (Mhlongo, 2017).

According to Woodthorpe (2011), graveyards are places that are reflective of both grief and remembrance and it is within the context of these cemeteries that various mourning rituals and practices are understood. Woodthorpe (2011) illustrates this by alluding to the erection of headstones, the placement of flowers on the grave as well as the burning of incense at the gravesite which all serve to establish a connection between the living and the dead. Hester (2006) argues that cemeteries are embodiments of cultural and historical identity. In this regard, users are encouraged to take care of these cemeteries in addition to the improvement of both the community and the surrounding landscapes (Leuta, 2017).

2.4 Burial methods and culture

There are several definitions of culture. This study adopts Idang's (2015:98) definition of culture as, "the totality of the way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenge of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms". Culture has patterns which influences behaviour and these patterns are transmitted in a tradition that is open and adaptive and above all, it is meant for the living (Ngidi, 2012). Among African groups, cultural beliefs do not permit open dialogue centred on how cemeteries can be proactively designed to cater for the growing population (Leuta, 2017). The problem with such cultural beliefs is the inevitability of death, and that interment remains a necessity (Basmajian and Coutts, 2010).

By virtue of being a multi-racial country, South Africa consists of various cultures with a complex matrix of traditional African cultures co-existing with Asian or Indian and Western cultures. What is crucial to note is that each ethnic group has different norms and values that are unique to it (Masango, 2005). However, what is distinctive about the African culture is that death is interpreted to mean a transition from the physical world to the spiritual or afterlife of the ancestors (Mhlongo, 2017). Most of the African scholarly work on issues surrounding death have placed emphasis on burial methods that are not only conventional but also popular within the African cultures. Miller and Rivera (2006) point out that burial customs that support the interment of a deceased individual are viewed as facilitating the

deceased's connection with the earthly world and the afterlife and as such, many cultures are emphatic about the choice of burial places.

The Zulu culture interprets dying as symbolic of going home and by implication, death means a spiritual reconnection with deceased relatives. The Zulu people have their beliefs and rituals pertaining to death (Zwane, 2011). The majority of African cultures view the deceased as mediators between the living and God, the Supreme Being (Mangany and Buitendag, 2013). In this regard ancestral spirits are the intermediaries between God and the people. Ngubane (2004) describes the ancestors as the living dead since the African culture holds the belief that the deceased transition into the afterlife where they are able to appeal to the spirit world.

Cemeteries function as long term memorials and the final resting places for the deceased. African communities have a high regard for graves for they cherish them as useful entities that enable families to visit and communicate with the dead (Ngcongco, 2005). Visiting the grave or burial site of a loved one is to contemplate the life the living once shared with the deceased and to be able to lead a new life without them (Mangena, 2010). Since conventional burial methods are of greater magnitude among the African cultures, other forms of burial especially cremation are viewed as bringing back an omen to the existing family. Therefore, if cremation is considered as a burial option, then a cleansing ritual has to be conducted afterwards to ensure the deceased can be re-joined with the ancestors (Ngubane, 2004). In some African cultures, the deceased's body is treated with the importance and respect it deserves and burial is conducted in an area that is not only decent but also accessible to the family of the deceased (Setsiba, 2012).

2.5 Alternative burial methods: International perspectives

According to Leuta (2017), there are numerous models that measure the level and extent of different developmental activities and their impact on society. However, there is limited information detailing the manner in which mortality rates impact on land uses and how municipalities should project the demands for future burial space. Basmajian and Coutts (2010) argue that even the United States of America experiences this shortfall in terms of the accessibility of information that guides municipal planners on the projected demand for space

needed for future cemeteries. In spite of the fact that the South African Cemeteries and Crematoria bylaws deal with the day to day running of cemeteries, more research still needs to be conducted on how to decisively deal with the shortage of burial space (Leuta, 2017). In a study conducted by Murray (2003), it emerged that in the greater parts of Europe, the primary motive underpinning the erection of cemeteries are hygiene and the need to rid churchyards of overcrowding. However, from time immemorial, cemeteries had been acting as disposal grounds for human bodily remains and they were believed to offer a sense of comfort to the mourning as well as acting as places of remembrance and awareness of the lives of those buried there. Murray (2003) further argues that cemeteries are havens for promoting spirituality and dignity of the deceased.

2.5.1 Natural burials

According to Uslu (2010), cemeteries in the northern parts of the world are established with the aim of imitating parks in order to improve the quality of the environment and also to harmonise the use of spaces for both burial and worship. The most popular method of burial in Australia and the United States of America is the natural one for the simple reason that it is more eco-friendly than cremation and that it creates peaceful green spaces that can be used for leisure and recreational activities (Pacleb and Brown, 2016). According to Wilson and Chiveralls (2013), natural burials involve interring the body into the soil which stimulates its decomposition and hence the method naturally recycles the human body. More importantly, natural burial does not require the excessive application of chemicals since it relies on a biodegradable coffin, casket or shroud in which the body is buried. Also, the grave is purposely made shallow to ensure speedy decomposition of the body (Mooallem, 2009). Additionally, shallow, unmarked graves mean that other bodies cannot be buried below them and there is also the uncertainty surrounding the exact position of the initial grave where the body had been buried (Wilson and Chiveralls, 2013). As a result of the above mentioned drawbacks, natural burial methods have become unsustainable and is evidenced by the reluctance by certain cultural and religious groups to tolerate its shortcomings.

2.5.2 Alkaline hydrolysis

According to Wilson and Chiveralls (2013), alkaline hydrolysis is a relatively new and commercialised burial option that has gained ground in the United States of America, Britain and Canada. This form of burial resembles cremation, but it uses water instead of fire and alkaline based substances (Oberholster, 2012). Bowdler (2011), cited in Wilson (2013), argues that alkaline hydrolysis involves the reduction of the human body into a green-brown liquid and the remaining bones are crushed down into ashes. Davies and Rumble (2012) assert that, while alkaline hydrolysis seems sustainable and fast as a way of disposing of the dead, financially its feasibility is doubtful as a sustainable solution especially for the more financially disadvantaged groups.

2.5.3 Re-cycling of graves

The recycling of graves is an old European burial practice which involves the renting out of burial space. The burial method is also practiced in Australia whose government has begun a 50 year license agreement which legalises the exhumation of human remains through a lift and deepen procedure in which the grave can then be reused (Basmajian and Coutts, 2011). According to Wilson and Chiveralls (2013), the process of recycling graves involves the burying of persons one on top of each other being separated by a few feet and this only occurs after the first body has decomposed. In other countries that are grappling with overpopulation such as Asian countries, burial spaces can be rented for only six weeks. In Brazil, burial grounds can only be leased for a period of a year and six months for infants (Bazell, 2004).

2.5.4 Cremation

Cremation remains popular in most parts of Europe, in which the main reasons provided for choosing cremation as an alternative burial method are saving costs and land (Basmajian and Coutts, 2011). For African countries the act of cremation is seen as taboo. However due to the growing demand for burial spaces, countries such as Zimbabwe still hold strong beliefs on life and afterlife. According to BBC Africa news (2018), the people of Zimbabwe believe that the spiritual connection between the dead and the living is difficult to separate and

therefore cremation would result in the spirit of the deceased being blocked and would therefore return to punish the living. Traditionally, Kenyan nationals transport the bodies of the deceased to their rural village for burial rituals and practices. However, recent years have seen an interesting number of African Kenyans opting for cremation. According to the BBC News Africa (2014), an average of 100 African Kenyans are cremated every month. It is quite pivotal to note that while burials remain significant to the African society, culture is also dynamic and can be altered to suit personal interests.

2.6 Alternative methods to burial

The decreasing amount of space within cemeteries in urban areas has caused the need to resort to alternative ways of disposing of the remains of the dead which replaces conventional burial methods. The Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria in Gauteng has been proposing alternative methods that include cremation, upright burials and the recycling of graves (Ngcongco, 2005). However, these options have largely been rejected by the general public, mostly religious and ethnic groups as it is seen as conflicting with their religious and cultural beliefs. Suggested optional methods are some of the measures and strategies that have been proffered at both the national and provincial levels in an attempt to address the scarcity of land which should otherwise be designated for cemeteries (Davids, 2011).

The fight for locating available land for cemeteries has required creative action by cemetery management in the City of Johannesburg (Dambudzo, 2012). According to a report published by SALGA (2016), the city applied to the provincial government for the expansion of the Eldorado Park Cemetery into the nearby land which is owned by the same provincial government. With regards to the Ennerdale and Doornkop cemetery, an application was forwarded to the City seeking the expansion of a small cemetery into vacant land adjacent to the cemetery (SALGA, 2016). In order to mitigate the above-mentioned challenges which the Department of Cemeteries and Crematoria is grappling with, people need to be encouraged to adopt the following alternatives methods to replace the traditional practice of burying their loved ones:

2.6.1 The re-use of graves

Re-using graves requires an immense understanding of the historical, cultural, religious and legislative roles that ought to be played by cemeteries (Francis et al. 2000). The recycling of graves operates on the assumption that after a period of about 10 years or more, all the current remains and tombstones are removed and the graves are made vacant making them available for new burials (Leuta and Green, 2011). According to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities [CRL Rights Commission] (2011), from a cultural and religious point of view, people are against reusing graves. There is a strong cultural belief that a burial place is not only sacred, but it is also a place which should not be tampered with. The people in eThekweni region had been re-using grave sites since the enactment of the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act of (1996). According to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR] (2010), recycling needs to be considered alongside other options. A recent study has shown that the recycling of graves will not be sustainable in the next 10 years.

According to Leuta and Green (2011), graves can only be re-used after the lapse of at least ten years, which is the least number of years needed for the corpses to become mere bones. Families can also prevent the re-using of a grave by simply re-leasing it. In a report conducted by the CRL Rights Commission (2011), cultural and religious groups shun the recycling of graves since it is allegedly a degrading strategy of dealing with the challenges arising from the inadequacy of the ground for burial purposes. The proponents of culture and religion raise the concern that recycling of graves affects the poorest members of society as it interferes with their identity and traditional values (CRL Rights Commission, 2011). In its review of the access norms and threshold standards for the spatial provision and development of social facilities and recreational spaces in the metropolitan areas of eThekweni and the City of Cape Town, the CSIR, (2010) highlighted that if the death rate is higher or if fewer people than expected are cremated, the demand for burial land increases. Current trends in the vicinity of eThekweni are suggestive of an unparalleled demand for burial space (CSIR, 2010).

Leuta and green (2011) disapprove of the reuse of graves as an alternative to the traditional burial system arguing that it is not going to prevent the shortage of burial space for the municipalities. Most African communities believe that the graves of their departed loved ones

should not be regarded as mere resting places for the dead, but also as sacred places that they can routinely visit with the aim of venerating, praying and maintaining a spiritual link with their ancestors. The re-cycling of graves has been resisted by locals whose beliefs are deeply rooted in their traditional cultures. According to Leuta (2017), the majority of African groups are against the recycling of graves as an alternative to conventional burials, citing the impossibility in connecting and performing rituals for the deceased, if more than one person is occupying a given grave. Research testifies that African families detest the reuse of graves, fearing that tampering with the resting place occupied by their ancestors could result in misfortunes for the entire family (Setsiba, 2012).

2.6.2 The second interment

The second interment is a system that encourages family members to share a grave. Mhlongo (2017) asserts that excluding the greater part of the African race, second interment and cremation have been gaining popularity amongst other racial groups. The African majority have adopted a negative attitude towards cremation. Nonetheless, Leuta and Green (2011) argue that second interment may aid in prolonging the life span of cemeteries. Furthermore, second interment is synonymous with the second burial, in that the interment options are offered to the family of the deceased (Johannesburg City Parks, 2008). City bylaws stipulate that the family can, as sanctioned by law, bury additional members in the same grave (Johannesburg City Parks, 2008). However, it is imperative to note that most of the African religions approach these optional methods with caution, arguing that cemeteries are spaces of cultural reverence, where the dead are seen as ancestors with an important link with the after world (Mhlongo, 2017).

The African religion views the deceased as playing a prominent intercessory role between the life of a particular family and God as ancestors are seen as intermediaries between the living and God, the Supreme Being. This influences the belief that each deceased person should occupy their own grave where they should not be disturbed as this could provoke misfortune for the family (CRL Rights Commission, 2011).

2.6.3 Mausoleums

Bazell (2004) defines mausoleums as burial chambers that are above the ground and their function is to accommodate the remains of the deceased. These are said to be empty buildings that are made available and accessible to the public and they have outward vases used by visitors when placing flowers as they pay their respect to the dead. Mausoleums are essentially a solution to the problem especially from the point of view of urban development in areas where there is insufficient space to bury the dead. Mausoleums function as memorial parks that have a double-faceted purpose that include; acting as natural gardens and also as accommodation for the dead (Sowetan live, 2011).

Dambudzo (2012) asserts that mausoleums bring to the fore the possibility of using ground that would otherwise be deemed unsuitable for conventional, in-ground burials. In 2015, the city of Johannesburg appealed to its residents to consider other forms of burial which encompass the building of mausoleums for their cost-effectiveness and these are argued to be sufficient alternatives to conventional burials (SA Breaking News, 2015). In addition to the shortage of land available to bury the dead, Moodley, an official from the Department of Parks and Recreation intimated that the city would be paying closer attention to graveyards as mausoleums may essentially be the green lungs of the cities. Arguably, as cities use up most of the land, the use of mausoleums would increase the city's green acreage (The Sunday times, 2018).

2.6.4 Cremation

Cremation is a type of disposal of dead human bodies which is defined as the process by which the body of the deceased is rapidly compacted through intense heat to effectively eliminate its composite and genetic makeup as well as its physical outlook (Slabbert, 2016). In addition, cremation is a much faster process than burial in effectively decreasing the demand for land. It is much cheaper than conventional burial since there is no need for a coffin. Only a simple container suffices, and there is no need for anyone to purchase and perpetually take care of both the gravesite and the tombstone (Powell, 2007). According to Zwane (2011), as a comparative advantage, crematorium infrastructure remarkably reduces pressure on land since only a fraction of the land which is otherwise needed for cemeteries could make much sense through turning already existing buildings and other facilities into

crematorium infrastructure. In the context of cremation, municipalities would be able to cut down on land allocated for the development of cemeteries. Despite being accepted internationally, the South African scenario poses challenges as religious groups tend to shy away from this method of disposing of the dead (Mhlongo, 2017). In 2011, the eThekweni Municipality mounted an unsuccessful awareness campaign aimed at promoting cremation as opposed to ground burials. To date, the majority of African groups are still reluctant to embrace cremation (Leuta and Green, 2011).

For Shoko (2008), people generally hold the view that the burial ceremonies are important in so far as they prepare for the body's final journey to the Creator after death and as such, destroying the human remains could also decimate the spirit that is expected to live on after death. The cultural belief system of the African people contends that the dead continue to live in another world from which they act as mediators between the living and God. Masango (2005) further describes cremation from a Biblical perspective as the last baptism by incandescent heat from which the pure flame ascends to heaven as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, further elaborating that people's acceptance of cremation demonstrates an understanding of the dynamism of cultural change as it evolves over time. The City of Tshwane and other metropolitan areas across South Africa are faced with the shortage of burial space to the extent of actively encouraging cremation and the recycling of graves (Kong, 1999). Leuta and Green (2011) express the possibility of cremation by referring to the highly acclaimed celebrity, the late Brenda Fassie who chose to have her body cremated when she was alive arguing that her decision promotes an awareness of cremation as an option that African groups could consider.

2.6.5 The mixed land use

The mixed land use approach involves the integration of parks and nature reserves with graveyards (Anderson and West, 2004). Most of the cemeteries are located within valuable areas around the inner city which allows for the adoption of a multiple-use approach. Urban cemeteries allow for the creation of open spaces which requires the provision of human recreational spaces instead of having the single-use approach (Kong, 1999). Basmajian and Coutts (2011) argue that cemeteries must not be seen as repositories of the dead but as epitomes of culture and heritage. They must be designed as green lungs to the city in support

of people's social well-being. In some cultures, cemeteries are not aimed at preserving bodies but to allow them to return to the Earth naturally through decomposition. According to Rose-Innes (2013), cemeteries are inclusive of green parks which help the return of the bodies of the deceased to the ground in a naturally and environmentally sensitive way. The burial method is environmentally friendly, involving the use of biodegradable containers and the grave markers are mindful of the landscape to avoid uprooting trees, shrubs or flat and engraved indigenous stones (Anderson and West, 2004).

A study conducted by CSIR (2010) illustrates that although the multiple land use approach raises religious and cultural concerns, it succeeds in creating an awareness of the possibility of well-constructed aesthetic designs which would reduce the pressure exerted on burial land (CSIR, 2010). According to Mhlongo (2017), the development of green burial parks does not present better land intensification options; instead, it presents a better management option in particular through development and maintenance costs attached to it. Basmajian and Coutts concur with Mhlongo (2017) that green burial grounds are valuable substitutes which provide recreational spaces at the same time serving as natural habitats for wildlife. Leuta and Green (2011) argue that a development of this kind, can extend and utilize green spaces, making them more cost-effective. Further, the mixed land-use burials take advantage of the existing land holdings without having to explore new burial sites. Thus, more central burial spaces are created which provides an environment where families converge and enjoy their leisure under the trees that provide shade for their loved ones (Leuta, 2017).

It is against the background of the inadequacy of land for burial in urban areas that the mixed land use method could be adopted with the idea of making recreational facilities easily accessible at the same time mixing parks with cemeteries to reduce pressure on land (Rose-Innes, 2012). Although some cultural groups and individuals resent the idea of staying too close to the dead, this perception faces inevitable change if society is educated about such an option together with aesthetic principles and design of parks to convince the community to accept that proposal or decision (CSIR, 2008).

2.7 Religion and morality

Various scholars have argued that when people think of death, they also think of their religious or spiritual selves. In general, African Americans identify religious beliefs as

important to their decisions regarding the condition of the body after death (Glass and Samuel, 2011). Locally, the pressing issue was striking a balance among varying religious ethnicities. By virtue of being a multi-cultural and religious society, South Africa accommodates diverse groups holding varying opinions on alternatives to burial. Setsiba (2012) states that the Hindu and Buddhist communities prefer cremation to in-ground burials and its morality lies in that it assists in detaching the spirit from the body which encourages the passing of the deceased to the next world. However, the Muslim and African communities hold different views regarding cremation. The Muslim society strongly views cremation as punishing the deceased, arguing that even in death the body continues to feel the pain (Dennie, 2003).

According to Glass and Samuel (2011), the Christian traditional belief has always been that the human body is the temple of Christ which should be prepared for a proper burial. Zondi (2015) concurs, adding that Christians support burial as the end of life choice and they believe that the body is interred only to be resurrected when Christ returns. Zondi (2015) adds that even within the Christian domain, conflicting views persist in terms of beliefs and norms the Christians share as some do not oppose cremation for the simple reason that the soul is believed to be more important than one's bodily remains. Masango (2005) argues that when a body is buried, within a given span of time, it would have disintegrated completely. The analogy would be that both cremation and burial definitely lead to complete disintegration. According to Leuta and Green (2011), Christian denominations in their entirety, including the Roman Catholic Church, approve of cremation, and the Hindus, Parsees and Buddhists are no exception. In spite of being widely practiced by the Indians and the Whites, the African communities are largely against cremation. Dennie (2003) argues that even the Afrikaner community is against cremation basing their rejection on the ideology of the Dutch Reformed Church. However, advocates of cremation have argued that the practice ought to take into consideration the shortage of burial space as well as its financial benefits and not only on religious grounds (Leuta, 2017).

2.8 The African perspective on religion and morality

According to Idang (2015), the key characteristics of the African traditional religion include the belief in an indigenous, invincible and omnipresent Supreme Being. Further, the African traditional religion is underpinned by the strong belief in life after death and that the existence of good and evil spirits, thus making it possible to connect with the Supreme Being (Umoh, 2005). Msimang (1991) argues that as Africa is undergoing tremendous and rapid transformation in every aspect of human life, many individuals are becoming increasingly alienated from their tribal and traditional beliefs, values and practices. Zondi (2015) concurs with Msimang on the notion that South Africa is caught up in the maze of western cultural superiority which holds western cultures as the pinnacle of human achievement and this has resulted in Africans rejecting their own cultures. However, the Zulu people have remained loyal to the conventional burial practices which involve the interring of the deceased in graves. With South Africa currently fighting, cancer, other diseases and old age, the demand for vacant land to bury the dead has hit unprecedented levels (Zwane, 2011).

According to Zondi and Khuzwayo (2015), the African traditional society holds the view that the most valuable and cherished treasure and gift an individual has been bestowed from above is life and as such, its conservation and extension should be the human being's primary responsibility. It is worth mentioning that non-conventional forms of burial are shunned and viewed as a taboo in the African cultural context. The Zulu culture appreciates the death of a loved one as a mode of transition from the physical life to the afterlife, where the individual turns into an ancestor (Mhlongo, 2017). Glass and Samuel (2011) assert that religious beliefs and practices influence people's understanding of the self and their decision making which in return manifest themselves in an individual's attitudes and behaviours in relation to death and dying. Religious beliefs underpin and influence one's understanding of death and afterlife, but spirituality is a stronger force that is interwoven with family life from an early stage (Davis, 1998). Therefore, an individual who has been exposed to and influenced by certain religious beliefs and practices often follows those traditional religious rituals including the method of burial to be chosen (Ngubane, 2004).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter explores the choice of burial methods in South Africa, especially amongst Black Africans. Death is seen as the passing on of a loved one into the afterlife. In the African society, culture significantly influences the choice of burial methods with cremation being the least favoured method of disposing of the deceased. The chapter has highlighted the reasons the African culture proffers in opposing other forms of burial that are exclusive of the conventional method of burial. It is the researcher's anticipation that this research will help in striking a balance between culture and other forms of burial that still remain alien to the African society.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methods used for the study. The overall objective of this study is to provide more insights into the factors influencing the choice of a specific burial method amongst the Zulu people residing in the Inanda community. The study draws on qualitative data obtained from key informant interviews and the in-depth interviews in order to get an informed understanding of the shortage of burial space as well as people's perceptions of the alternative methods of disposing of dead bodies that could substitute for the conventional burial method. This chapter outlines the research design as well as the methods used in this study. Firstly, the chapter provides a description of both the research setting and the study area. It then presents the sampling procedures followed in conducting this study and describes the data collection process. This chapter ends with an overview of the ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Study Context

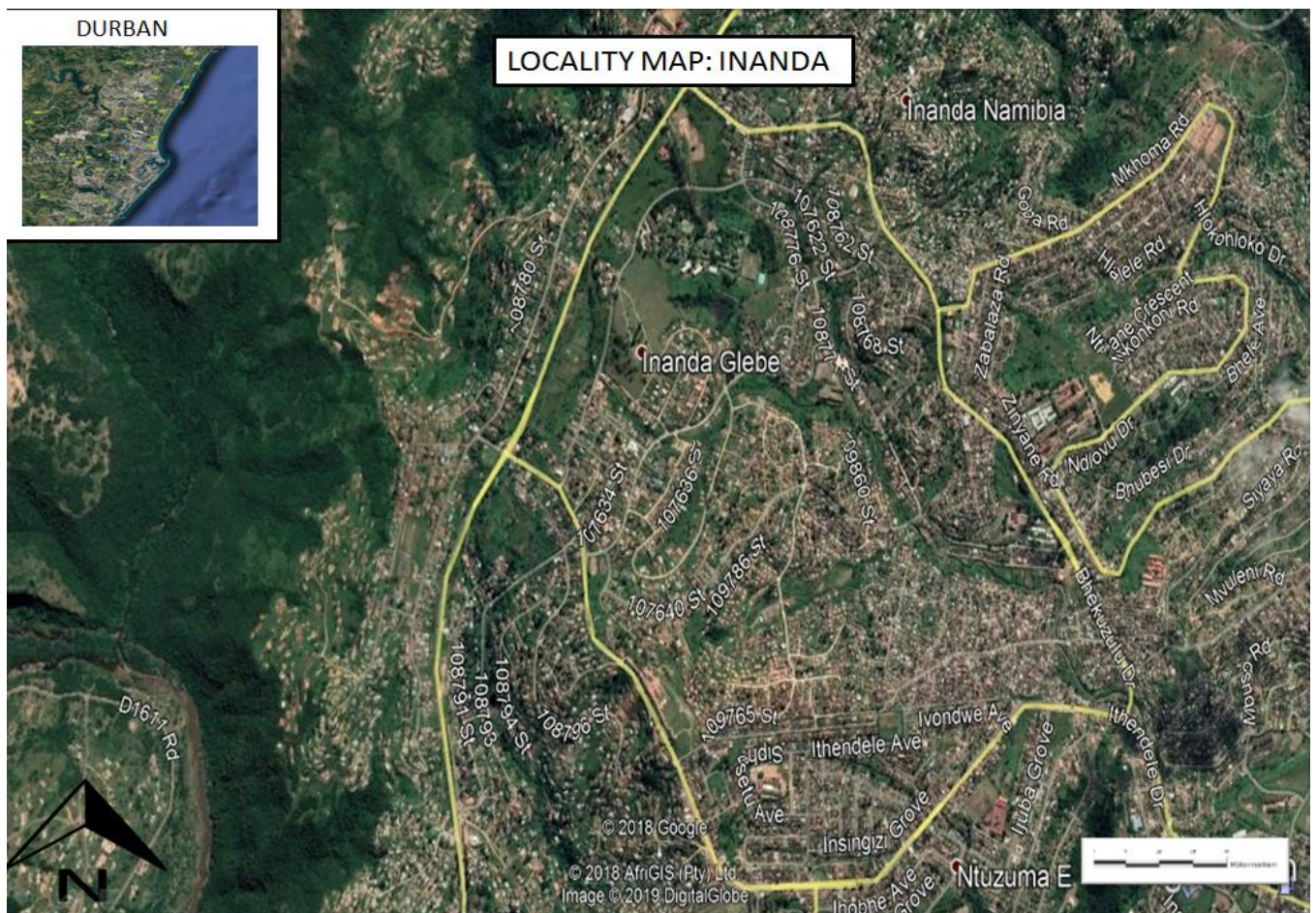
The study was conducted in two areas of Inanda. These are Inanda Glebe, an urban area and uMzinyathi, a peri-urban area. Both research sites fall within the jurisdiction of eThekweni Municipality, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). KZN has a total of 114 million inhabitants, constituting up to 19.7 percent of the country's population (Statistics SA, 2018). In selecting these research sites, the researcher hoped to effectively gain more insights into the attitudes of the Zulu people towards alternative ways of burial by interviewing purposively selected urban and peri-urban dwellers.

3.2.1 Inanda

Inanda is situated 24 kilometres from the city of Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The township was first established in the 1800s and was inhabited mainly by Black African people. However, the area briefly became home to the Boer Republic in the early 1830s. This area was later abandoned when the British colony took control of Natal, and fell into the

hands of land speculators. It was only in the late 1970s that the area saw a huge influx of rural migrants, therefore, transforming Inanda into an intense settlement with high levels of unemployment (Ncube, 2014). Inanda is separated into different settlements that differ in terms of ethnic composition. It is dominated by Zulu people followed by amaXhosa (Xhosa people) in areas such as the Gandhi settlement. Inanda Township has one of the largest conglomerations of low-income residential areas in South Africa (Phewa, 2016). The population is largely youthful. Inanda is characterised by escalating rates of unemployment, low levels of education, high levels of poverty and high crime rates (Ngcheshu and Ncwane, 2002). An interesting feature of the section of the tribal authority of this urban node is its strong adherence to customary laws and practices.

Figure 3.1: Locality Map of Inanda Township



Source: Google Earth (2019)

3.2.2 Inanda Glebe

Inanda Glebe is an urban settlement and forms part of Inanda. The area has its origins in the apartheid policy, which saw the establishment of mission stations in 1858. This area was built on mission land not far from the mission house of Reverend Daniel Lindley who built the Inanda Seminary boarding school for girls based on teachings of Christian values and morals (Ngceshu and Ncwane, 2012). Inanda Glebe is one of the most densely populated areas of Inanda, mostly due to rural-urban migration. This area consists of tribal diversities, with the Zulu people being the most dominant. The population in this area is characterised as falling within the middle-income bracket (Phewa, 2016).

3.2.3 uMzinyathi

uMzinyathi is a peri-urban settlement that falls under the Ingonyama Trust land situated on the western part of Inanda. The uMzinyathi community falls under the traditional authority of Inkosi Mqoqi Ngcobo (Sutherland et al, 2016). The area of Mzinyathi was first inhabited in the 1830s by the Qadi clan that previously lived under King Shaka. The Qadi clan moved to Inanda during the reign of King Dingaan (Phewa, 2016). The uMzinyathi area is home to more than thirty thousand people and is largely densifying as a result of people moving from urban areas in pursuit of land and low cost services (water and electricity). It is quite pivotal to note that this area is also home of the African traditional Nazareth Church, which was founded by Prophet Isiah Shembe in the early twentieth Century (Phewa, 2016). The area of uMzinyathi has a clinic, schools, a library and municipal camp sites.

3.3 The study population

The study population consisted of twenty people. Twelve of which were selected from the Inanda glebe area and the remaining eight resided in a small peri-urban area of uMzinyathi. The qualitative data for the study comes from in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. Religious and traditional leaders were chosen for the key informant interviews on the grounds that they would provide more insights and knowledge of the community from both the Christian and the African traditional perspectives on alternative methods to burial.

3.4 Research design

Babbie and Mouton (2008) describe a research design as a blueprint that guides the researcher in undertaking research. The research design is also described as a framework, within which the research is conducted. In the study, the significance of culture in influencing the choice of burial method is examined together with the perceptions of Africans with regards to alternative burial methods. Under spotlight in the study is the shortage of burial space which has become a cause for concern and a social issue amongst the African communities. The study adopted a qualitative research approach which helped the researcher to gain an informed understanding of the underlying ambiguities within the cultural phenomena under study. The qualitative method used demonstrated the importance of the chosen population group regarding their perceptions which influence the choice of the conventional burial method as the only acceptable and appropriate method.

3.5 Qualitative data collection methods

Qualitative data is generally gained through the use of unstructured methods which include observations, interviews and the collection of documentary materials (Dey, 2003). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in that the latter applies positivist methods that rely on interviews and researcher-defined categories. It is generally believed that qualitative methods produce data that is freely defined by the subject, unlike quantitative data that is structured by the researcher prior to the research (Thomas, 2010). The qualitative approach, whose underlying assumption is that reality is subjective, allows for the exploration of how people interpret their lives and experiences. The lived experiences of each individual give meaning to the perception the individual has of a particular phenomenon and this perception is influenced by internal and external experiences of that individual (Bandura, 1999).

In this study, the non-random sampling technique was used. This took the form of the purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used to find the initial participant who could in turn identify other participants for the snowball sampling stage. Face- to face interviews followed the sequence of the snowball sampling. To ensure that the setting of the

interviews allowed for maximum privacy and confidentiality, the interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants. The researcher interviewed community members who had participated in the burial of someone in the last 5 years. During the interviews, the study also included a few participants who had not buried anyone in recent years so as to eliminate bias. According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), the snowball sampling technique is popular with qualitative research. The study sample is produced by referrals where people recommend other persons who may also be eligible for participation in the research.

The researcher discussed the purpose and significance of the study with the participants and they were assured that their participation was strictly voluntary. The researcher requested permission to audio record the interviews for purposes of data analysis. The researcher also took field notes during the interview sessions. All the participants were asked to sign an informed consent form. The researcher used an interview schedule as the data collection instrument. It consisted of questions relevant to the study. The questions comprised of two sections. The first section captured the demographic characteristics of the participants while the second one focused on their experiences relating to the loss of a loved one as well as their attitudes and perceptions of alternative burial methods (Appendix 1). All the interviews were conducted in IsiZulu. However, the participants were able to choose to be interviewed in either IsiZulu or English.

3.5.1 Face to face interviews

The aim of face-to-face interviews is to conduct intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce and Neale, 2006). In this study, the aim was to elicit the responses of each individual's experiences and perceptions on the shortage of burial space and knowledge about alternative methods to burial. The in-depth interviews comprised of six participants each from the two study sites. The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys (Brouneus, 2011). The face to face interviews took place at the homes of the participants. In making this decision, the researcher felt that this would make the participants more comfortable to be in their own natural settings. The interviews lasted on average between 45 minutes to an hour. In-depth interviews were useful in this study as they

provided the researcher with detailed information on the participants' understanding of the current shortage of burial space. They also brought insights into the extent to which the participants were aware of the burial space crisis.

3.5.2 Key informant interviews

According to McCracken (1988) cited in Elmondorf and Luloff (2006), key informant interviews are designed to provide in-depth information from people who are considered to know more about a particular subject or study area. In this study, key informant interviews were conducted with four church leaders and four traditional leaders. The interviews were conducted in the nearest community hall. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people who have firsthand knowledge about the community (Carter and Beaulieu, 1992). It was assumed that the knowledge and experiences of the key informants would assist the researcher to gain insight on the communities' perceptions of tradition and religion and how these factors influence the choice of burial methods and also the extent to which people are willing to continue with the practice of conventional burials. The significance of key informant interviews in this study was to shed more light on people's perceptions of the lack of burial space. The key informants were also able to direct the researcher to participants in the area that had lost a loved one within a period of five years. This worked to enhance the snowball sampling strategy adopted in this study.

3.6 Data analysis

All the interviews were recorded, and later transcribed. The interviews were initially transcribed to IsiZulu before being translated into English. After data had been gathered from both the in-depth and the key informant interviews, thematic analysis was then applied to the study. According to Nowell et al. (2017), thematic analysis involves crafting a valid argument out of the patterns and themes emerging from a particular study. The researcher listened to all the twenty (20) interviews and also referred to the written notes when analysing the data. The researcher was then able to identify common themes emerging from the sorted data. Upon

completion of the process of transcription, codes were then generated and the data was further sorted according to main themes and sub-themes.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher adhered to relevant ethical considerations when conducting this study. The researcher sought ethical clearance to proceed with this particular study from the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix II). After receiving ethical approval, the researcher then embarked on the process of data collection. The researcher then met the participants and provided them with a detailed description of the purpose of the study. The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time. The participants were further assured of the anonymity of their identity. The participants were also made to sign a consent form in order to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

This research is qualitative in nature and is based on primary sources. The study used primary and secondary data sources which included obtaining data from already existing studies, based on questions with the objectives of this study in mind to ensure validity.

In order to ensure the true value of the data used in the study, the study focused on individual members of society who were considered knowledgeable about the community's cultural ties and those who had lost a loved one in a space of five years and were willing to talk about their experiences. To eliminate bias, the study also included people who had not buried a loved one in the past five years. For each study the same method was used to ensure consistency. The researcher ensured that interviews and literature information related to the research were applied and described as accurately as possible to ensure applicability in the study.

3.9 Limitations of the study

Due to the sensitivity of this topic, it was quite difficult to convince people to confide their experiences and perceptions as well as exposing their attitudes towards alternative methods

that can replace conventional burial methods. Furthermore, it took the researcher two months to get consent from the traditional leaders of uMzinyathi, Inanda. The researcher had to hold several meetings with community leaders explaining the type of research being conducted and why it was necessary to conduct it in this area. The researcher also experienced difficulty scheduling interviews due to unavailability of selected participants. The presented findings give insights into the perceptions towards burial sites and how culture influences the choice of burial methods.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has focused on the methodological framework to be followed in conducting the study. The chapter has afforded a detailed explanation of the methods of data collection which used interviews. Qualitative methods of data collection were considered suitable in providing insights into people's perceptions of burials and the factors influencing the choice of burial method. This chapter also highlighted its adherence to the ethical considerations and an explanation of the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The study aimed at exploring the perceptions of the Zulu people living in Inanda on alternative methods of burial and how culture influences the choice of burial method. This chapter draws on qualitative data from eight key informant interviews and twelve in-depth interviews, thus making it a total of 20 interviews. The study also employs an interpretative analysis. This chapter outlines the research findings obtained from interviews with different research participants such as residents, religious leaders and traditional leaders in relation to the optional burial methods.

4.2 The demographic characteristics of the participants

The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 4.1. A total of 20 interviews were conducted in two different areas located in Inanda and these are; an urban area called Inanda Glebe and a peri-urban area called uMzinyathi. The 20 interviews consisted of 8 key informant interviews and 12 in- depth interviews. The ages of the participants in this sample ranged from 25 to 50 years and above. When conducting data collection, the researcher had to be careful to avoid choosing too young or too old individuals that lacked knowledge about the shortage of burial space. The researcher felt that the chosen group of individual participants knew about the topical issues around them, which includes the shortage of burial space. The different groups which were interviewed consisted of male and female participants so as to eliminate gender based bias. In fact the data was drawn from thirteen males and 7 females. In most of the households the male counterparts responded ahead of their female counterparts as they were perceived as the head of the families.

Most of the sample was predominantly Christian but they belonged to various denominations within the Christian faith. The varied religious denomination included Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Nazareth and Zionist. Of the sample, three participants were still pursuing their degree studies, 13 had completed their tertiary studies, that is, a degree or a diploma, two had gone as far as grade 10 and the last 2 had completed their grade 12. All the participants stated

that IsiZulu was their main home language. The researcher felt the home language was an important characteristic, even though the participants were free to choose to be interviewed in either English or IsiZulu.

Table 4.1 Sample Characteristics

Interview Type	Age (Years)	Male	Female	Level of Education
In-depth Interviews	20-29	3	2	Tertiary Education (Degree)
	30-39	5	2	Tertiary Education (Degree)
TOTAL		MALE	FEMALE	OVERALL
		8	4	12

Table 4.2 Key informant categories

Key Informants	Age (Years)	Male	Female	Level of Education
Traditional leaders	40-49	3	1	Secondary Education (Grade8-Grade 12)
Religious leaders	50+	2	2	Tertiary Education (Diploma)
TOTAL		MALE	FEMALE	OVERALL
		5	3	8

Most of the participants stated that they were not aware of the burial crisis but some of them argued that they had heard about the issue from the media. The participants did not feel that they were affected by the matter and they had very little knowledge of the proposed alternative ways of burial. The participants felt that conventional burials were the only acceptable way of disposing of the bodies of the deceased and they argued that the proposed methods did not resonate with their cultural practices and burial customs.

4.3 Reasons for choosing the conventional burial

The participants suggested a number of reasons for their preference for the conventional burial methods to the proposed alternative methods. While some participants argued that culture determined the choice of a burial method, in which cultural practices and rituals were said to be associated with in-ground burials, other participants raised the issue of space as one of the reasons. Most Zulu people do not appreciate other methods such as cremation. They felt that cremating bodies was disrespectful to their ancestors and they believed in the afterlife where the deceased would join other family members who would have left before them and this explains why they visit the grave to communicate and perform rituals for the dead.

4.3.1 Culture

According to Idang (2015), culture is made up of intricate patterns that are characteristic of life, common to a specific group of individuals originating from a single ancestry or identity. Zwane (2011) sees culture as a legacy passed down from one generation to the next. More importantly, the study portrays culture as having a major influence on the choice of a specific burial method. Further, culture is also understood to encompass traditions, beliefs and rituals that collectively define the way of life, the morals and the values of an individual or a community. The vast majority of cultures believe in conventional burial and find comfort in knowing that there is a specific gravesite that can be visited by family and friends. For the Zulu people, tradition and culture shape the choices of burial, rituals as well as mourning practices. One participant had this to say:

“The Zulu culture holds the belief that when a person dies, he or she becomes an ancestor (idlozi) who mediates between the living and God. We can communicate with them and ask them for luck and good fortune” (Male, Key informant #8).

Another participant said:

“Our culture teaches us to respect our dead relatives. Our deceased relatives are our ancestors through whom we are able to communicate to God. They continue to exist in another world. We cannot afford to disregard our culture” (Male, In-depth interview #3).

Msimang (1991) asserts that the Zulu people believe in invoking the ancestors for them to connect and appeal to the spiritual world and as such, the process of becoming an ancestral spirit cannot occur without burial. This became evident in the interviews. The participants testified their belief in life after death and justified the importance of burying their loved ones as opposed to the alternative ways of disposing of the deceased. The Zulu people believe in life after death which is not only the rationale behind conventional burials but also an adherence to the belief system of a creator (Umveliqangi) and the will of ancestors (amadlozi). The Zulu people believe that when a person dies, he or she joins the creator and therefore becomes an ancestor who mediates between the living and God. A participant said:

“As a Zulu person I believe in burial and the will of the ancestors. When we talk about cremation, that deceased person will require a form of a cleansing ritual that involves the slaughtering of a cow. It is understandable if the deceased died through fire when we are left with no other option than to bury the remains but if the deceased passed on through any other form of death, then he or she needs to be buried” (Male, In-depth interview #9).

According to Zondi (2015), the Zulu culture has no place for cremation which is only believed to bring a curse to the living. They do not see how ashes can suddenly be regarded as ancestors. Contrary to the above quote in which the Zulu participant disapproves of cremation as a taboo unless one has been burnt to death, one can therefore argue that culture is dynamic and subject to review and alteration where necessary. It is evident that for the entire Zulu community, cremation has been alien to their lives (Msimang, 1991). It therefore becomes difficult for them to embrace cremation as a substitute for traditional burial. The Zulu people believe in the will of their ancestors which is a legacy that has been passed down

from one generation to the next. They essentially believe that other methods would be disrespectful to their ancestors and disobeying them results in misfortunes befalling the family. While culture and the will of ancestral spirits sanctioned conventional burials, other participants believed that sentimental value was the primary motive behind preferring conventional burials for their loved ones. The following was said to that effect:

“The culture and tradition of a people influence the burial method we choose because we are able to visit the deceased’s grave, take care of it, place flowers on it and also perform important rituals when need arises” (Female, In-depth interview #6).

Of all the participants, eight (8) reported sentimental reasons for visiting deceased relative’s grave, as well as cleansing the grave and performing rituals on it. It is important to note that cemetery space is more than just a place of burial because it also serves as a revered place for its cultural and spiritual significance. The Zulu culture considers the grave as a place where one connects with the ancestors. Most of the participants revealed that conventional burial methods were important for sentimental reasons, adherence to cultural practices as well as the need for spiritual connection with the dead. In this study, the participants intimated that they were only comfortable with burying their dead. They also shared the belief in a superior being, a creator and only ancestral invocation can make the deceased reach the spiritual world and to bring luck and good fortune to the living.

4.3.2 Residential factor

In order to understand why people choose traditional burial, their perceptions of burials had to be considered. Studies conducted on the shortage of burial space have shown that in most areas people rely on the municipality to provide them with cemetery space for them to bury their deceased (Mhlongo, 2017; Leuta, 2017). However, this study revealed that the peri-urban folk bury their loved ones in the confines of their homesteads. The results revealed that the participants living in uMzinyathi (peri-urban area) were more resistant to other methods owing to their adherence to its traditional culture. It also became apparent from the responses that people living in uMzinyathi are either unaware of the crisis around burial space or they have very scanty knowledge about it. They are not even concerned, arguing that the crisis does not affect them. One participant remarked thus:

“In aMaqadi (uMzinyathi) area, we still follow our tradition and customs. We neither understand nor agree with these new forms of burial. Even though it does occur here and there, it is very seldom that people in this area prefer cremation to the conventional burial methods. Since we are deeply rooted in our culture and tradition, we believe that a person should be buried whole and not as ashes. When persons die; they become ancestors (amadlozi) and they connect us with our creator (uMvelinqangi)” (Male, Key Informant #4).

Another participant had this to say:

“By virtue of being a Zulu man, I wish to be buried in my home for my children and great grandchildren to know where I was put to rest and when they visit my grave, they can even talk to me asking for blessings” (Male, Key Informant #7).

The data gathered from the interviews suggest that the inhabitants of uMzinyathi are not affected by the lack of space for burying their dead. One of the aims of this study was to find out how space influences the choice of burial method and in this regard it became evident to the researcher that the people residing in peri-urban areas do not seem to be affected by the lack of space to bury their dead since they bury their loved ones in their homesteads. One of them remarked:

“I think it is important for people to return to their place of birth. They should return to their rural areas (emkhaya) as we are faced with the shortage of burial space in Durban and in townships around Durban. People should not forget where they come from and return to their ancestral land where they will be buried peacefully” (Female, In-depth interview #12).

The participants from uMzinyathi shared the view that space does not influence their choice of burial method. Contrary to the above scenario, most of the participants residing in the urban areas reported that they would rather bury their loved ones in the rural areas where they still have relatives and ample land to bury the dead. The urban areas are mostly affected by the shortage of burial space and culture is not the only factor that influences the choice of burial method but area of residence is another influential factor. One of the participants argued that urban areas are confronted by the growing demand for land and therefore have to suffer the burden of disproportionate land allocation. The participant reported that some urban-dwelling families are sometimes left with no option other than to fall back on

alternative methods such as grave leasing, which allows relatives to be able to bury a loved one on the same cemetery space that has been occupied by a relative.

4.4 Reasons for not choosing conventional burials

The participants revealed their reasons for not opting for traditional burial and the factors contributing to this include lack of space, religious perceptions as well as lack of literacy and knowledge of the inevitable burial crisis. These factors will be discussed further. The participants reported that they had experienced difficulty in securing a grave site on which to bury their loved ones. The study also established that religion influenced choice of a burial method. The participants argued that their religious beliefs were not against other methods of burial and therefore they maintained that the method of burial is not the one which is important because the spirit of the deceased will be resurrected and connected with God. Some of the participants also claimed that the inadequacy of space had propelled them to resort to other means of disposing of the body of the deceased.

4.4.1 Lack of space

Burial space remains scarce and this is occurring against the backdrop of escalating demand for land. In a report published in 2010, the Johannesburg City Parks confirmed that 27 out of 35 cemeteries were inactive and were already being used for second burials (Moreosele, 2011). The interviews further confirmed that space indeed determined the choice of a given burial method. By virtue of being urban dwellers, the participants who dwelt in Inanda glebe had experienced difficulty in finding a place on which to bury their loved ones and this then forced them to fall back on alternative methods. The comments below illustrate the difficulty the participants faced in securing a place for interring their loved ones.

“When my mother passed on, the officials operating the cemetery told us that the graveyard was full. We then opted for the second interment which meant that we had to bury my mother on the same plot where my grandmother had been buried. We felt more comfortable with this option than the rest of the remaining ones” (Female, In-depth interview #10).

The participants also revealed the challenges they had faced as they searched for gravesites for their loved ones. Cemetery space is diminishing at a rapid rate which makes it impossible to accommodate the demand for it. Leuta and Green (2011) cited in Mhlongo (2017) found out that cemeteries are filled up to capacity and it is against this backdrop that the process of identifying new sites becomes a challenge due to lack of suitable land and competition from other land use projects. According to Dambudzo (2012), competition for land in the vicinity of the urban centres has been exacerbated by the need for residential stands, commercial and industrial development as well as community facilities that include cremation. The high demand for burial land has resulted from an increase in population in urban areas. This has increased pressures on land allocated for residential purposes but at the same time people need to be buried on the same land. According to Mhlongo (2017), of concern is the failure of the majority of the urban housing and development projects to set aside equivalent plot sizes to cater for the gravesites. An interviewee had this to say:

“We were unable to secure a burial space for my father. There was disagreement among the family members concerning cremation which my father had opted for while he was still alive. However, when he passed on, the members of our extended family rejected the idea. So we looked for a burial space and when we were unable to find one, we had to respect his wishes” (Male, In-depth interview #4).

Though people in urban areas are faced with the lack of burial space, things become easier in the case of the deceased family member having taken the initiative to state the type of method they would be comfortable with when they die. However, in some instances, this may create conflict in families as some members disapprove of the deceased’s desired burial method. Zondi (2015) argues for the need to arrive at a balanced appreciation of tradition and contemporary perceptions of the world. In this regard, educating people and mounting awareness campaigns should be the key focus for urban councils. The proposed alternative methods of burial can only be appreciated through educating and sensitising those affected. One of the participants said:

“Since burial space is scarce, people need to consider other forms of burial. Cremation is cost effective and also saves time put into preparing for the funeral” (Male, In-depth interview #4).

Another participant intimated, thus:

“When my daughter passed on, it was extremely difficult for us to find a grave site. We then discussed the matter and possible alternatives we were comfortable with were considered. By virtue of being a pastor with a congregation, that looks up to me. The right option was to cremate the body because we knew that when a person dies, the spirit will reconnect with God at resurrection” (Male, Key Informant #2).

Although cremation is alien to the Zulu people, it is recognized as more cost effective, apart from saving time otherwise spent in preparing for funerals. However, the majority of the communities are resistant to cremation. Some participants expressed their curiosity about this form of burial showing that if properly educated about its benefits, this could transform people’s attitudes towards this form of burial. The participants reiterate that the shortage of burial space is the reason for not choosing certain burial methods. Most of the participants who chose other methods other than the conventional burial method had faced some form of criticism either from society or other members of their family. One participant stated that although there were controversial opinions among families when a member of her family died, she would opt for cremation, arguing that people need to come to terms with the new, and alternative methods of burying their deceased relatives.

4.4.2 Religion

Durkheim (1915) defines religion as an integrated structure of belief systems and customs which then unite into a single community of believers called a church. While in most cases people associate religion with places of worship with defined practices, others associate it with a blueprint that guides their daily lives (Durkheim, 1915). According to Harrison (2006), religion is a conceptual framework that represents a perception of the world and the centrality of human beings. In this regard, Harrison (2006) argues that religion provides a guideline for how people should live and this way of life is articulated by a set of rituals, belief systems and customs. The participants revealed that their religious beliefs of life and death played an important role in their choice of burial methods. Some participants indicated that the choice of burial was not important since they believed in life after death and resurrection which

enable the spirit to be reconnected with God in its new form or body. A participant expressed the following sentiments:

“In my opinion, cremation is our best option right now because the body is not important during resurrection. The spirit is connected with God after leaving the body. Whether or not one has been buried or cremated, the body will eventually decompose. Even if the body is buried or otherwise, the spirit gets connected with God upon resurrection” (Female, Key informant #1).

Religion can be defined differently by each grouping or subset, especially in the chosen sample since most of the participants are members of the African based religions such as the Nazareth and the Zionist faiths. However, four (4) of the participants are followers of the Christian based worship. The participants reported that the major reason for not choosing burial was rooted in their religious beliefs regarding death and afterlife. One participant argued that choosing a different method of burial as opposed to a conventional burial method was based on the increase of the lack of burial space as well as the benefits of cremation. The participants expressed their awareness of the shortage of burial spaces and argued that other methods such as cremation needed to be taken into consideration so as to deal with the shortage of land. The following comment supports the above:

“It does not matter whether the body is cremated or buried. When a person is buried, the body decomposes. During cremation, the body is burnt to ashes. So the body is not significant in this regard” (Male, In-depth interview #1).

Another participant said:

“I do not think that the burial method is important. As a Christian, I know that when a person dies, the spirit becomes more important than the body. What is important is that a person to repent before death. The Holy Bible states that one day we shall all be resurrected and join the Lord in our new bodies” (Female, Key informant #3).

The participants did not seem to disapprove of the alternatives to conventional burial. However, this depended on the area of residence as well as the extent of male dominance. In male dominated households, other methods of burial such as cremation are not widely accepted. The responses that came from the seven younger and more educated participants show that they were comfortable with cremation, arguing the method is cost effective in so

far as it cuts costs for the poor. Nevertheless, it became evident from the responses of some of the participants that their perceptions on burials were unappreciative of the alternative methods. These participants advocated for traditional or conventional burial methods.

4.5 Alternative methods of burial

The reduction of space in cemeteries has necessitated the need to consider new methods that replace or complement the traditional burial. These include recycling of graves, second interment, and cremation, natural and upright burials. However, these alternatives have largely been rejected by the public, especially the religious and traditional groups as it tends to contradict their religious and traditional beliefs and practices (Davids, 2011). Most of the participants in the study indicated their awareness of some of the alternative burial methods. Cremation was acknowledged by all the participants.

Some of the participants reported having either witnessed the cremation of a family member or knew someone else who had chosen to be cremated as opposed to the conventional burial method. For them, cremation has to be considered as a future way of disposing of the dead. Despite these views, some were against all the proposed alternatives and argued that municipal officials should find alternatives that are in line with local cultural beliefs and practices. While the participants acknowledged that the shortage of burial space has reached a crisis point, they also implored the municipal officials to engage with communities in order to find solutions that would neither hinder nor exclude their cultural practices.

4.5.1 Cremation

According to Zwane (2011), the cremation of bodies is quicker than traditional burial apart from reducing the pressure exerted on land. It is much cheaper than conventional burials since only a simple container is required. There is no need for purchasing of a coffin, neither is there a need for caring for the gravesite and tombstone. Cremation occupies limited space or no space at all depending on the choice of disposal of the ashes. Kong (1999) asserts that the majority of the contemporary Christian denominations which include the Roman Catholic Church approve of cremation as a sustainable alternative. The cremation process involves the use of liquid petroleum gas, whose flame burns the body to ashes (Leuta and Green, 2011).

The majority of the participants expressed their disapproval of cremation. However, they indicated having heard about cremation and having seen other people practising it. For them, burning the deceased's body offended their cultural beliefs. The participants maintained that in the Zulu culture, cremation is taboo and is likely to create a bad omen for the living. The study revealed that the Zulu society regarded cremation as unacceptable, as reported by most of the participants who still favour conventional or traditional methods of burial. A participant said:

“We grew up with the knowledge that when a person dies, the body should be buried in a grave and that the deceased has to be respected because he or she is now one of the ancestors. We cannot therefore decide to abandon our customs in order to suit the modern society” (Male, Key informant #6).

It was further reported that:

“Conventional burial methods were practiced by our forefathers because they believed that a dead person becomes an ancestor (idlozi) that brings fortune and blessings to the living family. Therefore we cannot simply abandon our culture and tradition because that results in undesirable consequences for the living” (Male, Key informant #8).

Another commented:

“Amongst us Zulu people, culture is very important. We are guided by the old Zulu saying which goes; ‘indlela ibuzwa kwaba phambili’ which means wisdom is learnt from the elders. We cannot suddenly begin to practice something that was not practiced by our ancestors. Alien practices bring bad omen to the surviving families” (Female, In-depth interview #11).

One participant had this to say:

“Our cultural beliefs differ from those of other races. We do not believe in cremation. That custom is practiced by the Hindus. We have not heard of the Hindus practicing conventional burial. It is something that has never happened. Therefore we cannot simply adopt alien cultures and turn them into our own” (Male, In-depth Interview, #8).

The responses of the participants indicated that traditional beliefs determine the choice of a burial method. They also reported that cultural traditions were instilled in them at a tender age and therefore turning against these traditional beliefs would result in unimaginable wrath for the surviving family. Most of the participants were unwilling to hear about other burial methods arguing that the ancestors would not pardon anyone for adopting the proposed methods of burial and this would therefore result in unimaginable wrath for the living. Zondi (2015) argues that in spite of the fact that some societies are accommodative of the cremation of their loved ones, the Zulu people perceive cremation as not acceptable as an optional method of disposing of the deceased.

The Zulu society cherishes the traditional way of exhuming the earth and burying the corpses in graves as the only natural and satisfactory way of burying the dead. The participants felt that the act of cremating a loved one would bring misfortune to the living. They also argued that cremation was exclusively practiced by other societies and therefore abandoning their own cultural practices would prove fatal. Interestingly, a few of the participants were willing to abandon the conventional burial in favour of cremation and second interment. The following was said:

“In the Christian society we do not view cremation as sinful because we believe in life after death. When a person dies, they will be resurrected with God in their new body. Cremating or burying the bodies of the deceased do not matter” (Female, Key informant #5).

Most of the participants reported that they were against the alternative burial methods, arguing that such methods are not compatible with and sensitive to their culture which results in their ancestors leaving them to their own devices. However, the perceptions of the participants of the alternative burial methods showed their willingness to adopt the proposed new ways, claiming that either cremation or in-ground burial was not important at resurrection. The responses revealed that the alternative methods were basically accepted by the younger and more educated groups.

According to Tischler (1996), in a culture, people craft new and special ways of executing things that are suited for specific surroundings or set of situations. In the past the only accepted form of burial was through wrapping the corpse in a blanket and placing it in a recessed shelf along the side at the bottom of a grave (Elliot, 1970). However, with time, the

old customs and burial methods have been replaced by new ways such as the adoption of coffins and caskets. It is imperative to note that culture changes with time and adjusts to the demands of the present and as such, adopting other methods of burial such as cremation is part of the cultural dynamism and adaptation.

4.5.2 Other methods

Numerous methods of burial have been suggested and these include grave re-use, second interment, natural burials, mausoleums and others. While the above-mentioned alternatives have not gained popularity especially with the Zulu people of Inanda, the study revealed that some groups of people in South Africa were interested in knowing more about the proposed alternative ways of burial. The study also established that most of the participants were only aware of two or three of the new alternatives including cremation. The participants indicated having inadequate knowledge of these alternative methods. Some of the participants reported that they had not been aware of the crisis surrounding burial space. They argued that had they been made aware of this crisis as well as the alternative methods, they would be able to make informed decisions regarding the burial of loved ones. A participant said:

“We heard about this issue on the news notifying the public that graveyards had become full. Graves are reportedly being recycled but we do not know how true this is because we are not affected. Now, this issue of recycling graves is bewildering since we are uncertain as to where the removed remains of the deceased are going to be placed” (Male, Key informant #7).

Another participant remarked:

“Africans, do not find it easy to adopt the other methods of burial in the same way other cultures fail to accept our form of burial. We cannot accept something that is foreign to us, for example, cremation is seen as a taboo” (Male, In-depth interview #5).

Some of the participants revealed that this matter does not affect them directly since they are still able to bury their loved ones in their homesteads. The participants indicated that even though they had limited knowledge about the alternative methods, they were still not willing to consider them, arguing that these methods ran contrary to their cultural and traditional

beliefs. Among the other methods of burying the deceased, some of the participants showed an inclination towards adopting the second interment, which allows families to use one grave for the burial of more than one family member. A participant testified thus:

“We heard about the recycling of graves. However, the idea of sharing a grave with someone else does not go down well with me. We have also heard about cremation, something we do not practice as the Zulu people” (Female, In-depth interview #10).

Adding to the above point, a participant said:

“I do not have a problem with the proposed burial alternatives because sooner or later, we will have to adopt these alternatives especially cremation and upright burials. The diminishing of burial space is a pressing issue and we need to start getting accustomed to other methods of burial” (Male, In-depth interview #3).

From these comments it is clear that the majority of the participants still resisted the proposed alternatives. Some of the participants showed an understanding of the challenges of lack of burial space and were considering other methods such as second interment and cremation. However, the need to educate people on the grave crisis is imperative and a lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that people are aware of the sustainable options as opposed to the conventional and traditional burials. One participant, a Nazareth member indicated that in their religion, they believe that when a person dies, he is one with nature and should therefore be returned to the soil, which means other alternatives to burial are not encouraged since practicing them brings wrath to the deceased, whose spirit will perpetually wander around the earth. The following was said:

“I think if a grave has to be shared; it would be more appreciated if family members are buried together rather than sharing with someone you do not know. It is impossible to communicate or connect with my ancestors over the grave of someone to whom I am not related. This causes great confusion and leads to the deceased turning into a bad spirit, wandering the earth” (Female, In-depth interview #3).

However, a participant noted, thus:

“I do not see a problem with the proposed methods of burial. Truly, we are faced with a serious challenge of shortage of land to bury our dead. There is nowhere in the

bible where cremation is regarded as wrong and that is something people do not understand” (Female, Key informant #6).

4.6 Solutions to the burial crisis

Most of the responses from the participants indicated that they felt that government involvement is necessary in combating the burial crisis. The participants suggested the idea of mounting educational, awareness as well as land acquisition programmes. The findings reveal that people do not have adequate knowledge about the proposed alternative means of burial. The findings also indicated a degree of resistance among the Zulu people who still adhere to the conventional method of disposing of the dead. Most of the participants still believe that cemeteries still have enough space for long term conventional burials. The study indicates that conventional burial methods are very dominant amongst the Zulu people with other alternative methods such as cremation being practiced but on a very small scale. One participant said:

“In my opinion, shortage of burial space has a major influence on the type of burial method we have to adopt. The municipality should involve the people especially, councillors, traditional leaders and religious leaders so as to find an amicable solution to the matter at hand” (Female, In-depth interview #5).

It was also remarked that:

“I think the Government should create burial sites out of the vacant land on the outskirts of Durban and in that way, we will not have to compromise our beliefs and traditional culture” (Male, Key informant #8).

Apart from government involvement, the participants advocated for community engagement with the municipalities. The participants also felt that their cultural and religious beliefs were being ignored and that municipal authorities need to further engage with these groups and also provide awareness and education to these areas. One of the traditional key informants argued that they were not aware of the proposed alternative means of burial adding that adequate knowledge had not been provided to them. They reported not having attended the awareness campaign meetings (imbizo). They have not heard of them being conducted in their area.

“Culture and tradition play an important role in the way we conduct ourselves as we adhere to our morals and values. We cannot afford to cremate our loved ones. We are not certain as to where they will go after being cremated. Besides, cremation brings misfortune to the deceased’s family. We do not agree with these modern ways of living. This is why people need to be buried back home (rural areas). People do have relatives who can take them back home (rural areas) where they can be buried. People have become so accustomed to city life that they have forgotten their roots” (Male, Key informant #6).

A participant said:

“This era has seen us being faced with the challenge of a growing population and we are also running out of space to bury the dead. Sooner than later, we will be forced to consider alternative ways of burial. My perception is that culture is socially constructed and subject to constant change and evolution” (Female, Key Informant #2).

Another participant commented;

“Government should allow people to bury their loved ones in their homesteads because in our culture cremation is not only a taboo, but it is shunned. We believe that ancestors intercede between us and God thereby creating a passage of goodwill. When we communicate our worries with our ancestors, they must be able to communicate them to God (uMveliqangi)” (Male, In-depth interview #8).

The participants also raised concerns regarding their cultural practices and beliefs. The interviews with the participants showed that people should not forget where they from to avoid being absorbed by city life. The study revealed that some of the participants are unwilling to embrace other burial methods and they called for methods that will encompass their traditional and cultural beliefs.

According to Brettell and Seargant (2012), various cultures perceive burial as the most revered way of caring for the dead body and family members and friends draw comfort in having a specific gravesite where they can continually pay homage to the deceased. The Zulu people believed that adopting other methods that do not concur with their beliefs may result in their ancestors abandoning them. The traditional key informants claimed that conventional

burials were the only acceptable means, arguing that rejecting customs that have been passed down to them by their ancestors would bring unimaginable misfortune to the surviving family. However, some of the families that have practiced cremation before claim that they have not suffered any wrath arising from the decision to cremate their loved ones. They also progressively indicated that even in the future, they would continue with the practice and also call on other members of society to embrace cremation.

“Culture is very important to us the Zulu people. If we cremate a family member, it becomes difficult for the deceased member to connect with his ancestors in the form of ashes. I also do not agree with natural burials because when my children wish to visit my gravesite, they will hardly be able to identify it” (Male, In-depth interview, #7).

“Since we are confronted by the problem of the scarcity of land, there is need to reflect on other forms of burial and cremation and upright burials would help eliminate the problem because they also save space” (Female, Key informant #1).

“It will take a long time for us the Zulu people to comprehend the crisis before us so as to abandon conventional burial methods. The problem is that people do not have enough education about the crisis we are faced with right now. Culture is forever changing and evolving and once we appreciate that, we will make progress” (Female, In-depth Interview #5).

“The municipality should engage with the local people so as to collectively find a sustainable solution to the problem we are currently facing” (Female, In-depth interview #10).

The interviews revealed that the female participants were more willing to accept other methods of burial than their male counterparts. They argued that people need to start adopting other methods of burial. On the other hand, most of the male participants asserted that conventional burials were part of their culture and therefore accepting other methods of burial would be a demonstration of disrespect to their cultural beliefs. While most of the participants were males, the researcher’s observation revealed that these two study areas were characterized by patriarchal dominance since in each household the male participants were more willing to participate than their female counterparts.

The participants were emphatic that they were excluded from the process of finding alternative methods of burial. They advocated for community engagement. The participants expressed reluctance to accept alternative burial methods. They felt that they were being coerced to accept these methods especially in urban areas where the shortage of land has hit critical levels, but most of the participants argued that land reserved for housing, development and businesses is taking priority over land allocated for burials.

Some of the concerns raised was a result of lack of awareness regarding the burial crisis. The participants indicated that they often heard about the matter through hearsay and maintained that they had not been well informed about the matter. This became evident during the interviews when the researcher had to explain the alternative methods of disposing of the deceased. Most of the participants were aware of cremation but they were strongly against it. According to Ngubane (2004), traditionally death is interpreted to mean a journey back home where the deceased came from and where the spirit belongs (*ukugoduka, ukuya kobabo'mkhulu* in IsiZulu). By implication, when one dies, they re-join relatives and friends who departed before them (Mhlongo, 2017). The Zulu people traditionally preferred burial. Before the nineteenth century, they were buried in their homesteads, either behind or at the side of their huts. While this still occurs in rural areas, with the advent of modernity and the adoption of western cultures, people are gradually abandoning such practices.

4.7 Literacy factor

According to the eThekweni Municipality, the awareness campaign of 2011 targeted all the residential areas under their jurisdiction and residents were informed about the awareness campaign and further encouraged to attend. However, most of the participants argued that they neither heard nor attended any of the awareness meetings (*imbizo*) and they were therefore oblivious of the supposed burial crisis. The main objective of the study was to explore the alternative methods of disposing of the deceased within the context of culture, religion and customs. The researcher's aim was to find out whether these methods were being imposed on the people or if community engagement was a priority in dealing with and making sure that people understand the challenges faced by local municipalities as they grapple with the lack of space to bury the dead. A participant said:

“I do not know anything about the proposed alternatives to burial, but I do know about cremation. I saw people in my neighbourhood using this burial method. We experienced difficulty finding a place for my uncle’s grave. We were told that the graveyards were full. We then decided to bury him back home with our relatives as we were not comfortable with the other methods of burial” (Male, In-depth interview #7).

“I wish to be buried in a grave on the same plot where my relatives were buried. I believe that there is nothing wrong with second interment as long as you are sharing that grave with a family member and not a stranger” (Male, In-depth interview #8).

In their reaction to the alternative methods of burial, most of the participants emphasized that they lacked knowledge and awareness of the burial crisis. The participants further reported that community engagement is important. To ensure that people are aware of the crisis relating to shortage of land as well as the proposed alternative methods they can adopt in order for them to make informed decisions when faced with the loss of a loved one, the participants intimated their desire to be included and have their views on the matter taken into consideration.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the results obtained from both the key informant and the in-depth interviews conducted with residents of Inanda. This chapter aimed at assessing the current situation with regards to conventional methods as well as people’s perceptions of alternative methods that could substitute for the traditional way of burial. While most of the participants indicated that shortage of burial space has become an enormous crisis, the adoption of alternative methods may assist in addressing the imminent land scarcity. However, participants also reported their reluctance to embrace these alternatives, arguing that they were not culturally compatible. It became clear that while people are aware and appreciative of the burial crisis and the alternative burial methods, finding a sustainable solution to the crisis requires the engagement of the community and the provision of knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed alternative burial methods. It is also imperative to note that cultural and religious factors have a huge impact on the implementation of alternative burial methods. As such, the involvement of communities in the initial process of

identifying possible solutions requires a bottom up approach which stresses the need to put the needs of communities ahead of everything else.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Currently, South Africa is grappling with a crisis of land scarcity for the development of cemeteries due to urbanisation and high death rates owing to, increasing older population and higher levels of communicable and non-communicable diseases. According to Mngadi (2013), a number of factors have contributed to the rapid increase in the number of illegal immigrants as well as rural-urban migration hoping to secure better job prospects resulting in the development of squatter camps and illegal settlements thus exerting greater demand for land for various purposes.

Against the backdrop of shrinking burial space in urban centres, burial in general has become part of the crises confronting human lives for decades (Mhlongo, 2017). Burials, essentially in the Zulu society have been connected to cultural and religious practices. The objective of the study was to determine whether the community is willing to accept the proposed alternatives to traditional burial and how culture and space influence people's choice of burial methods in this instance. The research attempts to explain the factors contributing to people's choice of burial methods amongst the Zulu people. The study suggests that a lack of burial space influences the choices of burial methods and that culture and religion are key determinants of the choice of burial method.

5.2 Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to clarify the cultural significance of burial sites for Africans. The study looked specifically at the Zulu people of Inanda and how culture plays a role in decision making about the burial of the deceased. The study focused on the challenge posed by shortage of space for new burial grounds and the participants' perceptions of alternative methods and how culture influences people's reactions and attitude to change, with special reference to the Zulu people living in Inanda, KwaZulu-Natal. According to Zondi (2015), the greater part of the available literature on Zulu burial forms has been biased towards the conventional burial practice which involves the burying of the dead in the grave as the only practice acceptable according to the Zulu cultural standards. In fact, very limited information

is accessible on other burial practices in Africa. It is imperative that a better understanding of the shortage of burial space and the role of culture and tradition in choosing the deceased's final resting place is needed. The study draws on qualitative research methods to ensure that the objectives are achieved. In-depth interviews and key informant interviews were used to amass detailed information on the participants' experiences with regards to the death of a loved one as well as their perceptions of the alternative methods of burial. The study draws on key informant interviews and in-depth interviews conducted with participants in urban and peri-urban areas of Inanda, KwaZulu-Natal. The study was also guided by Bandura's (1989) Social Cognitive theory in exploring people's attitudes towards the alternative burial methods.

The majority of participants stated that the proposed alternative burial methods may indeed address land scarcity. However, not all are ready to accept alternative burial methods since such a transition will take some time to be well received by communities. The findings of this study are suggestive of the fact that most participants felt that conventional burials are intimately linked to culture and tradition. While some participants resented alternative burial methods, it became evident that a section of them were unaware of the burial crisis. Earlier studies have also shown that the burial crisis is a serious challenge for South Africa, owing to a lot of resistance being shown by the South Africans as represented by the Zulu people who are unwilling to accept alternative burial methods especially the act of cremating a loved one (Leuta, 2017; Mhlongo, 2017; Masango, 2005; SAPA, 2010 and Dennie, 2003). Studies suggest that a number of factors contribute to the choice of burial methods (Basmajian and Coutts, 2011; Dambudzo, 2012 and Cox et al, 2004). The study found that most of the participants had not attended any of the awareness campaigns, claiming that they had not been made aware of these meetings.

Even though an awareness campaign was conducted by the eThekweni Municipality in 2011, studies show that African groups still resist the proposed alternatives. Nonetheless, municipalities are still trying to engage with communities about the seriousness of the burial crisis. Over the years, burials have evolved in the Zulu society from wrapping the dead in white cloths and discarding them in graves, but such practices have since been replaced by the use of coffins and cemeteries (Ngcongco, 2005). It is apparent that in Africa, burial methods are inextricably rooted in cultural beliefs and religion under which different ceremonies are performed to ensure that the deceased is buried with dignity (Ngubane, 2004).

The issue of shortage of burial space is quite complex and controversial with the study suggesting that conventional burial methods still hold tremendous sway among the Zulu people especially in the rural areas where the deceased are buried within their homesteads. Another study conducted in Zimbabwe confirms that black Africans are still against cremation which is considered taboo. According to Kawadza (2016), Zimbabwean municipal authorities have called on locals to start considering alternative burial methods. However, in this regard, efforts to promote cremation as an alternative method of burial have courted fierce resistance from religious and cultural groups (Muzenda, 2016). This study suggests that the majority of the Black South Africans opt for home burials. Even against the background of the rural to urban migration, most of the families still advocate for burials conducted at rural homes and they even go to the extent of transporting the body of the deceased back to the rural areas. It is therefore important to note that home burials are widely practiced in rural areas and most of the participants argued that they were more comfortable with burying the dead in their rural homesteads.

The study suggests that the perceptions of the Zulu people regarding cremation as an alternative method of burial is highly negative. Many believed that it is likely to bring bad luck to the entire family. It is also seen as something that contradicts the Zulu culture. Many studies show that the Zulu culture is based on the belief in life after death, that is, a dead person enters the afterlife in transit to the world of the ancestors (Ngubane, 2004; Zwane, 2011; Idang, 2005; and Leuta and Green, 2011). The interviews suggested that although the participants were aware of cremation as an optional burial method, they had little knowledge about the benefits of cremation. While research conducted on cremation in Africa has sought to explain cremation as a different type of burial method, past research indicates that many Africans are opposed to the practice as it is seen as disrespectful to the African cultures which contend that the deceased's body needs to be buried in its intact form as a way of respecting it (Zwane, 2011).

Some of the participants reported that they were not against the proposed alternative burial forms and that they had heard of the burial crisis through reports in the media such as radio broadcasts, newspapers and so on. These participants argued that they were not against cremation as well as other proposed alternatives. They felt that people needed to start familiarising themselves with such alternatives as the demand for land grows. In addition, the study suggested that religious groups are not against cremation since they argued that it does

not matter whether a person is buried or cremated so long the spirit is reconnected with God upon resurrection.

Most of the studies conducted on alternative methods to burial have focused on traditional religious perceptions of cremation as held by the Catholic denominations, for instance, that were against cremation, arguing that Jesus Christ was buried and therefore was able to rise from the grave (Dennie, 2003; Leuta 2017; Zwane, 2011). However, recent studies that zero in on the Christian denominations indicate that they are not against cremation. Their perception is based on the argument that on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ which only occurs after death, it only resurrects the soul of the deceased and not the body (Zondi and Zwane, 2014; Leuta and Green, 2011). This distinction between the soul and the body has legitimised the destruction of the body through cremation based on the understanding that only the soul of the deceased will be saved.

The study found that ignorance about the burial crisis influences people's choice of burial methods and how they view death and their wish to dispose of their dead. The study found out that there is inadequate knowledge about the burial crisis and alternative methods of burial. This lack of knowledge of alternative methods to burial became a dominant theme. Traditionally, in the Zulu culture people would bury their dead in their homesteads which later evolved to the development of cemeteries and grave sites in urban centres. According to Ngcongco (2005), in the past burials would be conducted on Saturdays due to the unavailability of people on weekdays. This has since changed and burials are now conducted during weekdays because cemeteries are reportedly full on weekends. While the above scenario is not sanctioned by traditions and religion, this however, signifies the possibility of change which is often influenced by inevitable circumstances that require appropriate adaptation.

While the majority of the participants prefer conventional burials to the new ones, and with very few people opting for cremation, it is obvious that many are not ready for change. It also became clear that change will gradually occur with young individuals beginning to opt for cremation and second interment. Undoubtedly, despite the wide range of alternative methods to burial, conventional burials were still considered dominant among the Zulu people of Inanda. Though Botswana is a multi- religious country, studies suggest that in this country, cremation is not taboo, hence it is accepted by most groups and while some of the religious

denominations prefer to be buried, cremation is viewed as a way of averting the crisis that characterises the securing of grave sites within urban areas (East African News, 2017).

Noteworthy is the importance of re-evaluating the manner in which burials are conducted, that is, by exploring alternative methods to burial. While the current reality is that the majority of the people still practice conventional burial methods due to religious and cultural beliefs, it is also worth noting that burials cannot happen outside the cultural and religious contexts. While it is clear that many religious leaders are not against cremation and have argued that they will in future consider cremation, traditional leaders have argued that they are highly against cremation and most of the proposed alternative ways of disposing of the deceased.

In the Zulu culture, burials are understood as places where connection with the ancestors is only made possible. Most of the communities have resisted the adoption of other methods of disposing of the deceased such as grave recycling, second interment, upright burials and cremation. Regrettably, this resistance poses a threat to and acts as a major setback in the face of land scarcity. The research has also indicated that people visit the graveyard for sentimental reasons, to clean and cleanse the gravesite and also to place flowers and above all to connect with their ancestors through performing cultural practices and communicating with the dead.

According to an article in the East African News (2017), cremation has been accepted in Kenya owing to the influence of the Hindu culture though the majority of the people are still at liberty to bury their dead in their rural homes where they can perform ritual and religious burial customs. Zambians have always focused on burying the dead. However, the shortage of burial space has become a serious issue of public concern, in which families now bury their dead at a certain fee (Zwane, 2011). The capital of Zambia, Lusaka has opened two private burial places which come at a huge cost since the majority of the local people can hardly bury their loved ones at such sites due to issues to do with affordability. According to the locals, authorities indicated that there was no space to bury their dead. In this regard, the problem of shortage of burial space is now prompting the locals in Zambia to consider alternative burial methods such as cremation. According to an article in The Lusaka Times, (2017), cremation has been received with mixed feelings with some sections of the Zambian

citizenry totally against the practice and others willing to accept it. Nawa (2010) asserts that Zambians have rejected cremation on the grounds that it is alien to their Christian religion.

Studies have consistently portrayed culture as central in mounting resistance to other methods of burial (Zwane 2011; Mhlongo, 2017; Ngcongco, 2005). The majority of the participants believe that the proposed alternative burial methods will affect the deceased's final rest. It is argued that the exhumation of the body of the deceased is outright disrespect to their ancestors and this makes the spirit of the deceased wander the earth instead of resting peacefully. While people are against the proposed alternatives to burial, it is important to note that the existing cemeteries are being filled to capacity making them unable to accommodate the dead any more. Therefore, alternative methods need to be considered.

The study has shown that the burial crisis can be resolved amicably through an expanded community engagement programme that ropes in the religious and traditional leaders. In this regard, the engagement of stakeholders is necessary in ensuring a bottom up approach which gives responsibility to the locals. The interviews indicated that in some cases, burials would result in conflict among family members, with some of them supporting the deceased's choice on how they would like to be buried and on the one hand family members defending the family's cultural practice. That conflict sometimes stands in the way of the deceased's choice of how they would like to be sent off.

The introduction of alternative methods to conventional burial dawned among some of the Zulu people and what is required is strategic planning and preparations to help prepare communities for the implementation of these alternatives. The area of residence also plays a role in the choice of burial method. People in the peri-urban areas choose to bury their loved ones in their homesteads since they are not affected by the shortage of land for grave sites that is prevalent in urban areas. The interviews revealed that urban dwellers are mostly affected by the shortage of land for graveyards and hence the need to start circumventing the burial crisis through adopting the proposed alternative burial methods. Since land is a scarce resource, it is important to note that land suitable for burial purposes is also subjected to competing priorities from other land uses like housing, industrial development as well as agriculture (Ngcongco, 2005). The demand for land for housing and other amenities poses a serious threat to the development and expansion of cemeteries. Leuta and Green (2011) feel

that cemeteries are not easy to change due to their outlook and this further impedes their development since they are influenced by cultural and religious implications.

Bandura's social cognitive theory suggests that human behaviour is learned through imitating actions portrayed by close groups. The researcher views culture as encompassing behavioural patterns, norms and standards that are learnt through social engagement. The findings demonstrated that identity also influenced the choice of a particular burial method. The cultural significance of burial sites was also highlighted as having a major influence on how people wish to be placed to rest. Armed with an understanding of Bandura and Schalkwyk's (1989) definition of culture, the researcher concurs with these authors that culture shapes the collective thinking and way of life of the Zulu people. Worldwide, studies conducted on how people dispose of human bodily remains have shifted from the use of burial grounds to the incorporation of other facilities within cemeteries (Uslu, 2010, Rose-Innes (2013) and Leuta, 2017). Most of the cemeteries provide services that include the conventional burial method, cremation facilities as well as mausoleums. As such, most of these areas have started applying the mixed use approach.

5.3 Recommendations

This research suggests that the conventional burial method is still the most preferred type of burial method for the Zulu people of Inanda. The research results also indicate that people believe that municipalities should give priority to the land to be used for the development and expansion of cemeteries. It is also quite critical to note that the challenge of land scarcity can only be dealt with by roping in the communities, religious and cultural leaders in order to collectively find possible solutions and also to allow for communities to gradually adapt to alternative modes of interment. The research results are indicative of people's unwillingness to accept the proposed alternative burial methods. It also highlights that although people are aware of the burial crisis, they are not well informed about optional burial methods. In this regard, awareness campaigns are necessary in educating people about the seriousness of the graveyard crisis as well as the proposed choices of disposing of bodies of the deceased. Leuta and Green (2011) argue that traditional values are passed on from generation to generation and they are an essential part of an individual's existence. Notably, while change is inevitable, it requires effort from both municipalities and stakeholders. It is imperative to also

note that an amicable solution to the crisis relating to shortage of grave sites is possible if communities are provided with space-saving programmes as well as culturally and religiously friendly alternative methods of burying the dead.

While it is quite evident that the municipality is dealing with the challenge of identifying land for new cemetery development, the researcher was made to understand that an abrupt adoption of any one of the alternative methods will have ramifications on the community. Therefore, people need to be allowed time to adjust to these alternatives through a systematic implementation process that allows for the gradual phasing out of the conventional burial methods (Mhlongo, 2017). From the researcher's view as far as determining whether or not the Zulu people of Inanda were embracing the proposed alternatives such as cremation and what influences their choices of the burial method, it became apparent that in urban areas, cremation is gradually gaining popularity.

According to Leuta and Green (2011), the South African urban scenario depicts cremation as rapidly gaining ground at a faster rate than in the previous decade. Further, the research findings are expressive of the fact that the more educated and affluent the groups were, the more willing they were to opt for cremation. In this regard, it is important to implement educational drives that seek to expose the people to the proposed alternatives. Also, awareness programmes that start at grass root level and that ensure a bottom up approach in terms of the planning process and decision making on the implementation of alternative burial methods are helpful going forward.

Gender equity needs to be considered in the decision making process that seeks to choose and implement alternative burial methods. To that end, the research findings indicate that males still hold more sway in decision making, with women at the receiving end. They are forced to accept and respect decisions taken by their male counterparts. The government, together with local municipalities, needs to put in place programmes that will provide the public with information so as to allow them to make informed decisions when it comes to burying their loved ones. In addition, the government can also exploit other methods of disseminating information through providing pamphlets that will be readily available at local clinics, hospitals, libraries and shopping outlets where people will be able to easily access knowledge about the burial crisis.

It is also imperative that government provides programmes that will intensively educate people on the benefits or advantages of such methods as cremation considering the cost effectiveness of the method of burial which may influence the choice of burial method. The municipality can also employ community –based workers who will effectively teach and educate the populace in their place of residence about the cost effectiveness of the new options in terms of time, money and other resources.

The interviews depicted people’s perceptions on the conventional burial method as well as the alternative methods to burial which are all influenced by religion and culture. In this regard, what is needed is for the municipality of eThekweni to involve the stakeholders such as residents, traditional leaders, community leaders such as councillors and religious groups in order to reach an amicable solution to the crisis that has hindered the burial of the deceased. However, one of the fundamental aspects that stood out from the interviews is that the eThekweni municipality needs to be involved in the process of changing people’s attitudes and perceptions of the alternative ways to burial. This can best be achieved by developing educational programmes that cater specifically for the African population residing throughout Durban in order to convince them to compromise the ideologies they hold about death and afterlife which are rooted in culture and tradition so as to accommodate the much resented cremation and upright burials which are some of the alternatives proposed by the municipality.

The recommendation proposed above will assist in ensuring that people are informed about the different types of burial methods. Leuta and Green (2011) argue that the new approaches to burial need to be taken on board without disrespecting cultural and religious fundamentals, adding that it is imperative that community-based educational initiatives are needed to address issues of cultural and religious concerns relating to alternative methods to burial such as cremation, second interment and grave recycling (Mhlongo, 2017).

5.4 Areas of future research

New approaches such as the multi-use cemeteries, re-cycling of graves, second interment and cremation all offer solutions to the problem of shortage of space for graves, but almost all of these are culturally not acceptable for most Africans as well as individuals from other ethnic groups (Leuta and Green (2011). While it is important that people are provided with options

that are culturally and religiously acceptable, it is also important to note that the proposed alternatives to burial still need to be understood by the Zulu people so that they are aware of their availability for them to be able to make informed decisions regarding the choice to be made on the burial method. The topic that guided this study remains a highly sensitive issue among the Zulu people residing in Durban. What makes the topic particularly sensitive is the idea of convincing the people to adopt alternative methods to burial which are considered alien to their culture. Therefore, it is the researcher's view that more extensive research needs to be conducted to establish how each alternative method can be altered to accommodate both cultural and religious aspirations. Also, new research needs to focus on what needs to be achieved as well as transforming the mind-set of the people with regards to the alternative methods of disposing of the bodies of the deceased beloved ones. However, it is also critical to note that alternative methods that do not require large tracts of land need to be prioritised.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview guide in English and IsiZulu

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: Cultural significance of burial sites among Africans: a case study of Inanda.

1. PART A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

1.1 Gender

(Ubulili) _____

1.2 Age

(Iminyaka) _____

1.3 Home Language

(Ulimi lwasekhaya) _____

1.4 Residential area

(Indawo yokuhlala) _____

1.5 Religious orientation

(Ukuma kwenkolo) _____

2. PART B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

2.1 What is your understanding of the shortage of burial sites in Durban?

(Kuyini ukuqonda kwakho ukuntuleka kwezindawo zokungwaba eThekwini?)

2.2 Are you aware of the different types of burial methods?

(Uyazazi izinhlobo ezahlukene zokungcwaba?)

2.3 Do you know how many burial sites exist in your area?

(Uyazi ukuthi zingakhi izindawo zokungcwaba ezikhona endaweni yakho?)

2.4 Have you lost a loved one in the past five years? If yes, which type of burial form did you decide on?

(Uke walahlekelwa othandiweyo eminyakeni engaphansi eminyakeni emhlanu? Uma u-yebo, yiluphi uhlobo lokungcwaba oye wanquma ngalo?)

2.5 What are your views on the alternative methods to burial such as cremation, second interment and upright burials?

(Uyini umbono wakho ngezinye izindlela zokungcwaba ezifana nokulothisa, ukuthungatha kwesibilinokungcwaba okuqondile?)

2.6 With the diminishing land available for burial sites, which of the above mentioned would you mostly likely use other than traditional burial?

(Ngomhlaba owehlayo otholakala ezindaweni zokungcwaba, yikuphi okukhulunye ngaye ngenhla ongakusebenzisa ngaphandle kokungcwaba kwendabuko?)

2.7 Do you think culture plays a significant role in the choice of burial method?

(Ucabanga ukuthi usiko linendima ekukhetheni indlela yokungcwaba?)

13 June 2018

Ms Nokuzola Ayanda Ngcece (213517572)
Built Environment & Development Studies
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Ngcece,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1274/017M

Project title: Cultural significance of burial sites among Africans: A case study of Inanda

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

With regards to your response received on 13 June 2018 to our letter of 17 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

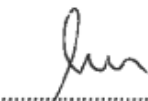
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Professor Pranitha Maharaj
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Oliver Mtapuri
cc School Administrator: Ms Nolundi Mzolo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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APPENDIX 2

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: Cultural significance of burial sites among Africans: a case study of Inanda.

PART A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA SHEET

Gender _____

Age _____

Home Language _____

Residential area _____

Religious orientation _____

PART B: INTERVIEW GUIDE (INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

I am Nokuzola Ngcece, a registered Masters Student at the University of KwaZulu Natal, college of Humanities.

The purpose of the interview is to perceive the respondents experiences, thoughts, feelings and perceptions of how culture influences the choice of burial method among African groups and how other alternatives to burial are perceived. The focus will be on people's perceptions and attitudes towards burial sites.

1. What is your understanding of the shortage of burial sites in Durban?
2. Are you aware of the different types of burial methods?
3. Do you know how many burial sites exist in your area?
4. Have you lost a loved one in the past year? If yes, which type of burial form did you decide on?
5. What are your views on the alternative methods to burial such as cremation, second interment and upright burials?
6. With the diminishing land available for burial sites, which of the above mentioned would you mostly likely use other than traditional burial?
7. Do you think culture plays a significant role in the choice of burial method?
8. How informed are you of the proposed alternatives to burial based on the lack of burial space?

9. Is culture an influencing factor in relation to adaptation of other alternatives to burial?
10. Does lack of burial space influence the adoption of other methods to burial within the African culture?

Thank you for your time!

Nokuzola Ngcece

Received and approved by
-kosi

