

**The Objective and Subjective Conditions of Poverty
Amongst the Destitute and Homeless
Population of Central Durban**

By

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Dedicated to the memory of my Grandfather

Stanley Charles Roberts

(1925 – 2003)

DECLARATION

This dissertation denotes original work by the author and has not been submitted in any other form to another university. Where use has been made of work of other authors and sources it has been accordingly acknowledged and referenced in the body of the dissertation.

The research for this dissertation was completed in the School of Development Studies at the University of Natal, Durban. Research was undertaken under the supervision of Geoff Waters, and the co-supervision of Julian May during the period of April 2002 to March 2003.

Opinions expressed and the conclusions attained are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the School of Development Studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a descriptive analysis of the destitute and homeless central Durban. A quantitative and qualitative examination was undertaken to present a description of both the objective and subjective conditions of the destitute and homeless population in central Durban.

The quantitative analysis was based on survey data gathered by the eThekweni Homeless Forum over 2002. This survey data provided information for 637 respondents, which this study captured and analysed on data editing software. The qualitative data was collected through ethnographic interviews carried out within night shelters in central Durban.

The quantitative analysis revealed the existence of a significant youth contingent within the population, with 15-19 year olds being the most represented. Further, the majority of the respondents report to have been on the streets for less than two years. Two interesting hypotheses for future study arise from this; has there been a massive recent influx of members of central Durban's street population; or does the population experience significant recycling and rehabilitation of new members? The analysis further revealed that the majority of the destitute and homeless population are from KwaZulu Natal, pointing to a population whose members, for the larger part, have not experienced and massive displacement from their place of origin.

The qualitative analysis revealed individuals who have had varying life experiences, and who at present have varying levels of aspiration; but nevertheless, would all benefit and react positively to an engagement from external organisations like the eThekweni Homeless Forum.

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I. Introduction

We try to read their cardboard signs, with macabre or cynical curiosity, while avoiding eye contact with '*them*' at traffic lights; we walk hurriedly past '*them*' in the city's streets, we begrudge the few coins we give '*them*' when returning to our car after our business or recreational outings; we all *want* to help '*them*' if only we knew how... who are '*they*'?

I.1 Outline of Research Problem

This study sets out to describe the subjective and the objective conditions of poverty amongst '*them*', central Durban's destitute and homeless. With the paucity of existing knowledge I argue that it would have been inappropriate to undertake or present a theoretical analysis here. The importance of existing theories on poverty is acknowledged and they are presented in the literature review; but the study is fundamentally concerned with describing the subjective and objective conditions of poverty in central Durban to augment what little knowledge of this population already exists. This study, then providing a body of knowledge against which theory can be applied and tested; as well as to act as a framework and foundation for future studies. This is a descriptive study and sets out offering no hypotheses, nor does it set out to prove or disprove any existing theories on poverty. Through this description and presentation of data, however, hypotheses for future studies do arise.

This study wants to explore what opportunities are open to *them* and how they experience their lives. Although poverty has and can be quantified it needs to be understood within the framework of a subjective understanding of it; and not merely from the theories formulated by "*academics within the sheltered walls of urban universities*" (Wilson and Ramphela, 1989:14). To understand poverty subjectively, as well as just objectively we are better equipped to approach the problem as outsiders and policy makers.

Direct qualitative observation needs to be positioned and verified by statistical studies of broad samples, but the statistical studies correspondingly need to be interpreted from the qualitative studies. On occasion the results of a statistical survey are completely erroneous, notwithstanding any technical verifications which may have been made, because the questions were ill conceived, for lack of sufficiently precise qualitative observations, to give a good idea of the personal reactions of the individuals interrogated. Some statistical tables can only be really understood if there are studies of individual cases to show the real significance of the combinations of variables noted.

(Hauser (ed), 1964:61)

Empirical evidence and its analysis is necessary in poverty studies, and policy formulations, but analysts and policy makers need to know what the data mean, and what poverty means to the poor in terms of their own everyday experiences. In this regard qualitative data can be seen as being data enhancers (Lawrence Neuman, 2000:17) allowing aspects of specific cases to be seen more clearly. Through gathering and presenting both quantitative and qualitative data this study hopes to create greater understanding of the destitute and homeless in central Durban; as well as provide a foundation for the formulation of future studies, and future interpretations of poverty in central Durban.

I.2 Conceptual Theoretical Framework

“Definitions of poverty are as value-based as definitions of Development”, no one definition can claim that it pleases all parties (George, 1988:82). Continuing the quantitative – qualitative tension George (1988:82) goes further to say that any claims that poverty can be defined in an objective and scientific way which will be constant across the board cannot stand up to critical examination. “There cannot be a definition of poverty which is free from value judgements”(George, 1988:83); if we can in fact, not free poverty from value judgements it is reasonable then to study the subjective experience of poverty in a specific context from a qualitative approach.

Gilbert and Gugler (1996:115), acknowledge that the “needs of the poor, or at least the ordering of their priorities, are frequently misunderstood by professionals, let alone by those of us who have lived most of our lives in the comfort of a developed country”. This sentiment is echoed in Wilson and Ramphela (1989:14), “In seeking to define the phenomenon we must be careful not to confine our thinking to those characteristics that appear important to people living within the sheltered walls of an urban university”. As with the Carnegie inquiry, the field workers were not given a neat definition of poverty which they could use in their field assessments. Instead they were instructed to go out and meet people who were experiencing poverty, and through listening to what they had to say, understand poverty from their experiences (Wilson and Ramphela, 1989:14). In this regard the study wants to discover how those in objective poverty experience their own situation, and whether or not the philosophical mechanisms employed by those in objective poverty differ from those employed by the researcher and those “sheltered academic theories” which are concerned with understanding and alleviating their poverty.

Turner’s recommendation (quoted in Gilbert and Gugler, 1996:118) is that poverty alleviation policies should be concerned with helping the poor to help themselves; the rationale being that the poor understand their own lives and needs better than the government and its assumptions do. It is with this in mind that the study has shown much interest in the eThekweni Homeless Forum (THF), and its idea of ‘safe houses’ (See Chapter V and Chapter VIII).

John Cole, in his book *The Poor of the Earth* (1977:96) says of the poor,

*They arrive in the city, but are not yet of the city, for it has offered them no Job...
They are hard to define, and no one can ever be quite sure when a man is informally urban – or urbanely informal perhaps?*

Lomnitz (quoted in Gilbert and Gugler, 1996:93) compare the urban poor to the hunters and gatherers of pre-agricultural societies,

They go out every day to hunt for jobs and gather the uncertain elements for survival. The city is their jungle; it is just as alien and as challenging. But their livelihood is based on leftovers: leftover jobs, leftover trades, leftover living space, homes built of leftovers.

It is with these issues in mind, and the desire to see how they may find congruence in the life experiences of the urban poor that the study will proceed.

1.3 Scope of Research and Issues to be Investigated

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the objective and subjective characteristics of poverty in central Durban. This will be approached by a quantitative analysis of survey information of 637 respondents, as well as a subjective examination of shelter residents' experiences and environment through ethnographic interviews.

The key questions in the discussions with respondents will focus around the following issues:

- What are the income earning opportunities open to the city's marginal inhabitants?
- What education levels, or what skills do they possess?
- What are their expected incomes?
- How do the respondents define their life experience?
- What are the possible options for escaping poverty open to them?
- What are the structural obstacles which negate these options?
- Are they aware of or a part of any form of social network beyond their nuclear family unit; if so how do these networks operate?
- What are their aspirations?

The aim of this study is to approach and answer these questions in the words of the respondents themselves, “giving a candid portrayal of social life that is true to the experiences of peoples being studied” (Lawrence Neuman, 2000:171).

I.4 Ethical Considerations

To protect the privacy of the informants on the street I have given them pseudonyms. To further ensure their privacy I allude to the shelters only by a street name or an area. Even though I told my informants I would use pseudonyms most of them weren't concerned either way.

I.5 Organisation of the Report

Chapter I, above, has provided an introduction for the study; outlining the research problem and presenting a conceptual and theoretical framework for the reader. The organisation of the rest of the report is presented below.

- Chapter II undertakes a literature review of literature relevant to poverty studies as well as a historical overview of poverty research in South Africa.
- Chapter III describes the methodology used in the research.
- Chapter IV deals with an expert interview with an individual representing the eThekweni Homeless Forum, which is an organisation at the frontline of grappling with issues of homelessness and destitution in Durban.
- Chapter V presents and discusses the quantitative data compiled in the course of the research.
- Chapter VI presents and discusses the qualitative data compiled in the course of the research.
- Chapter VII forwards a discussion of findings
- And lastly, Chapter VIII presents recommendations and conclusions.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Studying behavioural norms, aspirations and values of the poor

According to Gans (in Wilson, 1987:183) the disparity between aspirations and behaviour norms among affluent people is narrower than among poor people. Even if the affluent are unable to attain one set of aspirations (occupational for argument's sake), they are still in a position to satisfy other aspirations (such as for their family). The poor, however, have fewer opportunities and resources available to them to fulfil their aspirations; and may have no choice but to adopt behavioural norms which are incongruent with the wider society, although they may well still hold many of the same aspirations and values of the better-off sectors of society. This is why behavioural norms, aspirations and the values of the poor should play a focal role in any research on the cultural patterns of the poor.

These norms must be studied because they indicate how people react to their present existence; but limiting the analysis to them can lead to assumptions that behaviour would remain the same under different conditions when there is no reliable evidence, pro or con, to justify such an assumption.

(Gans in Wilson, 1987:183)

2.2 The Culture versus Environment Debate and Social Exclusion

Pertinent theories in approaching an understanding of poverty and homelessness are presented and contrasted below. The main proponent of the 'culture' debate was anthropologist Oscar Lewis, who coined the phrase, 'culture of poverty'. A culture he revealed through compiling life histories and participant observation in Latin America. Lewis described this culture as being, "both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified highly individuated, capitalistic society" (Lewis in Wilson, 1987:182). This arises from individuals' attempts to cope

with feelings of hopelessness and disillusionment which accompany their realisation of the obstacles blocking their path to escaping poverty and the realisation of their dreams; and attainment of the goals of their wider society. Lewis noted several key adaptations to this existential environment; a sense of fatalism due to separation from political processes; passivity and low aspirations arising from pure lack of opportunity; feelings of inferiority due to the wider society's contempt for the poor; and a tendency for the creation of female headed households due to poor men's inability to perform as a adequate breadwinner for the family. Lewis proposed that this culture of poverty could be impacted by implementing basic structural changes; and through involving the poor in active organisations to make them socially and class conscious – allowing them to 'leave a 'culture of poverty' although they may well be desperately poor' (Wilson, 1987:182). Much work has followed Lewis' notion, maintaining that the poor have to be culturally rehabilitated before they can escape their poverty and advance in society.

The main argument of the critics of the 'culture of poverty' concept is that the concept places the blame for poverty on the poor themselves; and neglects or conceals the social roots of poverty, i.e. bringing the focus of poverty reduction strategies onto reforming the beliefs and behaviours of the poor, rather than searching for the social ills inherent in society. The critics of the 'culture of poverty' believe, unlike its proponents, that the poor do in fact share the same aspirations and values as the rest of their society; and that these psychosocial aspects of poverty will recede when the poor are provided with the opportunities and access to resources which will allow their progress out of poverty. Herbert Gans (Wilson, 1987:182) observed that,

The arguments between those who think that poverty can best be eliminated by providing jobs and other resources and those who feel that cultural obstacles and psychological deficiencies must be overcome as well, is ultimately an argument about social change, about the psychological readiness of people to respond to change

That is, the proponents of resources hold a situational view of social change. This view maintains that individuals' beliefs and behaviour change only when the opportunities and resources available to them change. Those who hold to the concept of a 'culture of poverty', on the other hand, believe that people's beliefs and attitudes

determine how they will react to change, and therefore, only change which articulates well with the views of the culture will be embraced. The debate goes on; but Herbert Gans (Wilson, 1987:182) proposes that the truth more than likely, “lies somewhere in between”.

Another theory dealing with poverty, that has bearing on the homeless is social exclusion, which contains both economic and social components (May, 2003:5). Saith (2001:4) defines an individual as socially excluded if “ (a) he or she is geographically resident in a society but (b) for reasons beyond his or her control he or she cannot participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society and (c) he or she would like to participate”. Although Saith (2001:4) goes on to mention a refinement by Barry (1998), who acknowledges that groups should be considered socially excluded if participation is denied, regardless of whether or not they actually wish to participate. People may voluntarily choose not to participate, but this choice may be due to their own perception of their participation not being desired by the ‘included’; or as Sen notes (in May, 2003:6) a result of their being ashamed of their own poverty.

Social exclusion refers to the norms and processes that prevent certain groups from equal and effective participation in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of societies. It is both an outcome and a process that renders similar outcomes more likely (Narayan 1999 in Narayan, 2002:229).

At least four factors play a role in social exclusion: the excluded, the institutions from which they are excluded, the agents whose actions result in the exclusion, and the process through which the exclusion occurs. Narayan (2002:229) sees it as a relational phenomenon, implicating those with power and affecting those without.

Most excluded groups find themselves cut off from the channels which provide access to power and resources; this increases their vulnerability and increases the chances of falling into poverty. The social stigma attached to poverty itself can also be a cause for social exclusion. While social exclusion and poverty are obviously, and profoundly interconnected they remain two distinct entities. Narayan (2002:229) identifies two aspects of the relationship between the two. The first being that poverty can lead to social exclusion which can lead to more profound poverty, and further social exclusion. The vicious cycle is apparent and difficult to break. Secondly,

despite social exclusion not always leading to poverty, it is inextricably linked to exclusion from institutions and organs of society as well as a poorer sense of well-being.

2.3 Different contexts of Poverty Studies

Is one able to justify poverty studies in European countries where the GNP is on average ten times higher than in developing countries? Hagenaars in the preface to **The Perception of Poverty** (1986) says the answer is yes. Deprivation in affluent societies can not be overlooked simply because there is worse deprivation in another society. Hagenaars uses this difference of deprivation between two areas to show how the notion of 'poverty' can have different meanings. The meaning in the 'developing world' setting is one in which bare means to survive are scarce or insufficient; the 'developed world' situation is one in which means are not adequate to live a life that reaches the standards considered normal in society; or "in the advanced industrial democratic nations where bare physical wants have been met, [poverty] is a matter of deviation from social and economic norms" (The Institute of Economic Affairs, 1972:12). These two different aspects have important ramifications for the analysis and reduction schemes of poverty in either context. To broaden these two definitions, poverty may be defined as a situation wherein an individual's needs are not sufficiently satisfied (Hagenaars, 1986:1); the rub lies in what 'needs' are we considering; and what determines 'sufficient'. Hagenaars (1986:37), goes on to highlight three salient features in the way poverty can be defined;

- 1) *being poor is lacking some basic necessities;*
- 2) *being poor is having less than others in your society; and*
- 3) *being poor is feeling you don't have enough to get along.*

May (2000:5) sees the emerging consensus on poverty as being characterised by individuals, households, or entire communities being unable to, '... command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living'.

This leads on to two further aspects of poverty measurement which must be considered; absolute versus relative. An absolute poverty line defines people as poor

when an absolute need is not met to a specified minimum level; and does not change as the general standard of living in a country changes. A relative poverty line in the other hand defines an individual's poverty in their relation to the general standard of living of the rest of society. A perfectly constructed relative poverty line will decrease or increase by the same increment as an increase or decrease in the standard of living in the society. The minimum living level approach of the absolute poverty line method is set at standards necessary to meet, "basic human needs, such as minimum standards of nutrition, clothing and shelter and the cost of participating in every day life" (World Bank in UNISA, 1993:43). Although this level is set as an absolute it needs to be grounded in the socio-economic context of its community context. For the obvious reason that what is considered acceptable, or in fact minimum for survival changes from community to community. The determination of a minimum living level therefore involves some arbitrary choices from context to context.

2.4 Objective versus Subjective

A further important difference between difference in poverty line construction is the basis used for defining someone as poor. Objective criteria are based on a measurable objective aspect of someone's situation; and subjective is based on the beliefs and opinion of the individual concerned. The subjective opinion of people is more or less related to their objective situation, as far as aspects of income, literacy or family size are concerned. May (2000:5) goes on to say, "The perceptions of the poor themselves are a good source from which an appropriate conceptualisation of poverty in South Africa can be derived." To attain a perfect correlation, however, between these two would require the inclusion of too many variables to make it feasible. As is the likely case two incongruities occur; 1) individuals who are classified as poor by some objective measure, may not consider themselves poor; and 2) individuals who are objectively classified as non-poor, may consider themselves poor.

These errors arise from the fact, that as mentioned above, an individual's self-evaluation is based on far more factors than the objective approach takes into account, including such variables as aspirations, expectations or leisure.

2.5 Poverty Measures

A poverty headcount provides a number of absolute poor in the population being studied. The line for poverty being derived from some absolute variable, for example, income. The problem with this approach is that it portrays all those in poverty as being in the same depth of poverty; when in reality if the line is drawn on some arbitrary minimum limit the upper end of these 'poor' may be within R1,00 of being declared not poor – how different can the lives of two individuals living within a Rand of each others' incomes be, yet the one is now objectively poor and the other is not? Conversely the headcount approach does not reveal the plight of those who are truly impoverished, who are unimaginably below the absolute poverty line. One further short coming of this approach is that it provides no basis for monitoring or detecting the individuals who experience transient poverty (moving in and out of poverty depending on external factors) and those who are chronically poor, and experience no movement out of poverty, even for brief spells.

The poverty gap is another measure of poverty which defines the increase in income needed to bring every individual and household to the minimum living level. Again this method does not provide nuanced details. Such 'money metric' poverty measures are critiqued because measures of household expenditure or income, "only adequately reflect individual well-being the household has access to a market at which it can purchase all goods at given prices" (Carter and May, 1999:3). Further, some analysts would argue that access to goods such as safe water, electricity or services, "are better indicators of poverty and human possibility than are income or expenditure-based measures" (Carter and May, 1993:3).

2.6 Thinking about Poverty

Poverty is not just a matter of income and expenditure,

... it is not some morally neutral phenomenon which merely needs to be understood. It is an evil which must be rooted out.

(Wilson and Ramphela, 1989:258)

Poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, arising from a multitude of potential causes and synergies of these different sources; neither entirely economic nor entirely social in nature, "It is a condition as well as a process, a cause and an effect" (Oyen et al, 1996:34). To earn an income an individual needs the capacity as well as the opportunity to work. Although significant, these two factors are not the only criteria on which poverty and well-being rest. A number of factors play part in this web, including level of education, health, nutrition, and discrimination on gender, ethnic or any other grounds etc. Income is important, as some of these above aspects are available in the market, and an individual's income will determine access to them. An improvement of any one of these aspects, will play a part to improve the welfare of an individual (UNISA, 1993:3).

Beyond this, if poverty studies wish to advance itself, the existential nature of the phenomenon for those who live in poverty must be realised. That is to realise that,

Poor people must meet their poverty face to face twenty four hours a day, every day, all the year around. The way they dress, the way they walk, the way they prepare their food, the way they fill their children with hope or hopelessness – all reflect the iron laws of poverty

(Oyen et al, 1996:16).

Through realising this it becomes clear that the perceptions and experiences of the poor, as told by the poor, can lead us to an informative and rewarding mode of analysis (Carter and May, 1999:3).

Many have cited the urban factors which play a part in fostering poverty. Among them is the sprawling size and density of the city which impacts job opportunities, mobility, the social environment and personal/impersonal relationships in which urbanites find themselves (Roberts, 1973:92).

2.7 Historical Overview of Poverty Research in South Africa

Wilson (in Oyen et al, 1996:228) identifies three main areas that can be discerned in poverty research in South Africa; pre-1980; the period between De Klerk's 1990 announcement of political change and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela in the country's first democratic election in 1994; and the period until the present day.

In the Colony of the Transvaal Indigent Commission (1906 – 1908), one major short coming was that it only concerned itself with the indigence of whites; looking at non-white poverty in so far as it affected the white population. Methodologically though it succeeded in stressing the importance of both social and economic causes of indigence.

The 1928 Carnegie Commission into the Poor White Problem as the name suggests, was also only concerned with whites. In the years 1932/33 it published five volumes which laid the foundations for a series of political strategies focussing on poverty among whites. Unfortunately with its narrow focus on white poverty certain strategies were assimilated by the National Party with its ascendance in 1948; and Wilson (in Oyen et al, 1996) notes that some have said that the apartheid policies of the Party can be seen as an 'anti-poverty programme – for whites only'.

W.M. Macmillan (Wilson in Oyen et al, 1996:230) published an influential book in 1930 which considered both black and white poverty in South Africa. Along with the Native Economic Commission of 1932 and works by the South African Institute for Race Relations it was ensured that poverty was now as much an issue of concern for blacks as for whites.

The Second Carnegie Inquiry was launched in 1980. During this first phase three important aspects were laid out;

- 1) *Any study of poverty could be truly meaningful only if there was real inside understanding and participation of those communities that had to endure poverty. In the South African context, where the vast majority of those who are poor are black, this meant that, as far as possible, the centre of gravity of the inquiry had to be black rather than white.*
- 2) *It became clear that the inquiry should be designed as an open-ended, ongoing process rather than as a once-off affair.*
- 3) *While the study gradually took shape in discussions around the country, a striking contrast in views became apparent. White South Africans were generally enthusiastic about the need for research to gather facts on poverty. Black South Africans were unimpressed by data-gathering. "Why spend money finding out what we already know?", they asked. "What we need is action against poverty."*

(Wilson in Oyen et al, 1996:230)

This last view became crucial in guiding the work of the second Carnegie inquiry, right through the release of its main report in 1989.

The Carnegie Inquiry revealed the multifaceted nature of poverty; from the empirically measurable to the less tangible human aspects; feelings of uncertainty, humiliation, shame and inadequacy; fathers who are unable to support their families and mothers who can do nothing to ease their children's hunger. To draw on a well used quote from Wilson and Ramphele (1989:14),

Poverty is not knowing where your next meal is going to come from and always wondering when the council is going to put your furniture out and always praying that your husband must not lose his job. To me that is poverty.

Mrs Witbooi, Philipstown,
Karoo

In 1992 empirical data was drawn from 9000 households in South Africa under the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) in order to furnish policy makers with data for implementing the goals set by the Government of National Unity's Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Under Nelson Mandela's Government of National Unity two further initiatives were carried out. One under the Central Statistical Service (CSS) and the other under Data Research Africa (DRA) in conjunction with the World Bank. The CSS held a country wide household survey in October 1994. The DRA was aimed at 'clothing the bare bones of the statistics collected in recent years with a more qualitative assessment of the nature of poverty' (Wilson, in Oyen et al, 1996:231).

The Poverty and Inequality Report

In October 1995 the South African government, after being approached by the World Bank to undertake a collaborative poverty assessment, agreed that the Poverty and Inequality Report be conducted by South African researchers (May, 2000:3). The task was overseen by the Inter-ministerial Committee on Poverty and Inequality, which was convened in September 1996 by the Deputy President. The Committee set the following objectives for the report:

- *To undertake a detailed analysis of poverty and inequality in South Africa*
- *To analyse current policy in an integrative manner in order to draw out the cross-cutting issues affecting the implementation of the government's policy as spelled out in the RDP base document on the reduction of poverty and inequality*
- *To analyse the adequacy of current plans to reduce poverty and inequality and possible barriers to their implementation*
- *To propose ongoing monitoring mechanisms to measure the impact of policies and programmes in the reduction of poverty.*

(May, 2000:3).

The PIR employed procedures different to most other poverty assessments in other parts of the world. The report, entirely undertaken by South Africans, covers a broad range of issues, which went beyond the typical focus on poverty profiles and public expenditure reviews, “Indeed, even the inclusion of inequality as a research focus is unusual” (May, 2000:3).

The approach proposed by the PIR for the reduction of poverty was based on removing the factors that contribute to the vicious cycle of poverty on the one hand, while stimulating income and opportunity on the other.

The War on Poverty Forum

In August 1997, under the leadership of the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), the National War on Poverty forum was created. The long-term goals of this forum were to initiate and maintain participatory policy dialogue on issues surrounding poverty alleviation; as well as coordinating the objectives of different sectors and agencies. Soon after its conception the War on Poverty Forum approached the government asking to be allowed to participate in the compilation of the Poverty and Inequality Report (above). This request was denied, due to the report being almost complete, and the inappropriateness of engaging new rhetoric at that stage (Mthintso, 1999:100). The War on Poverty Forum acknowledged that while many views about poverty are expressed in development policies and practices the views of the poor themselves are rarely taken into account or even heard. This needed to be addressed and it was decided that the most effective way to achieve this would be to assemble the relevant agencies in one venue to hear the poor speak out on their own behalf. It was hoped that through this process a more meaningful agenda (built around issues the poor themselves found important) to poverty alleviation would emerge. A series of public hearings were held in rural areas. In each province a local NGO was responsible for the facilitation of the meeting, and was required to enlist the participation of other organisations to publicise the meetings and mobilise the poor to attend. With this Speak Out on Poverty programme, the poor had the opportunity to share, publicly, what poverty meant to them. These experiences and ideas then went

on to form the foundation of the War on Poverty Forum's national action plan. These findings were released in two documents; *The Peoples' Voice* and *Poverty and Human Rights*, which documented the life stories told by the poor, and examined the obstacles which impede the poor from accessing their constitutional rights. These reports were sent to the premier of each province, and were also made available to other decision makers (Mthintso, 1999).

The KwaZulu-Natal Income Dynamics Study (KIDS)

This panel study was undertaken by the University of Natal, International Food Policy Research Institute and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (May, 2003:9). The Panel study draws from a survey of 1400 households carried out in 1993 and 1998. It is significant because it allows the individual movements of households into and out of poverty to be identified between the two dates of data collection. As of 2000 the data from this study have been available in the public domain, since which time it has been analysed for a host of purposes (May, 2003:9).

2.8 Overview of Literature Review

This chapter has brought to light the many issues which surround the study of poverty as well as the sometimes conflicting approaches towards understanding the phenomenon itself; such as objective studies versus subjective studies, or 'culture of poverty' proponents versus the 'culture of poverty' critics. Most importantly this chapter has tried to convey the multifaceted nature of poverty and the useful synergy which arises when qualitative studies are incorporated to clothe the, "bare bones of the statistics" (Wilson, in Oyen et al, 1996:231) collected in quantitative studies.

III. Methodology

The research, although primarily aimed at exploring the qualitative experience of the urban poverty within shelters in Central Durban, also includes a quantitative examination of aspects of poverty in central Durban. The methodologies will be presented separately.

De Vos et al quote Leedy, “all research methodology rests upon a bedrock axiom: The nature of the data and the problem for research dictate the research methodology” in this regard De Vos et al continue adding that all knowledge and factual information has its source in either words or numbers (De Vos (ed), 2001:15).

Qualitative research is that which deals with data which is mainly verbal in nature. Quantitative research is that which is concerned with data of a more numerical nature. (De Vos (ed), 2001:15) to expand on these two concepts;

The quantitative approach to research in Social Sciences is more formalised as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined and which, in terms of methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences.

On the other hand;

The qualitative approaches are those in which the procedures are not strictly formalised, while the scope is more likely to be undefined and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted.

(De Vos (ed), 2001:15).

Laurence Neuman (2000:145) writes of qualitative researchers, “...[they] borrow ideas from the people they study, or develop new ideas as they examine a specific case in its context,” rather than attempting to transform aspects of the social world into variables and hypotheses.

3.1 The Quantitative Analysis

3.1.1 The Data

The quantitative analysis is drawn from the primary data obtained through the **eThekweni Inner City Friend of the Destitute Association's** (TIFODA) survey. The survey was conducted over 2002 and has captured data from 637 respondents. To my knowledge this is the only survey carried out among Durban's destitute and homeless population. Councillor Trevor Prince afforded me the privilege of being the first to carry out an analysis of this primary and raw data.

3.1.2 Method of Data Collection

The large majority of the survey questionnaires were filled out during the two feeding schemes that TIFODA hosted at the City Hall (See Chapter IV). A table was erected with place for five interviewers and five interviewees. The attendants were then encouraged to form lines and take the interviews that lasted around five minutes each. The rest of the surveys were conducted randomly by Trevor Prince and helpers along the beachfront and in shelters in Durban. This sampling is interesting because it has not tried to define who the *homeless* and *destitute* are, but rather has captured people who subjectively define themselves as *homeless* and *destitute*, through the feeding schemes being advertised as *Open Day[s] for The Innercity's Homeless And Destitute*; as well as the survey forms clearly stating they deal with *census information of our destitute and homeless*.

3.1.3 The Analysis

The different questions, and answers were imputed into the SPSS data editing programme allowing frequencies to be run on the different variables. Although problems with the survey itself are discussed in Chapter V, it has proved very

effective in the analysis of time spent by respondents on the streets, as well as the age spread of the destitute and homeless. The other variables are also presented and discussed in Chapter V.

3.2 The Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative research was carried out through ethnographic interviews conducted within the night shelters. An ethnographic approach was chosen because it is an approach, "... that leads us into those separate realities that others have learned to use to make sense of their worlds" (Spradley, 1979:iv-v); "...offering all of us the chance to step outside our narrow cultural backgrounds, to set aside our socially inherited ethnocentrism, if only for a brief period, and to apprehend the world from the viewpoint of other human beings who live by a different meaning system". These informal interviews were conducted with shelter residents and shelter owners of different shelters. This enables a subjective recording of the interviewees experiences and views; as well as a thick description of the environment in which the meetings took place to create a context for the reader to place the report in.

3.2.1 Sampling

It was decided to use the "Night Shelter" as the locus of the study as this afforded the opportunity to obtain a list of shelters in the central Durban area, and then using non-probability sampling draw a sample of shelters to be the universe for my study. This universe selected, I could then approach members of this universe's population, rather than wandering the streets and randomly approaching individuals that I deemed to be 'destitute' or homeless.

3.2.2 Procedure

This task proved more difficult than anticipated. My first intuition was to contact the Point Police Station, knowing that the Ark was in the area, as well as the South Beach Shelter (Which I had visited with Geoff Waters almost a year earlier). On calling them I was referred back and forth; there was hint of a list but no one really knew if there was one. Everyone, however, was quick to mention, "There's the Ark". On

phoning the Ark I explained my study, and that I was looking for a list of shelters in Durban. To which the first response was, “The Ark is not a shelter, but a Christian ministry”. Eventually I was told a list was busy being compiled but was not available; nor could they fax me any information because their electricity had been cut due to non-payment. They did, however, advise me to contact the Point Police Station. I contacted the station again and this time, although there was still no list, a sergeant was able to give me three shelters he knew of: The Ark in Browns Road, PLM Lodge in Point Road and the Palm Shelter in West Street.

I then resorted to calling the Life-Line crisis line and enquire if they had a list of shelters for the destitute. This proved to be a good avenue to follow, and they put me onto the *Survivors Crisis Centre* which caters mainly for abused women. I managed to get a hold of the woman who ran the centre, she had a list and was happy to meet with me and share it. On Tuesday 5 November I held an informal meeting her, here she gave me her list of some 22 Shelters (which became the population from which my sample was drawn), which included addresses, prices, services and in some cases contact numbers. Beyond this we spoke about the eThekweni Homeless Forum which had been mentioned in a newspaper article (Daily News, Tuesday October 2002,29:4) regarding the Ark in the previous week. She didn’t know much more than I did, but said I should speak to Councillor Trevor Prince who she knows is very involved with these things, and has been helpful in her previous meetings with him. My meeting with Councillor Prince is covered in Cahpter IV, *The eThekweni Homeless Forum*.

3.2.3 The Setting

The settings of the interviews and interactions will be dealt with in Chapter VI and will form part of the thick description which will accompany the interview reports.

3.2.4 Access to the research sites

After arriving at the night shelter I would first introduce myself and my study to the manager or owner of the shelter, and ask their permission before approaching any of the residents.

3.2.5 Engaging the Interviewee

Once permission was secured I would approach a resident of the shelter and introduce myself. I informed them that I was undertaking a study on people's life experiences in Durban shelters, and asked if they would mind talking to me. At first most weren't sure what I wanted exactly, but after a few probing questions; *how long have you been staying in this shelter?*, *have you always lived in Durban?*, etc the interviewees gathered their own momentum. The direction of the conversation was dictated by my interviewee; I let them tell me what they felt was important to them, asking more specific questions when the opportunity or topic arose. No one turned me away, and on leaving a shelter you could feel the people you didn't talk with almost wondering why you didn't speak with them. People were in general happy to speak with me, and I think enjoyed that someone was just listening.

3.2.6 Materials used for Data Collection

Although I used a dictaphone in my interview with Councillor Trevor Prince, I decided not to use one in the field for several reasons; they are intimidating and could lead to more guarded responses, the background noise from the streets and radios can make transcribing an almost impossible task. Further knowing my supervisor has been mugged in his field excursions I choose not to carry anything I didn't need with me. Even though a Dictaphone is not high on the mugging list, when in your jeans pocket it can be mistaken for a cell phone. I carried only car keys; a pen and notepad; my student card (in case I needed to identify myself should police be curious as to why I was walking in the areas I was); a letter from my supervisor to confirm who I was and

my research; and a box of cigarettes and a lighter. These last two items were probably the most useful while in the field. Offering and sharing a cigarette with a stranger is great icebreaker, and this ritual began most of my interviews. I tried to use the note pad as little as possible during the interviews trying to maintain as natural a conversation as possible, jotting down key words, phrases and imagery. I would then write the field report as soon I left the field, or even begin writing while walking to the next shelter.

3.2.7 Other Sources of data

Apart from field observations and the interviews, I have drawn on media reports and relevant literature to further highlight or explain certain aspects that arose during the course of the fieldwork.

IV. The eThekwini Homeless Forum

Compared to the other chapters which examine the subjective and objective conditions of the poor, and what avenues are available for them to improve their lives; this chapter and interview turns the perspective around and describes what is being done to try and create avenues for the destitute and homeless, from the other end of the spectrum.

The following is taken from an interview with councillor Trevor Prince, a founding member of the eThekwini Homeless Forum. All italicised passages are direct quotes from Trevor Prince.

4.1 The eThekwini Homeless Forum as an initiative

The eThekwini Homeless Forum (THF) began under the name of *eThekwini Inner City Friend of the Destitute Association* (TIFODA), in January 2002. TIFODA was born out of a meeting on the 27th of January of the destitute and homeless called by Trevor Prince at the City Hall. This event was advertised through 10 homeless people, strategically deployed at different points in the city to spread the word; as well as the distribution of 1000 pamphlets.

... more than 1000 men, women, and children – homeless people, real destitute people, attended the meeting. I didn't promise them anything, but what I did promise them was that I'm going to seriously focus on trying to do something to improve the situation in the CBD... We just discussed a few issues at the public meeting; no promises, we're going to try...

In the days that followed Trevor Prince received phone calls from individuals who had seen the meeting in the media and wanted to help, as well as a pledge of support from the *eThekwini Renewal Urban Management Precinct* (eTRUMP). After a series

of meetings and the securing and mobilisation of resources, this team of people organised a mass feeding scheme at City Hall on the 10th of February; a mere two weeks after the first public meeting of the destitute and homeless. The organisation decided to call itself TIFODA (*eThekwini Inner City Friend of the Destitute Association*). Circulars were made and distributed early in the week to advertise the event.

I have knowledge that there are 2500 to 3000 homeless men, women and children, living in central Durban. From this feeding scheme 2200 came. So my estimate is that there's about 2500 to 3000 because almost everyone of them must have come – it's free food on a Sunday... I made 1000 pamphlets, plus the 10 captains to recruit... Every shelter was given this pamphlet, every nook and cranny in the Esplanade, Victoria Embankment, the subway, the foyers and entrances of buildings.

The day consisted of 20 tables of food, with three volunteers manning each. One would serve rice, one curry and one salad. There were 2 ambulances, a team of paramedics and a team of doctors, provided by the Joint Medical Holdings (JMH) Group. Roman Security donated security guards to provide visible policing and police representatives from the CPU (Child Protection Unit) were also in attendance.

After due process, meetings and the creation of a constitution the eThekwini Homeless Forum was born on the 22nd of June 2002. With a nine person committee made up of councillors, health department officials, welfare department officials, members of the private sector, NGOs, CBOs and religious centres.

On the 14th of July the now THF held a second feeding scheme; where more than 3000 individuals were fed, and over 1000 received medical attention and treatment. There were tables of donated clothes as well, to which people could help themselves. Although there were not enough clothes for all, the effort was appreciated by everyone.

I took that City Hall, which is used for weddings and mayoral functions, and I brought the poorest of the poor and made them a wonderful brunch, no one can tell me otherwise. It's a public place, and they're members of the public!

4.2 'Safe Houses' the THF's response to shelters

In further trying to understand the homeless situation in Central Durban, Trevor Prince took himself to the streets to investigate shelters. *"People don't know who I am. I'm dressed up in my Bermudas and my slippers; they think I'm a vagabond myself."* This is what Trevor Prince came up with;

There are 25 overnight shelters; most of which are illegal, and are renting a place this size, paying R2000 to the landlord. Putting a hundred people sleeping on mattresses. The open the doors at six in the evening, by seven in the morning they must be out again. Only to sleep! 100 times R10 (which is minimal, most are R12 or R15) That's a R1000 a day – which is R30 000 a month – they pay R2000 – R5000 to the landlord, 2 or 3 grand to the council for lights and water, and the balance is a profit. They're not registered with the tax office, they not registered with council, they're not registered as a formal business. These are my findings, from 1 to 25. We've got 25 shelters that are operating, most of them illegal – now listen to my side. They're charging the homeless people 10 to 15 Rand a day. These homeless people in order to pay for that accommodation only, in most cases, very few are feeding. How do they come about that 10 to 15 Rand a day, plus food? They have to car guard, they have to steal, they have to pick pocket, they have to bag snatch, they have to work for drug dealers and shabbeen owners, they have to prostitute. Can you understand, the vicious cycle of events that's happening?

The THF proposes the introduction of 'Safe Houses' in place of shelters. These are buildings, houses, duplexes or blocks; with 20 to 200 people living in them. The vision is to make them self-sustainable. In return for maintaining and renovating the building the residents receive free accommodation, food, lights, water and medical attention. One immediate assumed benefit for the rest of the central Durban community is that crime committed by the destitute and homeless in central Durban will decrease. If *"50% of the homeless people engage in crime simply to survive"*, central Durban could be looking at 1000 to 1500 fewer offenders.

Life skills, job skill and social welfare services could then meet at these points and even have daily interaction with the “Safe House” residents to afford them the opportunity to make themselves sustainable. This leads to the ideal vision of the THF, to rehabilitate the destitute and homeless back into society and their families. If rehabilitation becomes a reality the THF envisions a situation where,

... the THF together with the state starts initiating avenues, where we can get free transport, through Metro Rail [for example], as a contribution on their part. Many of them want to go back home; but they can't. Because every cent they make they have to use to buy food, pay for accommodation or buy medication. So can you picture this now; half of them will be afforded the opportunity. There are vast opportunities here, we can clear this situation.

4.3 The THF as a source of Data

Although the THF hosted two massive feeding schemes, which provided medical treatment for attendants as well, this represents only two meals in the space of a year for the destitute and homeless who attended the functions. Further there are many organisations, especially church based which run weekly feeding programmes for the destitute and homeless. Although they serve far fewer than the THF's schemes; they are weekly events, which combined and overtime amount to a significant number of meals served. The THF, however, remains a source of interest to this study because it is not merely attending to the symptoms (Hunger, etc) of destitution and homelessness, but its vision includes the active engagement and treatment of the causes that trap people in this condition. Apart from the plan of “Safe House”, discussed above, part of this engagement includes the compilation of a data set on the destitute and homeless. 637 cases have been captured on the surveys; the majority of which were completed at the feeding schemes hosted at City Hall. This data is dealt with the following chapter.

V. The Quantitative Data

5.1 Introduction and Description of the Variables

The quantitative analysis has been drawn from the primary data held in the **eThekwini Inner City Friend of the Destitute Association's** (TIFODA) survey. The survey was conducted over 2002 and has captured data for 637 individuals. The raw data were captured and analysed using the SPSS 9 data editing software. All the variables were taken from the survey form itself, with the inclusion of several new variables which only served to categorise certain of the original variables. These will be discussed below, following which the analysis of frequencies will be presented. All cases include a reference number; which allows the names and surnames to be removed from the data set to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents information, should the data be used beyond this study and the eThekwini Homeless Forum's needs.

5.1.1 Surname and First Names

These two variables are the most straightforward. They will be the easiest variables to allow identification of cases in future studies. Allowing longitudinal comparisons, as well as the collection, over time, of a more complete dossier for each individual case.

5.1.2 Identification Document Number (ID No)

This variable captured the ID No's of those respondents who knew this information. The shortcomings of this variable, however, include its failure to report whether or not the respondent had the actual physical document within their possession. Only a handful of survey forms reported this information in brackets in the margin; with or without a number. They included such comments as; "ID stolen", "ID lost", or "has ID but not here and doesn't know number". Further, certain ID No's did not have the full complement of digits they require, or the age suggested by the number was

completely incongruent with the respondents reported age. Beyond this, due to the fact that the interviewers were not trained, it is not clear whether a dash on this survey form means *non-response*, or 'no ID No'. Missing cases in the descriptive analyses must, therefore be considered with this in mind and not disregarded.

5.1.3 Age

Records the respondents age; this was also recoded into a new variable which recorded it in 5 year age groups; from *0-4* up to *65 and above*.

5.1.4 Nationality

It is most clear from this question that the interviewers had not been briefed on standardisation of reporting. This variable contains reports on respondents race, language group, ethnic group, religion and nationality. It would be possible to include South African ethnic groups, (Zulu, Xhosa etc) into the South African nationality reports; but is an individual reported as being *Asian* an Asian national or a South African with Asian ancestry? Similarly for those reported as being *European*.

5.1.5 Marital Status

Marital status was coded on the data editor in four categories; *Single*, *Married*, *Divorced*, *Widowed*. Again it is unclear whether a dash or blank response on the survey form indicates 'non response' or *single*.

5.1.6 Dependents

Records the number of dependents the respondent has.

5.1.7 Gender

A useful variable to compare gender ratios on the streets.

5.1.8 Area Where You Live

Respondents reported this by area, street (despite the specific *Street Name* variable) and by shelter where they lived. Some forms bore the tragic response of ‘anywhere’.

5.1.9 Street Name

Where respondents answered ‘anywhere’ to the previous question this was generally not answered. Some street names reported were not streets in Durban but streets which held reference to their places of origin. Only street names of relevance to Central Durban have been included in tables and graphs of this study.

5.1.10 How long on Street

This variable was captured on the data editor in months, despite respondents reporting duration in weeks, months or years. A second variable was created which captures this duration in years; from *0-1 years* through *29-30 years*.

5.1.11 City/Town of Origin

This variable is a useful one for gauging displaced people among this sample population. Allowing us to trace which provinces or towns in South Africa have the greatest representation amongst the destitute of central Durban. This was also a better indicator of nationality in some instances. *Burundi* as an **origin** (for example) tells you a lot more than *Black* as a **nationality**. Despite these instances, however, the data is as ‘messy’ as that of the **nationality** question.

5.1.12 Previous Work Experience

Due to the fact that the vast majority of the respondents who reported work experience, reported more than one. As a poor man in Pakistan said, “The rich have one permanent job; the poor are rich in many jobs” (Narayan, 2000:36). These were

divided into two variables; *Work Experience 1* and *Work Experience 2*. This recorded the first two response in the order they were reported. Both these variables were coded into 17 broad categories which will be presented below.

5.1.13 Medical Condition

No response here, or a 'no' was taken to mean the absence of a medical condition and hence a healthy state. Because our interviewers were not trained medical professionals this response relies entirely on the reports of the respondents, who have either received professional diagnosis or have self diagnosed. Again it was clear there was no briefing on standardisation because the reports are completely varied and near impossible to code. Interesting cases and frequencies of conditions will be presented below.

5.1.14 Code (ABC)

This is a subjective rating of the overall appearance of the interviewee. An *A* meaning presentable, and able to pass for a regular member of 'acceptable society'; a *B* denoting rather presentable but a stranger would well assume the individual might be destitute, and finally a *C* denoting an individual whose appearance blatantly betrays that they are destitute. The problem with this variable is that because it is subjective and more than one interviewer carried out the survey; different interviewers opinions might be incongruent. Nevertheless it is an interesting reflection of the sample.

5.2 Frequencies

5.2.1 Age

The first variable to be presented will be *Age*. This is presented in 5 year age groups. This is an important variable as it reveals a demographic feature of the 'destitute' population of Durban. Knowing the age characteristics informs policy makers whom in fact their policies and interventions must cater for. Only 5 of the 637 respondents

did not report their age. This data is presented in graphical format as it reveals the *age-curve* as well as the actual numerical data.

The most interesting feature of this variable is the high representation amongst the 15-19 age group, which has 79 (13%) members compared to the 45 (7%) and 48 (8%) members of the preceding and following categories, respectively. This is also the most well represented of all groups with the 45-49 age group following with only 76 (12%) members.

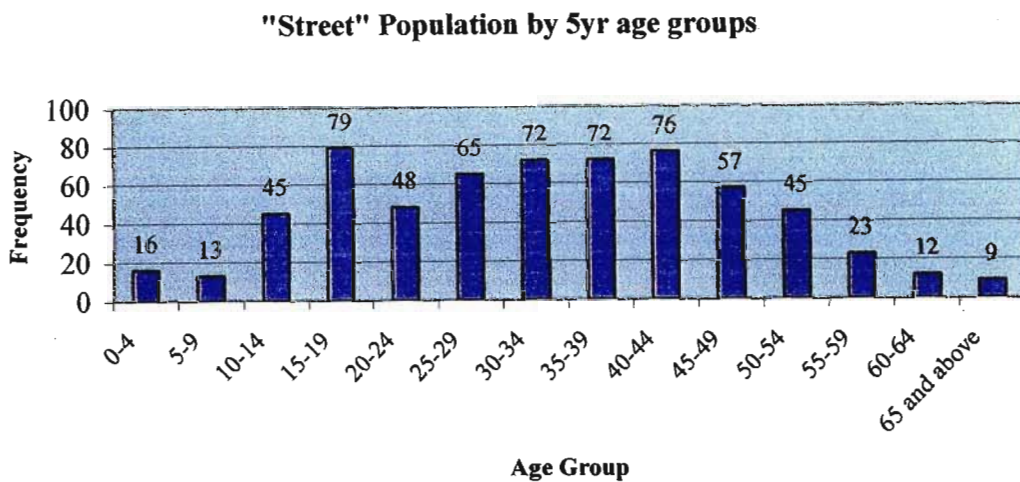


Figure 1: Street Population by 5yr age groups

5.2.2 Time on Street

This variable is a critical one for those concerned with the rehabilitation of 'street people'. It may be assumed that the shorter the period of time spent on the street, the easier it would be to introduce a person back into 'mainstream life'. This hypothesis would, however, need to be tested. With a non-response of only 60 (9%) out of a sample of 637, a count of 577 (91%) individuals answered this question. 225 (39%) report being on the streets of Durban for one year or less. 315 of the respondents (55%) have been on the street for two years or less. Whether this means that the majority of the people on the streets are able to escape within the first few years, or

whether Durban has experienced a recent and massive influx of homeless people is unclear, only a longitudinal study of this sample would answer this. Support for the prior assumption might be drawn from recent media coverage which reports massive swelling and mushrooming of the street child population in Durban (The Independent on Saturday, 30 November 2002:1&10). This might also explain the large 15-19 age group in the destitute and homeless population. The explanation one might assume is that many people are able to leave the streets within their first year, if this were indeed the case it would entail a massive recycling of the 'early years' street population of Durban. Both hypotheses are interesting and deserve future research.

Table 1

Time on Street within Sample (n = 577)

Years	Frequency	Percent
0-1	225	39
1-2	90	16
2-3	66	11
3-4	49	8
4-5	32	6
5-6	16	3
6-7	11	2
7-8	10	2
8-9	15	3
9-10	12	2
10-11	6	1
11-12	7	1
12-13	4	1
13-14	4	1
14-15	11	2
15-20	15	3
20-25	2	0
25-30	2	0

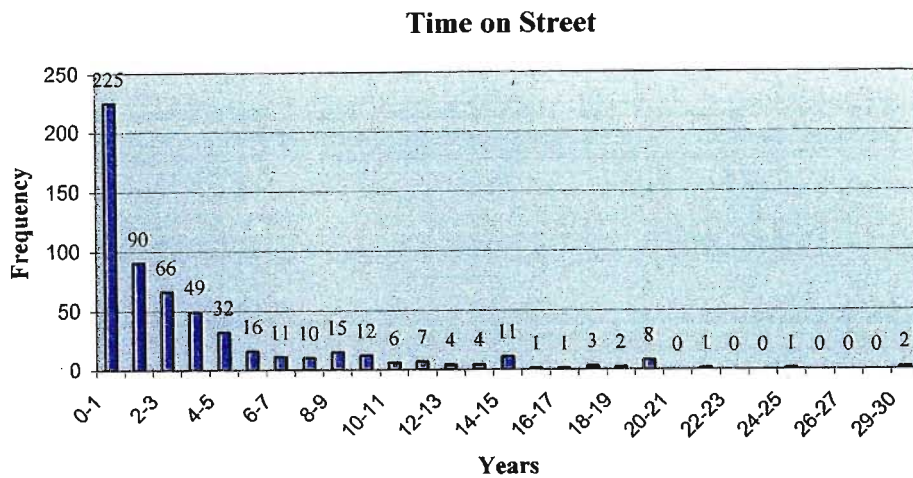


Figure 2: Time on Street

5.2.3 Streets

Of the 637 respondents only 93 did not respond to this question. Of the 544 who answered a street name 122 different answers were given. Ranging from 'All over', 'Any Street' to streets which don't exist and streets which do exist in Durban. 383 of the respondents were most concentrated in the streets represented in *Table 2*. This table reveals *Point Road* has the highest representation with 107 counts (28%). This is followed by *Browns Road* (in the Point area and the road which houses the Ark) and *Alice Street* with 58 (15%) and 50 (13%) counts, respectively.

Table 2**Streets where the Respondents Live (n = 383)**

Street Name	Frequency	Percent
Alice Street	50	13
All Over*	7	2
Browns Road	58	15
Commercial Road	6	2
Erskine Terrace	13	3
Esplanade	8	2
Grey Street	5	1
Mona Road	22	6
Point Road	107	28
Smith Street	32	8
Smith and Aliwal	20	5
South Road	5	1
Umgeni Road	18	5
West Street	32	8

5.2.4 Area

Of the 637 cases there were 20 *non-responses* for this question, and some 174 different responses were given. Responses range from general areas to specific shelter names. Not surprisingly the *Point* area had the highest representation with 58 (9%) counts, the *Ark* had a representation of 52 (8%) members. The response of *All Over* was recorded 56 (9%) times.

Below are the 22 most offered responses and account for 422 (66%) respondents.

Table 3**Areas where the Respondents Live (n = 422)**

Area	Frequency	Percent
Albany Shelter	7	2
Alice Street	16	4
Alice Street Home	4	1
All Over*	56	13
The Ark	52	12
Beach Front	11	3
City Central	32	8
Durban Station	15	4
Genesis Night Shelter	8	2
Maydon Wharf	16	4
Mona Road - unspecified	4	1
Mona Road - CJ's Shelter	15	4
New Dawn Shelter	22	5
North Beach	5	1
Palm Shelter	13	3
Paradise Shelter	6	1
Point	58	14
Power House Shelter	8	2
South Beach	5	1
South Beach Shelter	34	8
Thuthukani Shelter	30	7
Upper Class Shelter	5	1

5.2.5 Health

Of the 637 survey forms, 16 had not completed this question of the survey. Of the remaining 622, 399 reported having no medical condition or being healthy. Some reported healthy despite also reporting other ailments, both were recorded.

Table 4 represents 186 of the most commonly reported medical conditions. Of those not included here many of them were non-specific remarks like, *not so good, needs attention, unsatisfactory* or *very bad miscellaneous*. *Asthma, Chest Problems* and *TB* were the most commonly reported medical complaints with 29 (16%), 23 (12%) and 20 (11%) counts respectively. Second to these respiratory complaints were *Skin Problems* which account for 15 (8%) of the responses. *Miscellaneous Pains and Injuries* accounted for a further 38 (20%) of the responses.

Table 4

Health Conditions reported by Respondents (n = 186)

Condition	Frequency	Percent
Arthritis	6	3
Asthma	29	16
Back Trouble	6	3
Blood Pressure	11	6
Broken Limb	6	3
Chest Problem/Pains	23	12
Diabetic	5	3
Epileptic	5	3
Eye Problems	8	4
Gunshot/Stab Wounds	4	2
Miscellaneous Pains/Injuries	38	20
Partial Paralysis or Lame limb	3	2
Psychological Impairment	7	4
Skin Problems	15	8
TB (confirmed or suspected)	20	11

5.2.6 Work Experience

The table presented below has married the responses for both primary and secondary work experiences. Although the responses total **403**, it must be borne mind that two responses can belong to the same individual. If we take the number of respondents who reported at least one example of work experience, **333 (52%)** we can see a more accurate number of actual *individuals* who have work experience of some kind. This variable is useful in that reveals the actual resource of man power that is held in Durban's homeless population. Especially for the THF's proposed 'safe house' project – this table shows there is sufficient skill to run a 'safe house' where the residents renovate and maintain a building in return for their living needs.

With the 'safe house' concept in mind the following categories are of most interest. Of the **403** responses *Construction* is by far the best represented skill in this variable with **80 (20%)** respondents reporting it as either a primary or secondary work experience. **65 (16%)** respondents fell into the *Painter* category (which includes house/building painters, artists and sign writers). *Maintenance* is also well represented with **32 (8%)** counts as primary or secondary work experience; there are also **29 (7%)** *Drivers* within the sample.

Table 5

Work Experience reported by the Respondents (n = 403)

Work Experience	Frequency	Percent
Car/Security Guard	34	8
Catering	11	3
Clerical	29	7
Construction	80	20
Domestic/Cleaner	40	10
Driver	29	7
Machinist	17	4
Maintenance	32	8
Managerial	3	1
Mechanic	15	4
Musician	3	1
Painter	65	16
Prostitution	3	1
Salesperson	23	6
Seaman	8	2
Tailoring	11	3

5.2.7 Marital Status

Of the 572 responses to this question over half (397) of the respondents report being single. This is partly due to the fact of a very well represented young contingent in our population. It is possible that divorcees and widowers reported being *Single*, as the survey just asked for marital status and not specifically about divorce or death.

Table 6

Marital Status of Respondents (n = 572)

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	397	69
Married	83	15
Divorced	68	12
Widowed	24	4

After removing all respondents under 18 years old the pattern remains similar. With no change in actual numbers to the *Married*, *Divorced* or *Widowed*. The *non-response* count for this variable must not be overlooked, because, as mentioned above they may

well point to *Single* status. Regardless of *Single* responses, the data still indicates that 62% of the population that has ever been married were divorced.

Table 7

Marital Status of Respondents Controlled for Age (n = 458)

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	283	62
Married	83	18
Divorced	68	15
Widowed	24	5

5.2.8 Type A, B or C

As mentioned above this is a very subjectively based variable, its empirical worth is questionable, but it does present an interesting insight into a stranger's perception of the 'destitute'. Of the 637 cases 615 responses were given, the breakdown is presented in *Figure 3*.

Subjective Evaluation of Respondents' Appearance

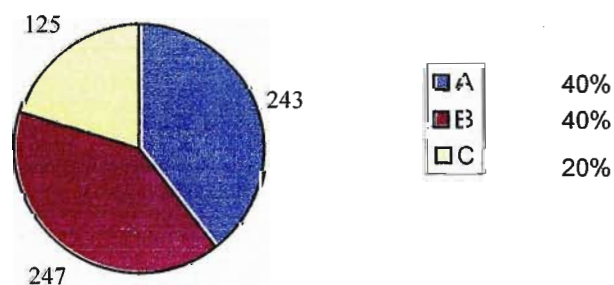


Figure 3: Subjective Evaluation of Respondents' Appearance

5.2.9 Identity Document Number

Of the 637 respondents only 220 (35%) provided ID numbers. Of this 220 (35%), 22 (10%) of the numbers given did not have the correct number of digits, and a further one is not a South African ID number. This information is important, for without documentation individuals are denied access to welfare and pension services; which although limited are significant when you have little else.

5.2.10 Gender

Of the 637 surveys, only 3 failed to record gender. The frequency and percentage of these results are presented below. Males account for 72% of the population and females 28%.

Table 8

Gender (n = 634)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
male	454	72
female	180	28

5.2.11 Dependents

This variable has been cross-tabulated with **Gender**, allowing us to observe any part that gender might play in determining our respondents likelihood of having dependents. To control for the larger presence of males in our sample, all their results have been divided by 2,52 to allow us to view these results as if females and males were equally represented in the sample. The results do not show a massive disparity between the genders in this regard. In total the female group only claims 8 more dependents than the male group; which is only 0.03% of the total number, 264, of dependents.

Table 9

Dependents by Controlled Gender

Dependents	Female	Percent	Male	Percent
0	42	31	51	40
1	23	17	26	20
2	22	16	21	16
3	16	12	12	9
4	16	12	6	5
5	10	7	6	5
6	2	1	2	2
7	2	1	1	1
8	1	1	2	2
9	1	1	1	1
10	0	0	0	0
11	1	1	0	0

Table 10 approaches the *Dependent* variable from the perspective of *Marital Status*. Although it does not control for the representative size each status holds in the entire population it does portray how many single parents there are among Durban's destitute and homeless. There are more *Dependants* recorded for the *Single* category, 148, than for the *Married*, *Divorced* and *Widowed* categories combined, 125.

Table 10

Dependents by Marital Status

Dependents	Single	%	Married	%	Divorced	%	Widowed	%
1	54	36	12	17	10	28	7	39
2	46	31	19	27	7	19	1	6
3	24	16	7	10	11	31	3	17
4	8	5	14	20	3	8	4	22
5	9	6	9	13	3	8	2	11
6	3	2	3	4	1	3	0	0
7	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	0
8	2	1	3	4	1	3	0	0
9	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	6
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	148	100	71	100	36	100	18	100

5.2.12 Nationality and Race

Despite the difficulties and problems the collection of this data posed, it as been possible, with several assumptions, to decompose the respondents into categories based on 'race'. Despite the very notion of 'race classification' being offensive, it is perhaps more acceptable in a study of urban poverty in post-apartheid South Africa, where large portions of the population have been historically disadvantaged through the discriminatory laws and practices of the apartheid governments, which dispossessed people and hindered their ability to accumulate and use assets (Carter and May, 2001:1988). The main assumption made with this data is that it is easier to assume 'race' from nationality, than it is to assume nationality from 'race'. Thus all respondent's who reported a nationality of an African country, or membership of an African ethnic group (Zulu, Xhosa etc) have been included with the respondents whose nationality was reported as being *Black* or *African*. Similarly all respondents whose nationality was reported as being *Afrikaaner* or from a European country have been included in those who were reported as being *White*. The same logic follows for the inclusion of *Asian* and *Muslim* respondents into the *Indian* category. I have included those who reported *South African* nationality for two reasons, firstly 'race'

cannot be assumed of a member of such a multi-cultural society as South Africa; secondly future studies on “poverty by racial decomposition” can use their assumptions and calculations to decompose this *South African* category into the other four categories.

There were only ten *non-responses* to this question, and one response of *non-European* which was also disregarded. The following table represents the results for 627 respondents in absolute figures, the Pie graph represents the same data but in percentage points. *Blacks* are most represented in this sample with 321 (51%) members, which (disregarding the *South African category*) is almost double the combined totals for the *Coloured*, *Indian* and *White* categories; 57 (9%), 54 (9%) and 52 (8%) respectively.

Table 11

Race Assumed from Nationality

Race assumed from Nationality	Frequency	Percent
South African	142	23
Black	321	51
Coloured	57	9
Indian	54	9
White	52	8

'Racial' decomposition of Respondents

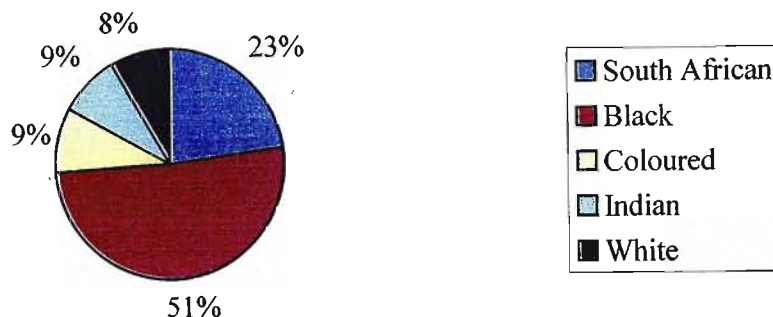


Figure 4: 'Racial' decomposition of Respondents

5.2.13 Origin

With a *non-response* count for this variable of 65, data for 572 individuals is available. Due to problems mentioned with the data above it has only been possible to effectively analyse and present 519 of these responses. It has been possible to deduct provinces of origin for 493 (95%) of these respondents, as well as countries of origin for a further 26 (5%) respondents of foreign nationality. Tables and graphs will be presented for these two sets of information. A further table and graph focussing only on respondents' areas within Kwa Zulu Natal will also be presented.

More than a quarter (29%) of the Street Population in central Durban examined for this variable are not from Kwa Zulu Natal; of this population 5% are not even South African Nationals. The distribution from Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape is evenly spread accounting for 9%, 8%, and 6% of central Durban's Street population respectively.

Of the 366 (71%) of the Street Population from Kwa Zulu Natal 180 (49%) are originally from Durban itself; the other 51% come from areas as close as the Bluff and Umhlanga, to areas as far as Matatiele and Mtubatuba. Port Shepstone, Stanger, Umlazi and Pietermaritzburg (besides Durban itself) are the most represented with 10 (3%), 11 (3%), 14 (4%) and 23 (6%) representatives respectively. The majority of the destitute population in Central Durban, therefore, are relatively close to their 'homes' or *origin*.

Table 12

Respondents' Origins

Origin	Frequency	Percent
Kwa Zulu Natal	366	71
Free State	6	1
Eastern Cape	42	8
Western Cape	33	6
Guateng etc	47	9
Foreigners	26	5

Respondents' Origins

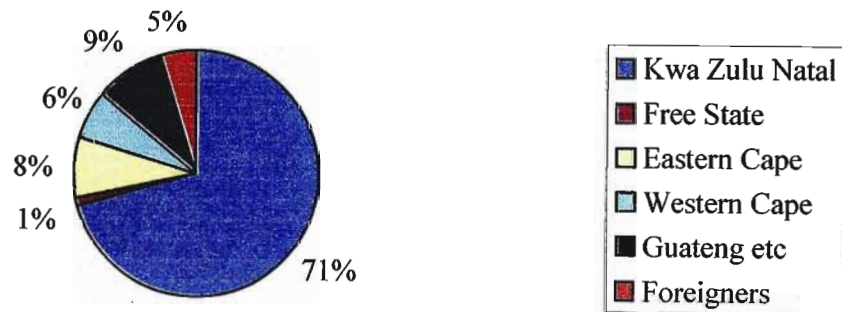


Figure 5: Respondents' Origins

Only areas which account for 3 or more respondents are presented in the following table. Only 32 out of the 366 respondents for Natal are excluded by this selection. These other areas will be presented separately. The reason for this exclusion is that just 1 or 2 respondents can be seen to be one unit; either an individual or a couple. The factors which can motivate one unit move from one area to another are potentially endless. 3 respondents, however, can be seen to be 2 or potentially 3 units. The more units acting in the same way (migrating to Durban in this case) the more chance of their individual reasons sharing a common factor. Thereby, if we can highlight the areas with a high representation among Durban's street population, we can start looking for salient features in these places of origin which might be root causes of the individual's poverty and their motivation to leave in favour of pursuing a life in the city.

Table 13

Origins within KwaZulu Natal

Area	Frequency	Percent
Clairmont		
Greytown		
Kokstad		
Pongola	3	1
Ulundi		
Umzinto		
Verulam		
Vryheid		
Eshowe		
Hammarsdal		
Harding		
Ladysmith		
Mtubatuba	4	1
NewCastle		
Richards Bay		
Umkomaas		
Umzimkulu		
Zululand		
Empangeni	7	2
Inanda	8	2
Kwa Mashu	9	2
Port Shepstone	10	3
Stanger	11	3
Umlazi	14	4
Pietermaritzburg	23	6
Durban	180	49

The following areas have only 1 representative amongst central Durban's street population: Amanzimtoti, Bergville, Bluff, Bothas Hill, Cato Manor, Chatsworth, Donnybrook, Gingindlovu, Isipingo, Ixopo, Jozini, Kranskop, Mooi Rivier, Ndwedwe, Nkandla, Nongoma, Overport, Phoenix, Sydenham, Umhlanga, Umzinto, Wentworth.

The remaining areas have only 2 representatives amongst central Durban's street population: Bulwer, Dundee, Matatiele, Ntuzuma, South Coast, Toti, Underberg.

Looking internationally Burundi, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, the UK and Ireland are most represented with 5 (19%), 5 (19%), 3 (12%), 2 (8%) and 2 (8%) nationals helping to make up the 519 cases of central Durban's Street Population respectively. Although taken by continent, Africa is best represented with 20 (77%) of the 26 foreigners belonging to an African country. One would be surprised that not one Nigerian national was captured in this sample. This may be explained by their strong social organisation, which absorbs and looks after new members in Durban (Leggett, 2001:144).

Table 14

Decomposition of Foreigners within the Street Population (n = 26)

Country	Frequency	Percent
Angola	1	4
Burundi	5	19
Hungary	1	4
Ireland	2	8
Malawi	1	4
Rwanda	1	4
Sierra Leone	1	4
Somalia	1	4
Swaziland	5	19
Tanzania	1	4
Uganda	1	4
UK	2	8
Zaire	1	4
Zimbabwe	3	12

5.3 Summary of Quantitative Data

5.3.1 Limitations of Data

As mentioned above the data collection was characterised by some shortcomings. These were mainly in areas of standardisation of interviewers' reporting; no coding was used in the undertaking of the survey; leading to great variation among respondents answers, and interpretations of what in fact the questions were looking for. This lead to a greater deal of interpretation being required when it came to capturing and analysing the data from the survey; mainly in regards of coding and categorisation of the respondents' answers. The most interesting and important characteristics revealed through this examination of descriptive variables will be highlighted below.

5.3.2 Summary

The destitute population of central Durban contains a sizeable youthful contingent with the 15-19 age group being most well represented with 79 (13%) members. 39% of the population have only been on the street for one year or less, with 55% having been on the street for two years or less. This points either to a recent influx of destitute into Durban or to a significant number of individuals escaping destitution within their first few years of street life. These hypotheses, however, require further study and examination. The population appears to be most concentrated in Point Road and the Point area; Point Road and Browns Road being the reported streets of 107 and 58 respondents respectively. Of the many medical complaints and conditions of the population respiratory problems (Asthma, Chest problems/pains and TB) are most prevalent with 72 respondents reporting these ailments. 333 respondents reported at least one form of previous work experience; there were 403 reports of work experience in total. Of this 403 construction was the most commonly reported with 80 (20%) counts; followed by painting with 65 (16%), domestic work / cleaning with 40 (10%), car/security guarding with 34 (8%), maintenance with 32 (8%), and driving and clerical experience each with 29 (7%). The information on marital status revealed that over one third (68) of the ever married respondents (175) have been divorced.

Males account for 72% of the population and females for the remaining 28%; with 148 (54%) of the reported 273 dependents by marital status, belonging to single parents. The majority (321 or 51%) of the destitute population in the sample are Black; with Coloureds, Indians and Whites equally represented with 57 (9%), 54 (9%) and 52 (8%) members respectively. 71% of the sample are originally from Kwa Zulu Natal, with only 5% being of foreign nationality; this is significant because it points to the majority of the sample not having undergone any major displacement.

If data can be thought of in cartographic terms, the quantitative data provides a satellite image (if you will) of central Durban's homeless and destitute population, it presents the broad objective characteristics of this group. It fails, however, to provide nuanced details of individual cases which aid the intellectual navigation of the landscape this study is trying to describe. This detail is found in the qualitative data presented in the following chapter.

VI. The Qualitative Data

Grown-ups love figures. When you talk to them about a new friend, they never ask questions about essential matters. They never say to you: 'What does his voice sound like? What games does he prefer? Does he collect butterflies?' They ask you: "How old is he? How many brothers does he have? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father earn?' It is only then that they feel they know him. If you were to mention to grown-ups: 'I've seen a beautiful house built with pink bricks, with geraniums on the windowsills and doves on the roof...' they would not be able to imagine such a house. You would have to say to them: 'I saw a house worth a hundred thousand pounds.' They would exclaim: 'Oh! How lovely.'

(Saint-Exupery, 1995:21)

6.1 Introduction to Qualitative Data

6.1.1 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out in night shelters in Durban. For ethical considerations I have not mentioned the names of the shelters in which interviews took place. Although access was easy to gain there were several obstacles which prevented me from carrying out interviews. The foremost was that several shelters are in fact closed during the day; residents can only arrive after four or six depending on the shelter, and then have to vacate at a stated hour in the morning. For personal safety I choose not to be on these streets after dark. The second obstacle to the fieldwork is that, due to their nature, shelters are opening and closing constantly, you may arrive at a certain street to find the shelter is no longer there. The other obstacle is that, as you will read below, although a shelter is open during the day, the residents may be asleep or resting; it is inappropriate to disturb them at this time.

6.1.2 Presentation of Qualitative Data

Thick description of all field trips has been provided to canvass a subjective understanding of the environment in which the subjects live and the interviews were conducted. The thick descriptions will be followed by an analysis of the eight questions forwarded in the *Scope of Research Issues to be Investigated*; where the answers for each respondent will be extracted from the thick description and presented.

6.2 Thick Description

According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, “a critical part of ethnography is thick description, a rich, detailed description of specifics (as opposed to summary, standardisation, generalisation, or variables)” (Lawrence Neuman, 2000: 348).

The text below refers to aspects of the meaningful everyday experiences of the subjects, placing the interview in a context from which the reader can infer cultural meaning and gather a sense of another’s reality (Lawrence Neuman, 2000).

6.2.1 West Street

When arriving at the top of the landing few things can ever quite prepare you for the view, framed by an iron security gate, of folded up mattress on a concrete floor, little more for the bare foot child trying to play hide ‘n seek from these new visitors on the other side of this gate. After a short while an adult comes to the gate and asks if he can help us; I reply saying that we’d just like to speak to the shelter manager, he disappears behind the wall and soon we are greeted by an Indian women, “Are you church people?”, “no just from the university”. She too disappears, once again behind the wall.

‘Hi I’m Peter’, the manager introduces himself as he approaches the gate; and opens it for us. The shelter is bigger than one would expect from the view offered by the other

side of the gate. A large rectangle with three discernable sections. We have entered into the middle one. In the centre of the floor are two rows of mattresses, folded in half during the day to provide more walking space; and along the walls are beds; for which the residents pay R10 a night. A couple of residents have decided to pay the extra R5 to spend the day in the shelter, and are busy at their beds, listening to the radio, or trying to organize their laundry. To the left is a similar sized section; mattress in the centre, and along the walls are cubicles, which for R30 a night provide more private accommodation, and are often used by families or couples. Children stay for free, and women are allowed to spend the day free of charge as well. Towards the right now, are the separate male and female ablution facilities, a large fish tank, the manager's cubicle and storeroom, and another cubicle. Here an old bar counter separates the sleeping/living quarters from the TV area and the kitchen.

Peter is happy to speak to me about the shelter and explains how the prices for accommodation are structured. The shelter is running at a present capacity of around 70 people per night, but during the holiday season when Durban is inundated with people from the other provinces it can go up to 110. I ask him if he's heard of the THF. He remembers their feeding schemes earlier in the year; and said he would be happy to join any organization except for the Ark. He points out the cubicles, kitchen, TV area, bathrooms and fish tank. Our attention is turned the fish tank. He answers me that it's not a marine tank but fresh water. He believes that it's important to be near water, it's a source of peace and often when he's stressed he just 'parks off' in front of the tank. There's little more than a school of juvenile guppies (no bigger than a centimetre) in the tank. "I used to have six angels, but the filter stopped when the power went off, and everything died".

He says I'm free to speak with his residents, and returns to his business. By this time my field assistant has struck up a game of poker with the barefooted five year old, who is the son of the other manager Muller, who lives in a cubicle on the left hand side.

Nearest to the gate an Indian man is lying on his bed, about to read a book. Sitting on a nearby bed, I introduce myself and ask him about himself. He holds a degree in theology from the University of Pietermaritzburg, and is meant to be studying his

honours degree at the University of Natal, Durban this year. His wife is a surgeon, and is apparently paying for his fees, as well as residence fees at the university. He claims he prefers the shelter because it's cheaper and he can use the rest of the money for other things. What exactly he never said; although he openly admitted he is living off his wife. He hasn't stayed at any other shelters in Durban, but he's heard of a new one that has opened up in Aliwal Street, he's also heard of the Ark and Derek de Nyschenn. He's even attended one service at the Ark, but said he'd never stay there. He plans to go home end of November, "She'll take me back, of course", and begin his honours in Pietermaritzburg next year. He maintains he's also been offered a lectureship at Pietermaritzburg, but it might be too much to hold down while trying to study. He plans to study his PhD in theology as well and go onto to lecture or minister. I don't mention that to the best of my knowledge there is no Theology department at the University of Natal, Durban. Although if he goes on to minister he will have to give up smoking, which he says won't be a problem. I ask him about the shirtless man sitting in the corner listening to his radio. "That's Dave, he's been here the longest, I'm sure he won't mind talking to you".

I rise from the bed and make my way over to my assistant who is now engaged in a game of 'Go Fish!' with the boy. By this time another man has entered the shelter; wearing a 'TILT car security' shirt, and carrying some sheet tin, and a pair of tin-snips. He sits next to Dave and by the way they talk it is clear they are old friends. I introduce myself, and my study, and sit on the bed facing them. Offering them a cigarette they decline, but Dave passes me his ashtray and says 'feel free'. Behind them on the wall, is a massive eagle with gold in its wings, superimposed over a giant heart, with the shelter's name and a date at the bottom. Recently painted with paint provided by the 'owner'. Dave's friend is Harry, he car guards on Tyzack Street on the beachfront. He 'scored' the 'TILT' shirt working one function for the nightclub, and says it's important to have some form of official looking clothing, otherwise people might think you're just a chancer. They both point to my jeans and T-shirt and say there's no way I would make any money if I car guarded in that outfit. I enquire about his current enterprise with the tin, and he replied that he's doing a job for a friend, removing and replacing rusted parts on a car. Exactly how this procedure works I'm not sure, but Harry will receive R50 for this day's effort which is more than his average R30 – R35 he will make from car guarding. This is generally spent

on a day's accommodation, food and cigarettes. He says he can make up to R60 if he stays late, but prefers to finish working before it gets dark because it's dangerous to be in the streets at night. Enquiring further as to the nature of the danger, him and Dave both say that the 'packs' of street kids that roam the streets at night are their biggest concern. There's no way to defend yourself from 15 to 20 children, and if you get violent they will stab you. (This danger of street child gangs has received much media attention, and an article entitled, *Festering Gangland*, appeared on the front page of the *Independent on Saturday*, November 30, 2002)

Harry is a boiler maker by training and is originally from Cape Town. He says he's worked in Sasol refineries and even in the Koeberg Nuclear plant in the Cape, which he says was a serious position to work in, with people being cut if they didn't make the standard. Harry is 60 years old, and has lived in this shelter for about a year. He says he's stayed in practically every shelter in Durban, and that this one is the best. Dave is 58 years old and is a fitter and turner by training he is originally from 'Rhodesia' (Zimbabwe), which he left 25 years ago to go to Johannesburg. He arrived in Durban a few years ago with his brother looking for construction work. He hasn't seen his brother since. One night while out having a few draughts with his brother and some friends, his brother, drunk, left early; going to their friend's house who was also looking after Dave's tool box. When Dave and the friend finally got home, the brother and the toolbox were both missing. Going down to the nearby pawnshop, Dave saw his toolbox in the shop, and when checking with the store clerk, the man who sold the toolbox matched his brother's description. This led me to ask both of them whether they would get back into construction if they had the chance. Both answered reluctantly saying that they feel too old to get back into climbing around, and carrying things. Dave said he's comfortable with his life. He car guards at a Church on the corner of Manning and Moore Road, for all Sunday services and when the church holds weeknight bible classes. These weeknight classes come to an end now due to the run up to the festive season, so he only works Sundays, until the new year. This is enough, though, to keep him up at the shelter from one week to the next. I ask them about the shelter which is literally right across the landing from the one we're in. It charges the same price, and provides a meal as well, but both Harry and Dave say they would not choose to stay there as it is rather a 'rough place'. When asking them about the THF they remember hearing about the feeding schemes earlier in the year,

and Dave responded quite positively to the 'Safe House' idea; pointing out that when he and Peter arrived at the premises two years ago there wasn't much there and he helped to erect the cubicles. He then took me into the ablution areas and showed me the tiling he had done in the bathrooms, which considering the limited resources had quite a bit of flair and style to it; the showers too he had help put in. He showed me the kitchen area, complete with fridge and microwave. The shelter does not provide any meals, but allows the residents use of the kitchen facilities to prepare their own meals. Returning to Harry in the corner, Dave pointed out the projector screen TV, and the fact that the shelter had Mnet as well. The only problem that arose, he said, was when half the guys wanted to watch the rugby and the other half wanted to watch the cricket. I asked Dave who supplied the paint, tiles, Mnet, microwave etc.; and he replied the 'owner'. Who, on further enquiry, is not Peter, but the 'guy Peter works for', Steven. Steven doesn't stay in the shelter, he runs a computer business, and used to own the strip bar/ escort agency downstairs. Dave tells me that the current shelter premises was itself one of those 'places where women dance on poles, the bar counter separating the TV/Kitchen from the rest of floor is a relic of that institution. Going back to the corner we spoke further about the idea of a self sustainable 'safe house', Dave and Harry both acknowledging the wealth of skills held by many of the homeless. Both said that, as good as free water, lights, board and health care are, they would need some form of pocket money as well, for certain necessities, 'like razor blades' Dave says while scratching his beard. While our conversation meanders we stumble across the weeks recent crack down on a Nigerian drug building by the police. The building, they tell me, is in fact practically next door. They go on to tell me about the white girls the Nigerian gangsters keep in 'stables', both for themselves and for generating income through prostitution and drug selling (as Leggett, 2001, describes). These girls are mostly runaways from the Transvaal, who come to Durban in search of better things and get ensnared in these Nigerian criminal circles. The Daily News (28 December 2002) has a front page story of a 14 year old runaway, recently saved from the "clutches of a Nigerian drug dealer who used her as a prostitute". As our conversation winds down, I notice the little boy has abandoned the card games and has gone in search of something to show my assistant. I thank Dave and Harry, and they invite me to come over sometime in the evening when there'll more people for me to talk to. The boy emerges from the cubicle carrying a computer keyboard which he found in the trash but is very proud of. We give him our colourful

smiley-face pen, which no longer works, but he doesn't mind, and he takes it back in the cubicle with him, saying 'Thank you uncle', as he turns back to the 'room' he shares with his dad.

Our next two stops were the Central City Methodist Church, and the Upper Class shelter in Smith Street. The church office was closed, and didn't feel it would be appropriate to speak to residents without the manager's permission; and the Upper Class Shelter, is only open from four in the afternoon until 8 in the morning, no one is allowed on the premises during the day. The next shelter to be visited was on Pickering Street.

Picture a scene from a bad movie set in a South American slum, complete with prostitutes on the corner, and hanging out of escort agencies, and dirty buildings with washing hanging from every available surface and window – I present to you Pickering Street. While looking lost, and looking for the shelter I was approached by a young Nigerian man, about my age, who later I learnt was George; "Are you looking for anything, or anyone?", he pointed us to the shelter; which was a strange complex, a block of flats facing the street, leading to a central courtyard, and then a similar block facing Winder Street on the other side of the courtyard. The entrance to the courtyard is gated shut but has a pedestrian entrance. Walking through the rusted gate, over a dirty concrete floor and an old used condom, which has clearly been lying in that spot for a while, we entered the courtyard. There were people milling about on the stairwells of both blocks. Asking for the manager or owner we got directed to a garage type building, with mirrored windows in the centre of the courtyard. Inside we found the manager and owner, Desigan. The office itself looked like a garage, complete with paint tins and a few tools, besides for Desigan's desk, bookshelf, concrete pool bench along the wall, and a couch, which I hazarded to sit on, facing his desk.

The shelter itself has 30 beds, which he charges R10 a night for, and R10 for the day; in the upper floors are cubicles (he didn't offer how many) but those have a going rate of R35. Meals aren't provided but he said that at times he gets large donations of food from Chicken Licken, and some other restaurants. On asking whether both blocks have the same layout we learn that the block on Winder Road is the shelter, the block

on Pickering, which we just walked through is leased to a Nigerian. He pays Desigan the monthly lease, but what he does with the building is his business, but Desigan doesn't know anything. Desigan explains how the building has been raided several times by the police, who have never managed to find any drugs or illegal on-goings; all the while we watch girls and women pulling their skirts straight and arranging their hair through the one-way glass. As he continues his stories about the unsavoury nature of this neighbourhood; stolen cars being parked in his courtyard etc. which have resulted in the iron gate; we see two well (trendy) dressed white kids (a guy and a girl) in their mid-twenties running, quite happily across the courtyard, Desigan doesn't see. Eventually my assistant asks for a cigarette and goes outside to speak to the man who lead us to the shelter. Once she has left the office Desigan says to me; "You know these Nigerians, they keep their white girls, to sell their bodies and drugs for them...". Seeing that he's made this opening offering, I venture to ask him about the two white youngsters I just saw in the quad; "They work for the Nigerians, they sell drugs to whites for them. The boy comes from quite a well off family as well". This new offering from Desigan fully qualifies this building as suffering from "Sleazy Hotel Syndrome". In short, in certain contexts,

...cheap hotel-rooms can lead to a major social problem. Sleazy hotels in South Africa's urban centres have become the central nexus for the trade in cocaine and heroin, as well as related enterprises such as prostitution, fraud, theft and robbery.

(Leggett, 2001:122)

Our conversation winds down, after confirming it would be in order for me to return in the future to talk to him and some the residents. Outside my assistant is talking to the Nigerian who lead us to the shelter and another man. We share a cigarette together and walk outside with them talking quite amicably. The first man asks us if we were there for 'business', but we explained our study to him, and he replied quite astutely, "So you're concerned with poverty alleviation?". I asked them if they were from Durban (which was obvious they were not); "No we're foreigners, from Nigeria"; "Ah, Kwera Kwera", I replied jokingly and they laughed; at this point we introduced ourselves to each other, and so we met George and Caine. They told us they were

Ibos, just working in Durban, which they feel is a really great place; at which point we took our leave of them.

6.2.2 Off Smith Street

Turning off Smith Street you are greeted by a narrow road, lined with a panel-beaters, a pub restaurant, apartment buildings, the night Shelter, and the smell of cooking curry. An iron gate clad with razor wire opens into a small ground floor landing. The walls are painted a red-brown from the floor to the midpoint where it becomes a dirty cream until the ceiling. A colour scheme not entirely unlike that of the shelter on West Street two roads away. Against the wall are several large notices; which read:

If you want to book in: Pay your rent, spoil yourself

Let the water flow over you while you wash yourself.

Then get a mattress and a blanket. No refund no

Matter who you are and where you from you wont go

Out or come in after 23h00.

Clear understanding Thank you.

The notice alongside displays the shelters prices: R5 Daytime Single; R10 Night time Single; R35 Room Day and Night. In the corner two open wooden doors reveal a staircase leading up to the first floor and shelter proper. On the door a piece of paper reads, "Ring bell for attention". Pushing the button on the wall, several times until realising the light on the landing is flicking on and off in time to the depressing of the 'bell' switch I give up on the bell and make my way upstairs. As I have found in the other shelters, they are typically arranged in a way that when you arrive at the main landing you cannot see into the shelter's entirety; until you step right up to the gate or over the threshold. There is no gate at the top of these stairs, and I step around a corner onto the shelter floor. It's about as big as one of the sections in the shelter on West Street. Along the left beds are lined with their heads against the walls under large windows. Along the right are the private cubicles or 'rooms' referred to on the price schedule downstairs. The beds offer fair sized and quality mattresses compared to some of the simple foam mattresses in other shelters. In the centre is a single table

with two chairs and two wooden benches around it. Seated on a chair, facing the television mounted on the wall above my head, is a man with a young daughter. I discover he is Ahmed, the manager. I introduce myself and my study; he calls his wife, Surina, who works with him and they talk with me around the table. Besides for a man sleeping on a bed the shelter is otherwise empty. Ahmed and Surina do not own the shelter, they have only been managing it for the past month since they have moved up to Durban from Cape Town. They tell me the owner owns one of the Take-away Cafés across Smith Street. The shelter is working at a present capacity of around 40. It offers a shower and toilets to residents; no meals are supplied, there is a kitchen (which the residents are not allowed to use), but they are welcome to bring in food to eat. Ahmed and his wife don't know exactly how all the residents earn their money, but that a lot of them 'hustle' on the streets. 'Hustle' is a word I would meet later this day and still cannot give a definitive definition for; but from its context it can include anything from begging to illegal activities and vice crimes. This is their first experience with managing a shelter, but they already have strong opinions about the people they work with and about other shelters in the area. When asked about their clientele, Surina replies, "A lot of people who don't know about shelters say that hobo's live there, but that's not true." When asked about other shelters and the Ark, her husband replied, "I would never stay in the Ark. I'd sooner take my child and live in the street... that's the filthiest place in Durban." As we wind down our discussion they invite me to come back during an evening when the residents have returned from their days, in order for me to see how the shelter operates with residents and to chat with the residents themselves. As I leave I ask about any other shelters in the street and am told that there is one next door, attached to the "Dis 'n Dat" tuck shop. I descend the stairs and re-enter the cooking smells on the ground level. "Dis 'n Dat" has similar notices at its entrance and the prices seemed to be in line. The women operating the till in the tuck shop calls the owners wife to speak to me. I introduce myself to her, and am told that this is in fact not a night shelter, but "proper accommodation". It will be interesting to revisit it in the future to see how "proper accommodation" differs from a night shelter. After this exchange I make my way out of the side street and across Smith Street to the "Take-Away" to speak to the shelter owner. She reconfirms much of what Ahmed and Surina have told me. She replies that they did not have much increased business during the festive season and summer is generally emptier than winter because people are happy to sleep outside in the

warmer weather. She is also happy for me to come back and visit the residents on an evening.

Seeing that I'm in the block I decide to revisit West Street, and catch up with Peter, Dave and Harry now that the festive season is dying down. I arrive at the landing, and through the locked gate I see Dave on his bed in the corner sipping a Black Label Quart and rolling a cigarette with boxer tobacco and a page from a telephone book. He sees me at the gate and calls for Charla to open for me. Charla is not too sure who I am, but I introduce myself, and say I have come to speak with Dave and Peter (who I cannot see at the moment). She goes to call him and I make my way over to Dave, shaking his hand and wishing him happy new year I sit on the bare mattress of the opposite bed and ask him how things have been since last we spoke. He says I've put on weight, I reply that I though I had lost since we last met; but he reassures me that it's the good kind. Again he isn't wearing a shirt; the right hand side of his face is quite swollen as if he may have an abscess in his mouth but otherwise he appears much the same as he did a month earlier. As I pull out my cigarettes Peter appears, I offer him my last cigarette and he joins Dave and myself. There are some new faces (to me) in the shelter, but Peter and Dave say it is much of the usual crowd with a few new faces. Ashton isn't there, they say he has been gone for a while and between them they are not sure if he is coming back or if he does indeed have a wife as he told me earlier. Dave is still car guarding at the Church, there is a card board picture of the 'Last Supper' above his bed which I'm sure was not there before as well as a rosary hanging above his bed side table. Lady (Peter's Maltese poodle who I had not met previously) is running around and barking at the two men on the other side of the gate sweeping the landing. Peter says they weren't over full during the festive season, as quite a lot of the residents go away to spend time with families. Peter remarks that people are generally tight fisted in January after increased spending during the festive season. There is a lot of activity in the far end by the TV area, they are busy making more beds out of wooden palettes which have been donated to them. They are also busy tearing down the wooden wall which separates the kitchen from the TV area in order to replace it with a brick wall. In the corner of the TV area is a small plastic Christmas tree adorned with bright decorations. All and all the place feels abuzz today. Peter and Dave agree that, "... the place is slowly coming right". Asking Peter how his fish tank is doing; he has some new, more exotic fish, compared to the

guppies from my first visit. Some of them were purchased by one of the residents. Peter moans though because the angel fish has been killing the smaller fish and has already killed all five of his neons. Later when I got chance to look at his tank it was looking far more cheerful and peaceful despite the presence of the 'killer' angel fish.

Dave says his season at the church had been good, in reply to Peter's 'tighfisted' remark he said the church goers always give him the same amount of money, and in general more over the Christmas period. On his Christmas morning shift alone he earned R520. This brought him and Peter to the story of a mutual acquaintance of theirs who was car guarding at the point yacht club, and earned around one and a half thousand Rand in one shift just before Christmas. He lost his job shortly afterwards, however, when he took a break from his ramp to have a beer at the nearby Chevron pub and one of the customer's cars was stolen. Peter and Dave were both disgusted at how someone could land in such a 'pot of gold and screw it up so stupidly'. What makes it worse they say is that he didn't save any of his money. He used some to buy food for his friends at the shelter and the rest was squandered; drunken or smoked away. "This is the problem with these guys," Peter said, "they don't think about tomorrow, they don't think about saving for the future." Peter finishes his cigarette and gets up to go back to some plumbing job he's busy with in the back. I ask Dave where Harry is, he generally works everyday so he's not in the shelter today. I ask him again about the origins of his friendship with Harry. Although he's been in Durban for six years he's known Harry for around thirty years. "He's my best friend, we go a long way back; he's a boiler maker and I'm a fitter; we worked in Secunda together". I tell Dave I have recently been to Secunda and comment on the massive Chimney stacks and power plants which dominate its one horizon. "We built those," he replied "years ago". He retells how his brother stole his tool box, and how he left construction to become a car guard. He tells me his brother was placed in a Pakistani jail last year to serve a six-year sentence. He was carrying drugs for Nigerians and was caught; "They've caused a lot of damage those Nigerians." At this time a women in her mid-thirties, in a summer dress and barefoot comes across to introduce herself, "I'm Jane but everyone here knows me as Carol". She offers me sleeping place with her, Dave tries to explain I'm just visiting, to which she replies that I should come stay at the shelter, "It's a great place!" Eventually Dave explains that I'm not resident in any other shelter either. Carol has just had a child, who is now seven months old,

and is presently staying with some friends giving Carol her first free time in a while; all her family have emigrated. She says today is the first day in a while that she really feels like she has survived and made it through earlier hardships in her life and her pregnancy. "I never thought I would live or like living in a shelter, but I'm happy here." She says she's known Harry and Dave since she met them in Johannesburg twenty years ago, when she was just fourteen. She has stayed in two other shelters; one of which I visited in off Smith Street; but none are as nice as this one. She says she's comfortable, and happy with 'hustling' to make her money for the shelter. I try to probe what 'hustling' she practises exactly, but she continues saying that today she really feels, for the first time, that she has survived. She goes off to the back of the shelter; and Dave says, "She works the Beach Front area," "Car guarding?" I ask, "No as a masseuse."

Dave starts rolling another cigarette with a page from a telephone book and his bag of boxer tobacco. He tells me that he was listening to East Coast Radio and that some number in the hundreds of children between four and fourteen were abandoned at Addington Hospital during the festive season. He's shocked by this atrocity and wonders what future awaits these children. Before I leave, he again says he's happy where he is, and he wouldn't want to get back into construction. He turned fifty-nine on the Saturday just past, and says he's not sure if he can claim pension at sixty or not; but that whenever he can claim it will be more than enough to pay his shelter expenses.

My final stop for this field trip is the Central City Methodist Mission; which also has a night shelter. I speak to Themba, the ministers assistant; who informs me that the shelter is only open from six in the evening until seven in the morning. He would show me the facility but that today they are short staffed, and he would take me at another time. He could, however, tell me that it only caters for men (with a significant proportion of refugees); the charge per night is R7 and includes a meal; warm water; and TV. Every Sunday a service is held for the residents, and is also open to the public. The Shelter itself is run by a man called Ronnie; whom I can arrange to meet at a later time through Themba.

6.2.3 Off Smith Street 2

A couple of bars and massage parlours line the street on its Playhouse facing side. The car guard outside the cellphone shop tells me there's no night shelter in Albany Road; neither do I find one when I disregard his information and search for it anyway. At the bottom of the road where it meets the Esplanade I ask another car guard, who similarly reports there is no shelter here. She does however tell me of the shelter on Aliwal Street on the next block. She can't tell me anything more about it, except that I can speak to Tony who works in the café on Aliwal.

Arriving at the front of the queue I ask to speak to Tony; "Which one? There's three Tonys working here." Despite not finding the Tony I am directed across the street where another car guard gives me the final directions. The corridor leading off the street is closed with a gate and padlocked. There is no one around who can tell me anything more about this shelter nor help me get access. Feeling despondent about two failed attempts so early in a single field trip I decide to pay a visit to Ahmed and Surina at the shelter off Smith Street; despite the fact it was empty the last occasion I visited it during the day.

Unlike the last week I visited the gate at the entrance is locked today, and there is a man sitting at the table inside reading a book with a closed ledger next to him. I tell him I have come to speak to Ahmed and Surina, and that I had spoken to them previously. He unlocks the gate for me, and allows me to ascend the stairs. The shelter is full today. There is even a body sleeping on the shelf bed at the top of the landing. Unlike the shelter on West Street, however, it is quiet. Makeshift curtains fight back the sunlight. Every resident is asleep; besides one woman I see disappearing into her cubicle. It is the same artificial stillness one experiences on long distant flights when the passengers sleep against the shut out sun and the noise of the aircraft. The sounds of Smith Street penetrate the room, but do not disturb it. It is inappropriate to seek

interviews at this time so I speak briefly to Surina, and tell her I will come back in the future, before descending the stairs again.

The man on gate duty is still at the table. It appears the book he is reading is the Bible. He is dressed in black trousers, and a black vest. His black shoes bare the shine of a recent polish. As he raises himself to open the gate I introduce myself and ask if he will speak to me. His name is Elvin, originally from Port Elizabeth. He found his way to this shelter through a religious organisation called Power Dimension in Fischer Street. They sponsored his initial stay in the shelter, until he was able to find his own means to pay for his accommodation. He's been on the streets, this round for a month, but by what I gather from the course of our conversation he's spent the last several years on and off the streets and in jail. When asked about life at the shelter he tells how three men arrived on the Sunday passed and tried to kill Ahmed. Who they represented and there motive were unclear, but Elvin says it is probably linked to some residents who Ahmed had to throw out because of disruptive behaviour. No one was injured and the police apprehended the men. He reports that the shelter houses about 30 permanent residents, faces which are always there. Further that the majority of residents earn income through car guarding or hustling. As he is about to give an example of 'hustling' employed by one of the couples at the shelter we are disturbed when he has to open the gate for a young boy with a stud in each ear, who is introduced to me as Ahmed's son. This line of conversation having been derailed he picks up a new trail and tells me how he was car guarding on Pine Street when he first arrived. This however came to end after a few weeks when the Nigerian national who had previously worked the area returned from absence and a conflict between the two grew imminent. "Some people are very creative when it comes to finding income," he tells me, "there's a lesbian couple here and they make those sculptures of insects and things out of palm fronds, it's clever and they sell them at the market by the Workshop. It's enough to pay for their accommodation here and food and stuff". When asked about what jobs or paths are open to people who find themselves destitute and on the streets, he tells me that it doesn't really matter what you know nor what experience you have, it's who you know. Breaks and opportunities are mostly created by people who are able to open a door for you or give you a chance. At this stage another resident arrives at the gate. An old white man with a weathered face. I am introduced to Charlie, who is one of the shelter's permanent residents. Asking

about Charlie's doctors appointment Elvin asks, "Did you go to the BP? What did they say?",

"uh?... Yes I went." Comes the reply. "Did they say you need more oil?", "Hell I need a full oil change."

Elvin returns his attention to me; before I'm able to ask Charlie to join our conversation he disappears up the stairs, saying, "time for a bit of read".

As Charlie disappears around the landing, I ask Elvin about his thoughts on the older shelter residents; their options and their goals. He replies that the older guys are just looking for peace. They've arrived here after a long period of surviving on the streets, or because of a problem where they come from, and that they're just looking for a safe and peaceful place to stay. "People don't understand," Elvin says to me, "that before you can find or achieve peace and tranquillity, there is always trouble and difficulty that you have to overcome. Some of these older guys are still going through their trouble before they can get to peace and tranquillity. I'm at a stage where I've found my peace; I've been in prison, I was involved in gangsterism and the Numbers down in PE; things I don't want to go into; but I've seen and done things in my life and I'm lucky I was able to get out and move away from it."

I ask Elvin the same question, but about the younger people in the shelter and on the streets; those in their teens and early twenties. He says the situation of some of the young girls who get involved with prostitution is really bad. "They're mainly runaways, from Cape Town and Joburg. They have their reasons; of the some I know, the one was raped by her father, the other by her brother and his friends. They try to get away from these things and they find themselves on the streets. What are they going to do? They have to survive somehow. But what I try to tell them and what they don't realise is that the deeper you get into these things the harder it becomes to get out or leave eventually. It's the same with the boys who get involved with taking or selling drugs. The longer you're in it the deeper you get and the harder it is to get out." These young girls, he tells me, don't stay in shelters, they're 'taken care of' by the guys they work for.

I ask him if he's stayed in any of the other shelters in Durban. He says he has but that this shelter is the best to him. He tried the shelter on West Street but "there things

going on there” which he doesn’t want to get mixed up in; he’s made a great effort to leave the questionable part of his life behind and try for a new start and he doesn’t need to expose himself to temptation when it can be avoided. He stayed in the Ark, as well, in 1991. He says it was a great place then, he was even involved in the teaching of their life skills programme at one stage. He’s disgusted with the situation now, “If the police were doing their job a lot of those people who run the Ark wouldn’t be there any more”; he says there is also corruption among the police so a lot of things that happen at the Ark just go by ‘unseen’. He tells as well that the black youth pastor of the Ark was arrested for stabbing someone just before New Year’s. Elvin says he’s a reborn Christian and in years past the Ark was a great place. “It was through finding Jesus Christ that I was able to leave gangsterism. Funnily enough it was a Boere Aunty who saved me. This tannie just walked up to me one day and told me to sort my life. You know, I was young and rebellious, it came in one ear and out the other. But something stuck and that’s when it started. Later on I was up in Hilbrow with two of my friends, a bruinou and wit laaitie who had just gotten out of jail. We were bumming for chow outside the shops around Wolmarans Street; and I saw the two most beautiful white women I have ever seen. They were glowing, I was scared when I saw them. They walked straight to my friends and I, and gave each one of us a ten Rand note. They told us to buy food and told us about a shelter nearby; we knew some bad things about this shelter so we told them we’d buy food but not stay there. I can still see them, this beautiful light shining around them; it wasn’t natural; they were glowing. As they walked off, I told my friends we had to go see them again. We went after them and we looked, but they had vanished. I knew, and I told my friends; *those were angels*”.

We speak further about different shelters, and the motives of different shelter owners; from those who run a business and those who actually care about their residents and the situation on Durban’s streets. He’s excited about the new shelter which is going to be opened on Stanger Street opposite the hotel. He’s watching the door today as a favour but would like to get involved with managing the shelter, he would also like to be journalist for the newspaper . “Obvioulsy Ahmed is the first choice because he’s proved himself here. The streets are bad out there, but if we want to really help we have to create an environment in here that is better than the one out there. There is too much nonsense going on in some shelters, they need to be a positive influence in

peoples' lives not a continuation of the negatives on the street. This is part of my vision; if you don't have a vision you're dead." The way Elvin speaks of 'vision' reminds of Trevor Prince and so I speak to him about Trevor and the THF's plan of safe houses. Elvin believes it has a good chance of working, "This Prince sounds like he has a good plan, as long as it doesn't get hijacked by politics, it could make a difference."

As the conversation takes a different meander, Elvin tells me about his girlfriend of six years, a Tamil woman he met through the phone book. While in jail he felt he desperately needed to find a woman on the 'outside' to communicate with. After managing to obtain a phone book he started reading through the 'A's', asking God's guidance to find a coloured woman he could communicate with. He couldn't find any coloured women, and he had too great a sense of urgency to look beyond the 'A's'. Eventually he found a suitable candidate and wrote to her. She replied, thanking him for the letter but saying she was emigrating shortly, but because he sounded like a nice guy she put him in contact with her Tamil friend; and that is how he met his girlfriend of six years now.

I feel positive after the almost two hours I've spent with Elvin, he speaks and carries himself in the manner of one who will affect a positive change in his environment.

6.2.4 The Point

Originally I was not going to include this facility in my sample because it is not a typical shelter (as I was told repeatedly it's not in fact a shelter but a Christian Ministry – hence the pseudonym I have given this facility) and because it is so controversial at present (I would refer the reader to the articles in *The Daily News*, but that this would reveal the facility's identity). For these very reasons, however, I eventually felt I could not exclude it. Everyone I spoke to on the street had an opinion of the Ministry, most were severely critical and defamatory; and the first place people mentioned when they heard of my study was 'The Ministry'. The Ministry has had a great reputation in the past, and an infamous one at present; this is my experience of the Ministry.

The Ministry is a massive complex with its main entrance opening into a road in Durban's Point area. The entrance is both a walkway and a driveway into the complex, a blue bakkie is parked inside as we arrive. A collection of people are milling about on the corner and we later learn they are a mix of 'street people' and people awaiting admittance to the Ministry. Two security guards man the gate, monitoring those who enter and leave. There is a reception office just inside the gate on the left with another security guard at a table and another man; the walls are adorned with pull-out magazine posters of the Springbok rugby squads over the past years. Across the driveway, and elevated, is another office area, with large glass windows overlooking the entrance. I've only had telephonic contact with Pastor John earlier in my research and ask to speak to him. The receptionist then motions us to one of the doormen and instructs him to take us to Pastor John. We are lead further into the complex and are lead into a walled off courtyard area, with potted plants and cane furniture partly lit by a dirty skylight. This is the waiting area outside the main Ministry administration offices. We are told that someone will be with us shortly. Eventually a middle-aged woman dressed all in black, with her hair tightly tied back meets us at the table and introduces herself as, "Pastor Lyn". Pastor John is away today. Once again I introduce our study to her, and she agrees to talk to us. She talks us through the process of admittance to the Ministry; the first phase is with the 55 day office. All new residents in the Ministry are required to attend 55 days of compulsory bible study. This is an absolute criterion and if a potential resident is not prepared to meet this they are not welcome at the Ministry. Once the 55 days have been completed the residents are still required to attend compulsory services, praise and worship sessions etc. These activities take place every night of the week except for Thursdays and Saturdays which are free nights. Unemployed residents with no income stay free of charge; those with jobs, or who collect a pension are required to contribute 40% of their earnings to the ministry. Later we learn and see that those who have jobs also enjoy a separate, and far more inviting, dining area than the rest of the residents do. Further all new residents are registered on entering the Ministry, and details along with work experience and skills training are also captured on the records by Pastor Michael. The Ministry is registered with the Department of Man Power, and when contractors are busy in the Durban area they approach the Ministry, which then acts a facilitator between employers and its residents; not forgetting that 40% of

residents earnings are contributed to the Ministry. When asking Pastor Lyn about the meals prepared for residents she admits,

It's not the greatest, but it's something ... it is tough here if you can survive the Ministry for a week you can pretty much survive anything.

Pastor Lyn then takes us through to the Ministry's Outreach office where, after a brief introduction, she hands us over to Sam who heads up the outreach office. Sam himself was an addict who underwent the Ministry's rehabilitation route years earlier, and has slowly become involved in the ministry, and now heads up the Outreach office. First and foremost Sam tells us, "The Ministry is not a shelter, it is a Christian ministry." He gives a similar introduction to that of Pastor Lyn and then takes us on a tour of the Ministry complex. First are the clinics which are on the ground floor off the driveway from the main entrance. This is where residents who fall ill or those who come to the Ministry ill or injured are cared for. We can see through the door into the one ward, it is a dismal scene. Sam invites us into the ward to have a look, but we decline not feeling comfortable to look on the sick, injured and dying like tourists in a theme park. In the time we are at the Ministry we see no less than two ambulances which have come to attend problems which the Ministry staff cannot handle themselves or to take serious cases away to hospital. On the corridor outside the clinic a woman, with both her legs amputated sits in a wheel chair. She had been there since we arrived, and had not moved when we left later in the afternoon. The Ministry has the feel of a medieval village under siege. The architecture and face brick walls are oppressive and masses of people are just milling about in the corridors and quads. From what I gather some kind of pass must be obtained before residents can leave the premises. The residents range from healthy, and presentable to the terminally ill, mentally impaired and 'down and out'. While Sam explains the clinic to us, one man who bares the evidence of a severe burn accident across half his face his busy up and down the corridors pursuing some activity; on the periphery of our conversation is another man who is clearly mentally impaired; very timid, half muttering to himself, half trying to make verbal contact with those around him. Disturbing images which remain clear long after the field trip is complete. Since our arrival there have been constant announcements made over an unseen intercom system; reminiscent of a train station yet more difficult to make out. From one, however, I make out there is an outing to

the cinema for the children (sponsored by a donor), and it is calling for all who are going to attend to be ready for the transport when it comes. This is when I see the perhaps most haunting image from our field experiences. Amongst these brick-faced walls, oppressive corridors and lost lives are two blonde girls around ten years old (probably sisters), smartly dressed and excited for their outing; no different from girls the same age you might see in a Musgrave restaurant with their parents. Their youth and innocence contrasted startlingly against this environment.

Sam's tour took us to the youth centre which caters for teenage boys and young men. The separation between the male and female adult accommodation is strictly maintained. And sons of single mothers are not allowed to remain in the female quarters when they reach ten years of age. They are expected to sleep in the Men's section or this youth section; neither, in my opinion, are appropriate environments for a boy. The crèche on the far end of the complex was closed due to school holidays, but sported wax crayon drawings and paintings on the walls. After the crèche Sam took us to the drug rehabilitation centre. Entering another building in the Ministry complex we are met by a man reeling out of the building; intoxicated on something. As I'm about to ask Sam if one of the patients has escaped he introduces Pastor Bob to us, "This is Thorin and Sue from the University of Natal," Pastor Bob doesn't say anything but just smiles broadly. He passes by us and falls, catching himself on a chair, he sits down, as if it were an intentional movement. The walls of the corridor and staircase leading up to the Rehabilitation Centre are lined with religious posters and quotes, much like the rest of the Ministry. The Rehabilitation Centre is well lit with large windows and has an airy open floor plan. The centre is separate from the rest of the Ministry and so has its own dining tables and kitchen. There is only one patient organising his belongings at one of the corner beds; the rest of the patients are on an outing to the beach. At a desk in an office area, walled off at waste level, are two men. The one is reading and the other is counting a host of copper coins and placing them in bank bags. Sam introduces us to the man in charge of the rehabilitation programme. He has piercing blue eyes, and an air of clinical efficiency about him.

He relates how addictions and abuses range from alcohol, and mainline drugs to chemicals like Brasso; as well as the serious abuse of substances as innocent as

Grandpa headache powder. The rehabilitation programme runs for several weeks (it only caters for men); and if a patient deviates from the treatment he is kicked out, and must come back at a later stage when he is more serious about rehabilitation and is prepared to exercise more self discipline. Our visit to the rehabilitation centre over, Sam's tour winds back through the corridors and past the quads towards the administration offices where we first met Pastor Lyn. We're hoping he'll introduce us to Pastor Michael to find out more about his database on the Ministry's residents, unfortunately he is also out; and so our visit to the Ministry comes to end.

6.3 Analysis of Qualitative interviews

In the introduction the following questions were asked:

- What are the income earning opportunities open to the city's marginal inhabitants?
- What education levels, or what skills do they possess?
- What are their expected incomes?
- How do the respondents define their life experience?
- What the possible options for escaping poverty open to them?
- What are the structural obstacles which negate these options?
- Are they aware of or a part of any form of social network beyond their nuclear family unit; if so how do these networks operate?
- What are their aspirations?

The answers to these eight questions have been extracted from the thick descriptions above, and will be presented below.

What are the income earning opportunities open to the city's marginal inhabitants?

Ashton:

Ashton is living off his wife who lives and works in Westville. She supports him in the belief he is studying at the University of Natal.

Dave:

Dave car guards at a church in Musgrave, and is looking forward to becoming eligible for pension.

Harry:

Harry car guards on the beachfront and performs odd jobs for acquaintances and strangers alike.

Carol:

Carol works as a masseuse on the beach front and also 'hustles' to get by.

Elvin:

Elvin car guarded until a territory confrontation forced him to leave his ramp. His stay at the shelter was initially sponsored by church group in town.

What education levels, or what skills do they possess?

Ashton:

Ashton claims to have a bachelor's degree in theology.

Dave:

Dave is a fitter and turner by training and previous occupation.

Harry:

Harry is a boiler maker by training and previous occupation.

Carol:

Doesn't appear to have any particular skills training.

Elvin:

Besides involvement and membership in a Numbers gang Elvin possesses no particular skills training.

What are their expected incomes?

Ashton:

Ashton expects to earn a ministers salary when he has completed his studying and training. Although for now he's living off the money his wife has given him to study and live with in Durban. Which is more than ample to cover the costs of shelter accommodation.

Dave:

Dave car guards at the Church on Sundays, and certain weeknights when meetings are held at the church. He does not mention a figure, but it is sufficient to cover his shelter accommodation, food and cigarettes.

Harry:

Harry earns R30 – R35 for a days car guarding. He can make up to R60 if he works late, but the danger of being attacked by street child gangs is not worth the risk. The odd job he is performing when I first meet him brings in R50. He says this R30 a day is enough for his accommodation, food and cigarettes.

Carol:

Carol does not mention an income. She must obviously make enough for the shelter. She has a baby to care for as well; whether or not it is staying with friends for financial reasons isn't made explicit.

Elvin:

Elvin does not appear be engaged in any form of employment at the moment. From what I gather he helps perform duties at the shelter to earn his keep.

How do the respondents define their life experience?

Ashton:

Ashton maintains he is in control of his life; choosing to stay in a shelter so that he can use the money his wife gives him for other things.

Dave:

Dave says he's happy where he is. When asked whether he'd go back to construction if he had the chance, he says he wouldn't. He's too old for it now; he's happy to 'park off'. He helped build the shelter, he's the longest resident and enjoys the friendship and support the shelter offers.

Harry:

Although Harry made no explicit comment on his position, his manner seems more proactive and purposeful in comparison to Dave's happy resignation.

Carol:

Carol appears to have recently overcome great difficulty and uncertainty in her life. She was constantly mentioning, how for the first time in her life she feels that she has *survived*. "*I never thought I would live, or like living in a shelter, but I'm happy here*".

Elvin:

Elvin seems to have given much philosophical thought and evaluation over his life and experiences. He wants a better life for himself, but he realises these things take time and dedication. He's thankful he's been able to escape from his past of gangsterism and an unsavoury life style.

I'm at a stage where I've found my peace; I've been in prison; I was involved in gangsterism and the Numbers down in PE. Things I don't want to go into; but I've seen and done things in my life and I'm lucky I was able to get out and move away from it.

He has a realistic yet positive outlook on his future prospects.

What the possible options for escaping poverty open to them?

Ashton:

Ashton has the option of returning to his wife, or completing his studies and earning his own living; “*She ’ll take me back of course*”.

Dave:

There do not seem to be too many options, besides car guarding, available to Dave to better his life. He does not appear to want any either.

Harry:

There do not seem to be many options available to Harry either. He says the offer of a week long (for example) work contract comes along occasionally; but these only offer pay at the end of the work. This is not a viable option for people in Harry’s position who do not have the financial reserves to support themselves for several days until they get paid.

Carol:

Despite her new found positive view of her life; the options for escaping poverty open to a single mother living in a shelter seem minimal to non-existent.

Elvin:

Elvin maintains that getting a good job or accessing escape avenues have very little to do with the skills one possesses, but rather who one knows. He believes it is mainly through social links and connections that doors can be opened for people in his position.

What are the structural obstacles which negate these options?

Ashton:

Due to his is ability to return to his wife this does not apply to Ashton.

Dave:

Dave's main obstacle is that he feels he is now too old to return to the occupation of his training.

Harry:

Although Harry would be willing to take a contract job he does not have the financial reserves to support himself through the days until payday.

Carol:

The most obvious obstacles to Carol are her lack of any skills training, and her position as a single mother.

Elvin:

Elvin has no formal skills training, but he does have a prison record; both of which will not make him overly attractive to an employer.

Are they aware of or a part of any form of social network beyond their nuclear family unit; if so how do these networks operate?

Ashton:

Ashton is able to return to his wife, which probably makes him less reliant on social networks on the street; although he made no explicit comment on the subject.

Dave:

Dave mentions strong friendship and reciprocal networks within the shelter. He mentions the specific example of residents sharing food with other residents, who for whatever reason, are unable to afford to buy food or a meal for themselves. The favour is returned when the recipient is able to reciprocate.

Harry:

Harry mentions the same example as Dave above, and is in fact one of Dave's oldest friends and a key member in Dave's friendship and reciprocal network; as Dave is for him too.

Carol:

Carol is also a member of Dave and Harry's network, she has known them for years. All her family have emigrated; although close friends are currently watching her new baby, giving her a few days break from single motherhood.

Elvin:

Elvin has a girlfriend of six years which I gather is an important relationship for him. His involvement with a church was responsible for his initial sponsorship in the shelter; and he enjoys a reciprocal relationship with the managers – sharing their tasks and responsibilities in return for the occasions when he cannot pay them with money.

What are their aspirations?Ashton:

Ashton wants to finish his theological studies and minister for the church.

Dave:

Dave is waiting to become eligible for pension so he can stop car guarding and just enjoy his older years.

Harry:

It is not clear what Harry's aspirations are. He is getting by from day to day, and that seems as if it is enough.

Carol:

It is not clear what Carol's aspirations are.

Elvin:

Elvin is very positive about his life and perhaps that is why he has more apparent aspirations than the rest. He would like to be a journalist one day, despite having no formal training; he would also like to manage a shelter when the owner opens another one, although he knows the current manager has preference because he's already proven himself. He also aspires to continuing his relationship with his girlfriend; and making a life with her when he is in a position to do so.

VII. Discussion

In the introduction three salient features of poverty were quoted from Hagenaaers (1986:37) these were;

- 1) *being poor is lacking some basic necessities;*
- 2) *being poor is having less than others in your society; and*
- 3) *being poor is feeling you don't have enough to get along.*

Although it is clear from the study that the first two features are evident from the quantitative and qualitative data, the third feature is not so obvious. In fact it in the cases of Carol, Dave, Harry and Elvin it is not applicable. They *are* getting along; each in their own way. Dave is happy to car-guard until he is eligible for pension and then live off that. He says he's happy in the shelter, he helped build it and he has a firm friendship and support network there. Carol is a part of this network, and in her own words, "For the first time today I feel I'm going to make it, I have survived". Elvin too is getting along, and he has come from a past of trouble and difficulties. He's been seeing the same women for six years, he aspires to get a job and improve himself; he would like to be a journalist. They don't have much, but people find a way to get along, to survive. As Elvin said, "***Some people are very creative when it comes to finding income***". They car-guard, odd job and 'hustle', to make enough to ensure immediate survival. This doesn't make the situation any less abhorrent, however. Opportunities need to be made available that allow people to better themselves, and create more direction in their life than merely dealing with day to day survival. This is why the idea of the 'safe house' needs to be further explored, and piloted. If the destitute and homeless population are afforded this resource, day-to-day survival no longer has to be the focus of activities. As Trevor Prince suggests they have no reason to 'hustle' now, if crime declines it benefits everyone in our society. Further if every

resident is required to be involved in the renovation and maintenance of these buildings they will have something to show for their time, as well as a sense of accomplishment. It was obvious how proud Dave was when he first showed me around his shelter; pointing out all the work he was responsible for. Giving people a sense of their own worth, alleviation of poverty of the 'self' should be an important focus and desired outcome in any poverty research or implementation. 'Safe house'-type initiatives have the potential to achieve this end.

The poor are not a separate subculture (Gilbert and Gugler, 1992:118), but are a part of our culture; and despite material difference "act much like everyone else".

... they (the poor) have the aspirations of the bourgeoisie, the perseverance of the pioneers, and the values of the patriots. What they do not have is the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations.

(Perlman cited in Gilbert and Gugler, 1992:118)

To fulfil their aspirations, the poor need to voice them. The poor need a voice, and they need to know someone is listening. Whether this voice is given through public meetings outside City Hall, as it was in January 2002; or an organisation like the THF kindles and maintains ongoing dialogue with representatives and members of this population; it is a crucial aspect of understanding and alleviating poverty. It is easy to be fatalistic when you are a forsaken member of a society. The City and our society have to make visible attempts to engage with the problem of destitution and homelessness. To capture the attention and imagination of poor and non-poor alike. If a better tomorrow can be envisioned, it has already started getting better.

VII. Recommendations and Conclusions

7.2 Shelters

8.2.1 List

A definitive list must be compiled of every shelter in the Central Durban area; making these facilities more accessible to researchers and especially interventionists. Recording such aspects as price; services; capacity and address. This list must also be maintained constantly to keep up with constant opening and closing down of shelters. This list will be valuable to future research of this nature as well as any initiative which would require the mobilisation of the destitute and homeless in Durban.

8.2.1 Evaluation

Although, as Trevor Prince mentioned, some shelters run at a high cash profit, while paying minimal overheads and offering few to no services; it would be unwise to demonise all shelters, and cast them aside in favour of 'safe houses'. To use the example of the 'West Street' Shelter; there was strong almost 'family' atmosphere between the locals. The place was abuzz with activity or renovations, and the residents were proud of it, "*It's slowly coming right*" they told me as they pointed out the renovations. It was an environment I felt comfortable in; and were it to be removed those 50 to 70 peoples lives would be much, much poorer for it. As soon as I say this, though, there are other shelters that need to be carefully evaluated, and removed in favour of 'safe houses', or more shelters like the one in West Street. The danger is that some of these unsavoury buildings are the best options open to some people at this time. If you can't offer them a better alternative it may not be wise to 'save' them from this corruption just yet. In short a better alternative has to be made available soon.

7.3 Ongoing Survey

Another survey must be carried out in 2003. The same form could be used but it would require better training of interviewers to avoid loss of potential data due to complete lack of standardisation. Or the form and questions could be reorganised and presented in such away as to avoid the problems encountered with this survey.

This survey would allow us to compare the population over these two years. The survey should be repeated every year; a longitudinal data base would shed more light on the dynamics of this population. It would also answer questions which arose in this study; like is the massive frequency of the first year population due to a recent influx of destitute and homeless, or is this a common phenomenon, perhaps pointing to a high level of people escaping the streets in their first year?

7.4 Involvement of Business and the Community

7.4.1 Food

There is a massive resource of food in the form of 'left overs' and 'waste' from hotels and restaurants. Both Trevor Prince and restaurateurs I have spoken to told me how much food went to waste from the kitchens, especially bread. If this could be organised and mobilised it could form a great resource. This is just one example; but if restaurants from Umhlanga through to the Bluff could participate in this kind of project there would be a significant amount of food available for feeding schemes, or 'safe houses'. The resource is there, it needs to be mobilised and coordinated. Even if restaurants in different areas participate in rotation. One day and night of the week the restaurants of one area sort their 'waste' and 'leftovers' and have them ready for collection by THF (for examples sake), who then distributes it at specific feeding points, shelters or safe houses'.

7.4.2 Laundry

This may sound like an arbitrary issue, but both the quantitative data, and Trevor Prince's observations from the feeding/medical schemes at city hall identify skin rashes, skin irritations, asthma and chest infections as being a prevalent condition among the destitute and homeless. Dirty, dusty bedding could play a large part in these conditions. If hotels are prepared to get involved in feeding schemes, why not approach different hotels; which have industrial laundry equipment, to wash the blankets and sheets of the shelters. There are enough hotels along the beachfront, that if they all participated, they could rotate the responsibility and thereby the demand on individual hotels would be minimal.

7.4.3 Public Awareness of organisations like the THF

The THF must be advertised. Their campaigns and projects must be given media coverage. As wildlife organisations and other charities host charity art exhibitions, music performances etc; the THF must plan and host similar functions. Alongside schemes and functions for the destitute and homeless the THF must host events for the other end of the spectrum, with a view not just to fund raising but awareness. Let teenagers watch music performances organised by the THF while their grandparents attend an art exhibition organised by the THF. The THF must not just be an organisation that organises feeding schemes for the destitute and homeless, but it must become a movement that involves all spectrums of the community. We've all heard people say, "I really want to help, but I don't know how". Organisations like the THF have the potential to be the vehicles which answer this 'how?'; people must know about it. The wider community must also be exposed to and be made aware of the situation of the destitute and homeless, so that they are no longer non-specific blobs on our experiential landscapes whom we turn a blind eye to when we drive through our city, but real members of our society. Awareness is the first precursor to any action.

Let participating restaurants place a THF sticker alongside the 'Visa' sticker on their windows; let hotels have the THF logo on their brochures. A proud and active community involvement would be a fantastic asset to such an initiative.

Johannesburg and Cape Town circulate *Homeless Talk* and *Big Issue* respectively. These contain news on homelessness and general articles as well. It is of special interest to students in related fields. Durban should perhaps look to initiating a sister publication, to spread news and awareness on homelessness.

7.5 Conclusion

In the course of this study both quantitative and qualitative data have been captured and analysed. The merit of each approach is clear; the quantitative data paints a extensive backdrop against which the individual detail of the qualitative data can be positioned. Each method could stand alone but the two together present more than the sum of their parts. Further each method provides a base from which better informed future studies of the same or alternate method can be launched. As quoted on page one of this study;

On occasion the results of a statistical survey are completely erroneous... because the questions were ill conceived, for lack of sufficiently precise qualitative observations [and vice versa]... some statistical tables can only be really understood if there are studies of individual cases to show the real significance of the combination of variables noted [and vice versa].

(Hauser(ed), 1964:61)

With this in mind the study will reiterate that empirical evidence and its analysis is necessary in poverty studies and policy formulation; but analysts and policy makers need to know what the data mean, and what poverty means to the poor in terms of their own everyday experiences. In this regard qualitative data can be seen as being data enhancers (Lawrence Neuman, 2000:17), allowing aspects of specific cases to be seen more clearly.

This study did not set out to prove or disprove the cultural or environmental perspectives on poverty, nor social exclusion theory, nor any perspectives for that matter. In my fieldwork I did not see any overarching presence of any perspective. Yes, aspects of each were present in each individual I spoke to, but the mix and interplay were all different. Dave presented the most characteristics of one whom textbooks would assign to the 'culture of poverty', in so much that he is passive and resigned to his position but I feel if he were provided with opportunities and access to resources he would respond positively and progress out of poverty without needing to be '*culturally rehabilitated*', which the 'culture' proponents would see a critical and necessary first step. Elvin on the other hand presents none of the characteristics of a 'culture of poverty', he is engaging, bright and has aspirations for his future, yet his poverty and criminal record serve to earmark him for exclusion by the wider, more conventional society. Although he assumes inclusion is difficult for people in his position he does not seem to be a self-excluder. His polished shoes and crisp appearance are evidence of his effort or wish to be accepted by that which he is presently excluded from. A passer by might have easily mistaken him for the researcher and me as the subject. Elvin's case, as opposed to Dave's, therefore, finds better purchase within a social exclusion context. Although it is beyond the purpose of this study it is acknowledged that there are avenues for the different schools of thought to pursue future research in this field, based on such hypotheses.

From the findings that have been presented in this thesis; it is clear that there are potential solutions to the problems that face the destitute and homeless. One of these potential avenues lies in organisations like the THF and the recommendations made above. The resources and the willingness to mobilise and organise these resources exist. To cast our attention back to a quote from Gans (in Wilson, 1987:182) in the **Literature Review's** look at the **Culture versus Environment Debate**,

The arguments between those who think that poverty can best be eliminated by providing jobs and other resources, and those who feel that cultural obstacles and psychological deficiencies must be overcome as well, is ultimately and argument

about social change, about the psychological willingness of people to respond to change.

This study set out to begin to understand poverty in central Durban, to describe it with quantitative data, with the subjective experiences of individuals and to discover if any potential avenues existed, which could improve peoples' quality of life, and even lead them out of poverty. Avenues do exist, but they will require social change, and the psychological willingness, not just of the poor, but of the non-poor as well to respond to this call for action and positive change.

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Media

The Daily News (October 29, 2002) (Taking the Ark away from Noah)

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