



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Social discontent and class struggle: A case of KwaZulu-Natal July 2021 socio-political unrest

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November 30, 2023


Declaration

I, Ryan Henry, hereby declare that I have not previously applied to any other university for a degree or examination and that I have properly cited and acknowledged all the sources I have used.

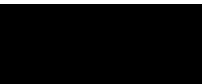
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Abstract

This study explores the underlying causes of the July Unrest-2021 using the theories of scholars such as Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon. It investigates the impact of these causes by looking at the underlying factors contributing to social discord among key players in the July Unrest-2021. The exploration looks at how the state responded to instances of ‘collective rule-breaking’ as an element of lawlessness. The consequences of disregarding class struggle and its influence on social cohesion. Furthermore, the extent to which proficient policing would have served as a deterrent against social unrest. The study found that poverty, crime, inequality, poor service delivery, and racism are apartheid’s legacy and government inefficiencies. In addition, when marginalised groups experience significant grievances, they often form a class, allowing them to express their dissatisfaction through looting, arson, and murder.

The research was conducted through a desktop study that utilised secondary data from multiple data sources, such as Internet scholarly materials, books, and newspapers. Articles and media clips gather information; content analysis analyses the information; and relational analysis investigates the relationships between concepts. The study advocates for governmental entities to pursue more efficacious strategies aimed at improving the socioeconomic disparities and diminishing the prevailing inequality between affluent and disadvantaged segments of society within the context of South Africa. This recommendation is predicated upon the recognition that the persistence of economic deprivation engenders a milieu characterised by heightened susceptibility to incitement and unrest within the societal fabric.

Keywords: *Social discontent / Class struggle / Unrest / South Africa / socioeconomic issues / July 2021 unrest*

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List of Acronyms

ANC	:	African National Congress
COVID-19	:	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CU	:	Civil unrest
CS	:	Class struggle
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
ISIS	:	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JU-2021	:	July Unrest
KwaZulu Natal	:	KZN
SA	:	South Africa
SD	:	Social discontent

Chapter One

Historical background contextualised

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation explores the causes of the July Unrest in 2021 and the underlying factors contributing to social discontent among key players. It explores the impact of these causes through the theories of Marx (1848) and Fanon (1961). The chapter also explores the nuanced interplay of social discontent, class struggle, and civil unrest in the context of KwaZulu-Natal's socio-economic and historic-political situation. According to Doob (2021), deep-seated inequalities, poverty, and joblessness were the dry wood waiting for the spark.

The socio-economic and historical-political situation in KwaZulu-Natal provided fertile ground for such discontent and struggle, which was exacerbated by widespread inequalities, poverty, and unemployment (Jinnah, 2022). While distressing, these factors can act as catalysts for social change by highlighting existing issues and prompting a collective response. The recognition and response to distressing factors can foster a re-evaluation of societal norms and values, ultimately contributing to transformative shifts in social dynamics. This study revolves around the July Unrest-2021, a pivotal moment in KwaZulu-Natal history. This disturbance was not an isolated event; rather, it was an expression of the concepts of class struggle, civil unrest, and ingrained social discontent, which are essential to Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon's theories.

These concepts are pivotal in understanding the roots of civil and social unrest within societies (Mongale, 2021). Social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle not only serve as indicators of inequality, but also drive social change, shaping policies, and social cohesion. Majazi (2023) mentions that South Africa has had a segregationist, oppressive history since the Apartheid regime lost power in 1994. The legacy of this continues to haunt the country 29 years later with an alarming plethora of protests, unemployment, crime, poverty, corruption, and inequality (Bhorat, 2017). The government was unprepared for the July Unrest-2021 events, necessitating the handling of new challenges alongside persistent societal issues. Mongale (2021) attributes the rise in collective rule-breaking during these disturbances to heightened intra-party strife within the African National Congress (ANC) and concomitant changes in class dynamics.

Instigators were blamed for the ensuing violence, diverting attention away from governmental shortcomings in effectively addressing the underlying issues (Africa, 2021; Ramaphosa, 2021). Thus, the prevalence of social discontent, civil unrest and class struggle can further serve as measurements of government ineffectiveness.

This study aims to analyse the civil unrest in South Africa, exploring the complex interaction of socio-political, economic, and historical factors that led to the upheaval (Bekker, 2020). By understanding the causes, societal dynamics, and repercussions of the unrest, this research provides valuable insights for policymakers, social scientists, and researchers (The Economist, 2023). The study further endeavours to offer an in-depth comprehension of the intricacies involved by scrutinising the fundamental reasons, communal dynamics, and influence on various occurrences, societal segments, and geographical areas. According to Larrue (2021), this in-depth understanding allows for the development of well-informed policies and strategies to address similar challenges and promote future social stability. Thus, the research study provides a thorough understanding of the complexities involved by examining specific events, demographic groups, and geographical regions.

1.2 Background

This section presents the background of the study and discusses and contextualises the research problem. The July Unrest-2021 was a violent outbreak of civil uproar that lasted from July 7 to July 19, 2021 (The Presidency, 2021). Vhumbunu (2021) reflected that the unrest began during the “*Free Zuma*” protest and resulted in growing violence in the form of looting (mass theft and destruction of property), arson, and killings. In KwaZulu-Natal alone, the July Unrest-2021 claimed 258 South African lives (Al-Jazeera, 2021). The riots caused over a billion rand in damages and placed nearly 150,000 jobs in peril, resulting in an unexpected decline in the projected national gross domestic product to 2.3% and 2.4% in 2022 and 2023, respectively (Elumalai *et al.*, 2022). Major roadways were blocked, schools and distribution centres were closed, trucks were burned, and railways and maritime services were suspended, causing utter chaos in daily life.

The South African economy is distinctively vulnerable to such disorder; business centres were largely disrupted during the unrest period, as nearly 100 malls, 200 shopping centres, 300 banks,

and 90 pharmacies were closed (IOL, 2023). The South African government's insufficient police numbers and poor socio-economic conditions are assumed to be the causes of the July Unrest-2021's continuation over several days and the intensity of the damages. Furthermore, South Africa has the thirteenth-highest poverty rate in the world, the third-highest crime rate, and the first-highest unemployment and inequality rate in the world (Anon, 2022). Therefore, the July Unrest-2021 was a mass buildup of several problematic conditions finally getting an outlet.

During the Mahikeng/Mafikeng massacre, the violence manifested as looting, vandalism and attacks on foreign groups, while in the July Unrest-2021, the targets were other racial groups. The violence in both cases began in the political realm and escalated drastically (Yende, 2022). Furthermore, Ragolane (2022) believes that, in some cases, socio-economic deprivation and inequality contributed to the movement's popularity, regardless of the protest's original intent. Ani and Uwizeyimana (2022) stated that the culture of mass civil looting and the multiplier effect on the economy are worse than the maladministration of national resources. Ani and Uwizeyimana (2022) further stated that the culture of looting and vandalism with its pronounced ripple effect on the economy, surpasses the detrimental impact of the mismanagement and looting of national resources.

However, it is imperative to qualify the actors involved in this form of mass civil looting. The question is raised as to who is primarily responsible for this looting, property damage and violence: common people or those in positions of authority. By discerning the origins of such behaviour, a more nuanced understanding can be attained. The authors highlight the adverse consequences of this culture of looting on the investment climate, both nationally and internationally, owing to the resultant unsafe environment. This prompts a critical examination of the socio-political dynamics contributing to looting, vandalism and violence as a form of economic exploitation.

The phenomena create fear for national and foreign investment in South Africa due to the unsafe environment caused by civil unrest (Ani and Uwizeyimana, 2022). Duignan *et al.* (2022) conclude that persistent occurrences of social protests in a destination can result in a negative societal image. Although the outcomes of social protests are unpredictable, an analysis of previous protest experiences could inform management and preventive action plans for the same or similar future crises (Ani and Uwizeyimana, 2022). Thus, the unrest further exacerbates the already struggling economy.

In both instances, the police were not prepared and had to call in reinforcements to assist as damages piled up from citizens' collective rule-breaking and civil disorder (Ani and Uwizeyimana, 2022). Such violent and criminal protester behaviour was not the primary goal of the anti-Supra protest. Still, it did provide an exceptional opportunity for the unemployed and poor protesters to gather as many resources as possible from shop owners to sustain their lives. On the other hand, Uwizeyimana (2018) stated that many of the average and working-class members of society were worried over the growing trend of the protest, especially as many were losing access to food, electricity, petrol, etc.

1.3 Problem statement

South Africa faced the worst period of civil unrest since the dissolution of the apartheid system (Elumalai *et al.*, 2022). The civil unrest exposed disaffection from an existential civil unrest that is rooted in the empty, failed promises of the ANC to bridge the gaping cleft between the affluent and poverty-stricken citizens, heightening the civil unrest. According to Mongale (2021), the unfulfilled promises of the ANC government, together with the growing unemployment rate, specifically among black South Africans, gave way to the roaring uprising of a discontented societal group that clenched onto the opportunity to display their resentment soon after the arrest of former President Jacob Zuma. Noting this historical build-up to the arrest, one must delve further into the socio-political climate of South Africa, which sought to use his arrest as a backboard for their disenchanting grievances. Bessinger (2022) stated that it is important to identify its foundation and supporting factors to be able to recognise and understand the mechanics behind such an uprising, what the chances are of this taking place, and how soon it will be repeated.

In addition, Hoyer *et al.* (2023) expounded that to formulate effective policies and strategies as well as understand the underlying causes of the July Unrest-2021, a thorough understanding of the complex dimensions of social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle is imperative. According to Xaba and Akinola (2023), unresolved societal tensions pose a significant threat to national stability, economic progress, and social cohesion. Moreover, the continued existence of these issues hampers the nation's journey towards true reconciliation after the apartheid era. Addressing these challenges is imperative for fostering a more equitable society, enhancing

governance, and fortifying the foundations of democracy. Hopkins *et al.* (2021) believe that by shedding light on these critical issues, research not only contributes to the academic discourse but also provides practical insights for policymakers, social scientists, and community leaders. Through an in-depth exploration of the underlying factors and its interconnections, this study endeavours to pave the way for evidence-based solutions, ultimately fostering a more harmonious and just South African society.

The need to understand the complex network of variables causing social unrest and class conflict in South Africa, in short, is what motivates this research. It also discerns the underlying reasons behind the ANC's internal discord and meticulously analyses the collective rule-breaking behaviour exhibited during the unrest (Cabane, 2023). By delving into these complexities, this study seeks to provide nuanced insights into the dynamics of civil unrest in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.4 Research objectives

The key research objectives that guide and structure the study under investigation are listed below. By establishing the research objectives precisely, the researcher endeavours to define the scope of inquiry and enable a methodical and deliberate investigation of the current research questions. This serves as the study's compass, directing attention towards specific objectives and outcomes. These objectives, which also serve to direct the research process, improve the overall coherence and efficacy of the study.

Through the pursuit of these research objectives, the study aspires to make meaningful contributions to the existing knowledge in the chosen field of study (Navarro, 2020). The key aims of the study are formulated on the following objectives:

- i) To investigate the factors of social discontent that led to the July 2021 unrest.
- ii) To examine the state's response to acts of collective rule-breaking (lawlessness).
- iii) To ascertain the repercussions of ignoring civil unrest and its impact on social cohesion.
- iv) To determine the extent to which effective policing can deter social unrest in South Africa.

1.5 Research questions

According to Falkenberg *et al.* (2023), research questions lay the foundation for the study by articulating the central questions that steer the research endeavour. The research questions serve as a framework, giving the study's exploration structure and direction. By being formulated, it also seeks to identify specific areas of interest and investigation within the larger study scope. Addressing the research questions can impart knowledge, generate insights, and contribute to the scholarly discourse in the chosen field (Kamenetzky and Hinrichs-Krapels, 2020). In doing so, one can highlight the significance of the investigation and shape the trajectory of the academic inquiry. The research questions are thoughtfully formulated to tackle the central problems being studied, which encourages a methodical and exacting analysis of the topic (Wilkinson and Dokter, 2023).

The following research questions were developed from the research problem:

- i) What factors of discontent among social classes led to the July Unrest-2021?
- ii) Why was the state's response against acts of collective rule-breaking (lawlessness) unable to avert the July Unrest-2021 from erupting?
- iii) What could have been done to weaken the civil unrest and tensions between citizens and the state?
- iv) What was the police's role in deterring social unrest?

1.6 Significance of the study

Studying the civil unrest in South Africa holds immense significance due to its multifaceted impact. By analysing the socio-political climate, the study reveals intricate interactions between social, economic, and political factors, offering crucial insights for policymakers and researchers (Nohrstedt, 2022). Beckett (2022) identifies persistent societal issues such as economic disparities and unfulfilled promises, paving the way for targeted policy reforms. In hindsight, understanding the mechanics behind the unrest equips authorities to implement preventive measures, fostering social stability through early intervention and community engagement.

The study further acts as a catalyst for promoting social justice, generating awareness about marginalised communities' challenges, and encouraging inclusive societal initiatives. The study of civil unrest has global significance, providing valuable lessons for nations facing similar challenges and assisting in the formulation of effective strategies for social and political stability (Kaldor, 2020). Academically, the study offers a rich resource for researchers and students, deepening an understanding of societal movements and political unrest, making it a pivotal area of research and analysis.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Being a desktop study, the following issues may arise bias in sources, deviation of information, and false information (Allen *et al.*, 2023). The bias in sources occurs when scholars push their agenda in an article, and this can lead to the research itself being biased rather than objective. To combat this issue, the study only uses sources that share the same facts and are analysed with relational analysis to ensure the relationships being explored are from multiple sources. Deviation of information occurs when certain articles differ on certain facts about an event; unlike source bias, this can happen due to the timing of the information. Africa News (2022) stated that 300 people died during the unrest, whereas Al-Jazeera (2021) stated that 258 people died during the unrest. Both articles are a year apart. To mitigate this discrepancy, the study uses the latest articles while continuing to compare articles for what is repeatedly confirmed as facts. Lastly, there is false information in which some sources mention things that no other source mentions or confirms (Pilnyand Riles, 2023). To rectify this, the study will focus primarily on the main databases, such as Jstor, Sabinet, and ProQuest, then sources from Google Scholar and other accredited sources, and cross reference to articles on the internet to confirm information, and whatever cannot be confirmed will be left out of this study.

Table 1.1: Definitions

Term	Definition of term
Social discontent	social discontent is a latent feeling of anxiety among citizens concerning the precarious state of society. This feeling consists of a perceived deterioration of five aspects of that society: (i) a loss of confidence in human capabilities, (ii) a loss of ideology, (iii) a loss of political power, (iv) a loss of a sense of community, and (v) increasing socio-economic vulnerability. (CDDG, 2017)
Class struggle	The conflict between different classes in a society resulting from different social or economic positions and reflecting opposed interests (Cambridge, 2024).
Unrest	Disagreements or fighting between different groups of people (Cambridge, 2024).
Civil unrest	Civil unrest is characterised by public disturbances, protests, or demonstrations, often involving violence and defiance of authorities (Kilgo, 2020).
Socio-economic disparities	Socio-economic disparity is multi-faceted, but disparity essentially regresses to disparity among individuals. Disparity has many aspects. Disparity in income through the degree of skills and years of schooling, and disparity in job opportunities, in access to information and health all relate to individuals. (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 2006)
July 2021 unrest	South Africa experienced violent civil unrest, mainly in parts of the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, from 8 July 2021 until it was brought under control around 17 July 2021. The unrest was characterised by social media mobilisation leading to looting, destruction of property and the disruption of economic activity. At the end of that orgy of violence thousands of people were injured, an estimated 354 dead and over R50 billion lost to the economy (Africa, et al., 2021)
Inequality	the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, money, etc. than other people (Cambridge, 2024).
Socio-political unrest	Social and political unrest involve social disturbances that cause public disorder. Manifestations include Riots that are deliberately violent and result in injury and property damage (Wanzala-Silva, 2022).

Poverty	Poverty, the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. Poverty is said to exist when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. In this context, the identification of poor people first requires a determination of what constitutes basic needs (Augustyn, 2024).
Protest	The display or expression of disapproval of something (Augustyn, 2024).
African National Congress	The ANC was a national liberation movement. The African National Congress (ANC) is South Africa's governing party and has been in power since the transition to democracy in April 1994 (Augustyn, 2024).

1.8 Summary

This chapter emphasises the profound impact of the unrest in South Africa in July 2021, which was marked by violence, economic disruptions, and job losses. It articulates the research problem, focusing on socio-economic disparities and unfulfilled promises as root causes that lead to intensified unrest. The chapter sets out the research questions and objectives, aiming to investigate the July Unrest-2021 and evaluate the state's and policing's role in addressing social unrest. The study's objectives, problem statement, and significance are briefly highlighted, paving the way for subsequent chapters. The next chapter presents the gathered literature, laying the groundwork for the investigation.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In an article by Vhumbunu (2021), the July Unrest-2021 was regarded as a phenomenon unlike anything previously witnessed in democratic South Africa; however, the factors propelling the event were nothing new to the citizens of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. The systematic literature review delves into the intricate interplay between social discontent, civil unrest, and socio-political unrest in the specific context of the July Unrest-2021 (Mongale, 2022), therefore the primary focus of this study was based on the events that occurred in July 2021, as well as historical data. Using relevant theoretical frameworks, this review aims to unearth the underlying causes and manifestations of social discontent and civil unrest in this region, as well as shed light on the complexities of socio-political dynamics in South Africa.

Check (2023) stated that the factors in the broader context of the July Unrest-2021 were primarily linked to civil unrest, social discontent, class struggle and socio-political unrest. These elements are, in some ways, part of a larger framework of dysfunction that has been simmering in the background of South Africa for decades. The following review of the literature identifies each author's contribution to the study based on the concepts addressed with the July Unrest-2021. The authors will also be contrasted with one another based on similarities, arguments, and accuracy evaluation, and linked by the study as a point of connection to other authors' work (Mohamed *et al.*, 2021). Thus, this chapter conducts a review of the literature of sources related to the phenomenon, with this study as the mediator.

2.2 Conceptualising the July Unrest of 2021

The July Unrest-2021 socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal served as a stark reminder of the complexities inherent in contemporary societies, where social discontent and civil unrest can escalate into large-scale public disturbances (StatsSA, 2021b). Policymakers and community leaders should take immediate action to understand the underlying dynamics and causes of these

events, as it will have significant implications for our understanding of social movements, economic inequality, and political tensions in the region.

Bhorat *et al.* (2017) cited the prevalence of these socio-economic and political factors as a breeding ground for civil unrest and this was prevalent in the outbreak of the July Unrest-2021 riots in South Africa. Consequently, the government was not prepared for the eruption of riots of such magnitude and, thus, deployed more than 20,000 military personnel to assist the already overly stretched South African Police Services (SAPS) (Al Jazeera, 2021). As a result of the July Unrest-2021 riots, businesses that were responsible for employing foreigners were destroyed, and many small, medium, and micro enterprises, businesses did not have insurance, which subsequently led to the closure of such businesses (Elumalai *et al.*, 2022).

Social discontent, class struggle and unrest form the base of the July Unrest-2021, however the view is limited. Thus, the significance of the event will be divided into 4 categories of discussion namely, socio-economic dynamics, lack of governance, the context of COVID-19, and the arrest of Jacob Zuma in order to evaluate the July Unrest-2021 symptom by symptom.

2.2.1 Factors of discontent among social classes that led to the July Unrest 2021

Visagie *et al.* (2021) assert that a tumultuous eruption of social unrest lays bare the simmering discontent among its social classes. This dissertation delves into the multifaceted factors that contributed to the discontent, providing a comprehensive examination of the socioeconomic, historical, and political dimensions unique to the regions. Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Marx's class struggle and Fanon's insights into oppression, the study aims to unravel the complex web of inequalities, poverty, and unemployment that served as the catalysts for the July Unrest-2021. By scrutinising the interconnected dynamics of class struggle and social discontent, this research endeavours to illuminate the root causes of civil unrest, offering insights into the broader mechanisms that drive societal upheaval (Accord, 2021). The July Unrest-2021 is not merely a historical event but a critical juncture for understanding the intricate fabric of discontent within KwaZulu-Natal's social classes.

2.2.2 On social discontent

According to Nagel (1974) and Smith (2020), political discontent and its consequences, which include protests, violence, instability, and revolution, are dependent not only on the level of economic well-being but also on the distribution of wealth. Müller (2021) extrapolates that the existence of high-income inequality leads to the radicalisation of the proletariat, enhances class polarisation, and reduces the tolerance of the bourgeoisie for groups with low income to actively participate in political and decision-making processes. It is important to consider the role of political institutions in mediating the effects of economic inequality. The radicalising effects of high-income inequality can be lessened, as Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) contend, by inclusive political institutions that permit widespread participation. These can provide channels for peaceful political expression and ensure that economic gains are more equitably distributed. Polacko *et al.* (2021) agree that extractive political institutions that concentrate power in the hands of a few can exacerbate class polarisation and limit low-income groups' political participation. This dynamic has the potential to exacerbate economic disparities and fuel political unrest. As a result, addressing income inequality necessitates both economic interventions and political reforms that promote inclusivity and broad-based participation.

In the case of social discontent, there is no debate but rather a discussion of the factors that lead to social discontent and how these factors create social discontent. These challenges are made worse by the widening economic divide between the rich and the poor, high unemployment rates, factionalism within the ANC, and the emergence of stereotyped Zulu nationalism and racial tensions within the South African context. According to Enaifoghe *et al.* (2023), social discontent in South Africa can be attributed to several human insecurities, including the worsening of poverty, shortages of food and fuel, effects on the health sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, fatalities, and rising unemployment.

2.2.3 The complexities of class struggle

Heydebrand (2001) criticises Marx and Engels (1848), arguing that Marx and Engels (1848) theory overestimates revolutionary change and undermines the role of the state. The autonomous legal institutions and social movements contribute to mediating between pressures for change and the collective accommodation of the status quo due to the reliance on the Hegelian dialectic

contradiction. This understanding reinforces that class, while economically based, is not as simple as monetary value. Heydebrand (2001), argues that resistance to change by social classes invested in and interested in the status quo is the most proximate cause of class conflict and the possibility for social revolution. It is crucial to emphasise that those in privileged positions who are reluctant to reduce socioeconomic inequality are not likely to stand by and do nothing when a revolution directly threatens the status quo within the societal-economic framework.

Consequently, these individuals are inclined to participate in negotiation processes aimed at ameliorating societal grievances and fostering consensus among varied social classes. This strategic engagement serves as a mechanism to uphold their current power dynamics and societal standing (Heydebrand, 2001). In other words, the rich see the unrest as a warning sign of revolution and, therefore, attempt to reach a consensus with those forming the revolution. However, Heydebrand (2001) does acknowledge that in recent times, Marxist's predictions about capitalism's downfall may have come true due to the one-sidedness of the current economy, in which the gap between opposing classes increases beyond mediation.

Weber (1968) disagrees with Marx and Engels (1848) on what constitutes a class. The significant difference is that Weber (1968) argues that class is only one form of stratification, with the other dimensions being status and party. However, Weber (1968) identifies four main classes, as opposed to Marx and Engel's (1848) two classes. These classes are the manual working class, the petty bourgeoisie, the property-less white-collar workers, and the dominant entrepreneurial and propertied groups. Weber argues that class is distinct from status. Weber (1968) believes factors apart from ownership and non-ownership of property can influence the formation of classes. Furthermore, Weber (1968) sees no evidence to support the polarisation of classes, which Marx and Engels (1848) see as an essential feature of the class structure.

Another difference is that, unlike Marx and Engels (1848), Weber (1968) does not subscribe to the view that a proletarian revolution is inevitable and that workers will express class dissatisfaction in less dramatic ways. For Weber (1968), social groups and classes are in the sphere of power and are connected to the distribution of power. Given that there are various ways that power can be exercised, it is not possible to reduce the organisation of all these groups to a single dimension or factor, such as ownership or non-ownership of the means of production. Rather, for Weber (1968), there is a pluralism associated with the class structure in that people attempt to achieve ends using various means; each of these may create a grouping such as a class,

status group, or party. However, Marx and Engels (1848) and Weber (1968) both believe in economic relations as perpetuating class and power; Weber (1968) simply expands Marx and Engels' notion of class and adds party and status to this equation. These degrees of class affect the revolution Marx (1848) expects, but it makes it more realistic because there are various class formations within classes due to conflicting sub-interests.

However, Marx (1848) oversimplifies the formation of revolution based on class struggle; another critique would be that his class struggle is somewhat outdated. This flaw stems from the time in which Marx wrote, and ultimately, revolution is a rather straightforward process. Thus, the study seeks to draw from Marx as a guideline rather than a blueprint. Marx describes the core of the July Unrest-2021 as the rich and poor's conflict essentially manifesting physically. Furthermore, the study path is separate from Marx because this study seeks to uncover the root problem in terms of conflict, not revolution. In other words, the study sees Marx's (1848) value in terms of inequality resulting in conflict but shuns the notion of a revolution and adds other underlying factors that Marx's class struggle was not plagued with, such as government instability, ethnic and racial divides, Apartheid's ghost, and vast unemployment. In addition, institutions such as trade unions, policing, other institutions, etc. The authors mentioned above, while influential, only add to the factors missing in Marx's theory. Ultimately, Marx's theory is the perfect lens when further adding the other authors. Thus, Marx's theory becomes the guiding one in examining the July Unrest-2021 in South Africa.

Finally, CDDG (2016) states that social discontent is related less to people's situations and more to society. In addition, the feeling of anxiety among citizens is related to the precarious state of society. This point is in the background of both the civil unrest and social discontent; it reflects the comparative nature of society, in which one is defined by another, whether status, class, finances, or property. A house looks great when compared to a shack but fails in comparison to a mansion. Thus, from this understanding, CDDG (2016) is referring not just to the individual's comparison but to the group's comparison. In other words, this comparison is not just between a rich man and a poor man, but like Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998) state, collective identity forms out of common grievances or situations, and these groups are easily mobilised through unity in their aligned interests. As discussed above, class does not have to be economic. These classes can form with simply an interest and/or an antagonism, such as poor service delivery. Combined with an opportunity to oppose the state, receive retribution, and avoid consequence,

the opportunity Thus, collective identity united by deprivation or injustice, is rapidly mobilised when given the opportunity to do so.

2.2.4 Social unrest vs civil unrest

Vorster (2023) sheds light on the subject that civil unrest, or civil disturbance, encompasses a spectrum of activities ranging from demonstrations and group protests to disruption of public order and violence. According to Binder (2024), civil disobedience can devolve into civil unrest because of a triggering event that releases underlying currents of resentment and inequity in society. Richardson (2020) concludes that civil unrest is often attributed to an interplay between social, political, economic, and environmental issues. Binder (2024) further reiterated that civil unrest includes racial and ethnic tensions, food scarcity and insecurity, price increases, climate shocks such as drought, and economic and demographic shocks. Hartley *et al.* (2021) reported that roughly 37% of South Africans surveyed expressed fear about the future, 21% expressed despair, and only 36% expressed hope. As depicted in the graph below (Table 2.2), many respondents in KwaZulu-Natal (64%) and Gauteng (76%), believed that the government's response to the unrest and looting was either too slow or ineffective (Hartley *et al.*, 2021).

The July Unrest-2021 initially appeared as a manifestation of civil unrest, a phenomenon that had become somewhat commonplace and less impactful in the eyes of the South African populace (Chenzi, 2021). However, President Cyril Ramaphosa attributed the escalation of the unrest to what he termed "*an invisible third hand.*" This description, articulated by the President on Friday, July 16, 2021, suggests a shift from civil unrest to a more complex state of social unrest (The Presidency, 2021).

The events of the past week were nothing less than a deliberate, coordinated, and well-planned attack on our democracy... intended to cripple the economy, cause social instability, and severely weaken—or even dislodge—the democratic state. Using the pretext of a political grievance, those behind these acts have sought to provoke a popular insurrection. The chaos was used as a smokescreen to carry out acts of economic sabotage.

The orchestrated anarchy implied that incidents like the July Unrest-2021 are synonymous with social unrest, which is the disruption of public order, and other actors or bystanders may have

been drawn into the frenzy by the crowd's contagious emotions, moods, or behaviours (Chenzi, 2021). Newburn (2021) refers to acts of civil disorder as occurring when social unrest turns violent.

Social unrest, as recognised by Earl *et al.* (2022), is typically initiated by individuals or groups expressing a grievance and working to resolve it in the open. Groups of people may mobilise with or without escalation into violence. Group cohesion is more effective among individuals with similar identities or who have common sentiments that bring them together across social strata, such as class or race. Jetten *et al.* (2020) describe social unrest as a crisis, such as perceived injustice, inequality, or fear, that may generate group cohesion and unleash the potential for social disturbances. In this context, group dynamics can override individual autonomy of thought and even intellect. Individuals can more easily engage in actions contrary to ordinary norms and values when drawn into the collective.

Table 2.1: Social unrest vs civil unrest

Aspect	Social unrest	Civil unrest
Definition	General dissatisfaction or discontent within a society, often related to economic, political, or social issues (Visagie <i>et al.</i> , 2021).	Civil unrest is characterised by public disturbances, protests, or demonstrations, often involving violence and defiance of authorities (Kilgo, 2020).
Scope	It is broader and encompasses various forms of protest, dissent, and collective dissatisfaction (Wanzala-Silva, 2022).	More specific and involves organised public disturbances, often resulting in clashes with law enforcement or government forces (Seattle, 2018).
Participants	Can include a wide range of individuals, groups, or communities expressing grievances or dissent	Typically, it involves organised groups or community mobilisation against a specific issue or government

	(Wanzala-Silva, 2022).	action, often with defined goals (Kilgo, 2020).
Objectives	Protest against systemic issues, policies, or perceived injustices, aiming for social change or awareness (Wanzala-Silva, 2022).	Often seeks to challenge authority, protest specific events or policies, or demand political or societal reforms (Kilgo, 2020).
Methods	May involve peaceful demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, or online activism, with a focus on raising awareness and mobilising public opinion (Seattle, 2018).	Can include protests, riots, strikes, civil disobedience, or acts of violence aimed at disrupting the status quo or pressuring authorities (Clover, 2019).
Response	Government response may vary, ranging from dialogue and reform to suppression and crackdown, depending on the nature and scale of unrest (Wanzala-Silva, 2023).	Governments often respond with law enforcement measures, including arrests, curfews, or the deployment of security forces, to restore order (Goldstein, 2020).
Examples	Public protests, online activism, labour strikes, peaceful demonstrations, and advocacy campaigns (Wanzala-Silva, 2022).	Riots, violent protests, clashes with law enforcement, acts of civil disobedience, and organised rebellion against authorities (Seattle, 2018).

2.3 Socio-economic dynamics

Socio-economic dynamics in a community encompass a multitude of interconnected factors that shape the overall well-being and interactions of its members. One of the significant factors is unemployment, which presents challenges for individuals in attaining sustainable employment, resulting in economic hardships and negative societal ramifications. Inequality further exacerbates disparities in wealth, access to opportunities, and quality of life among different segments of the population (OECD, 2015). The lack of adequate service delivery compounds these challenges, affecting essential amenities such as healthcare,

education, and infrastructure, disproportionately impacting marginalised communities (Du, Zhang & Mora, 2022). Additionally, racial tension adds a layer of complexity, reflecting historical and systemic disparities that persist in social, economic, and political spheres, contributing to an environment where prejudices can fuel social unrest.

These socio-economic dynamics are interconnected and create a complex web of challenges that require comprehensive and equitable solutions. Prince et al. (2023) asserts that addressing unemployment, inequality, service delivery issues, and racial tensions necessitates a multi-faceted approach involving policy interventions, community engagement, and initiatives that promote inclusivity and social justice. Recognising the interplay between these factors is crucial for developing strategies that not only alleviate immediate concerns but also foster sustainable and positive socio-economic development within a given society.

2.3.1 Underemployment and unemployment as causes of social unrest

Unemployment and underemployment not only have economic implications but also social consequences. When a significant portion of the population is unemployed or underemployed, it can lead to feelings of frustration, dissatisfaction, and marginalisation. These feelings can, in turn, fuel social unrest as individuals and communities express their discontent and demand change (Mncayi, 2020; Galea and Abdalla, 2020).

High levels of unemployment or underemployment indicate the struggle of individuals to secure suitable work, forcing some to settle for part-time employment when they seek full-time opportunities (Mncayi, 2020). Such situations frequently cause widespread annoyance and discontent among the workforces. The seminal work by Galea and Abdalla (2020) explores in depth the complex and multifaceted effects of unemployment and underemployment and sheds light on the complex interactions between economic hardship, social injustice, and civil unrest. There is an urgent need for targeted policy interventions and societal reforms to address these challenges and promote social cohesion and economic stability (Monteil *et al.*, 2020).

Table 2.2 Underemployment and unemployment

Details	Underemployment	Unemployment
Economic Precarity	Underemployment is a situation where individuals are employed but work fewer hours than they would like or are capable of working. Underemployment is often associated with precarious work, where job security is low, and workers may be more susceptible to economic shocks (Pratap et al., 2021)	Unemployment is the state of not having a job despite being able and willing to work. Unemployment is also a source of economic precarity, as it can lead to a lack of income and the inability to meet basic needs (Kalleberg, 2018).
Social inequality and alienation	Being unemployed can lead to feelings of inequity and marginalisation. Individuals may feel alienated from society due to a perceived lack of recognition for their skills and qualifications (Rözer <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	The inability to find work can exacerbate feelings of social exclusion and alienation. A growing disparity between the employed and unemployed can contribute to a shattered social fabric, breeding resentment and discontent (Rözer <i>et al.</i> , 2020).
Political unrest and protest movements	Unemployment-related frustration can show up as support for or involvement in protest movements. Individuals may seek to express their dissatisfaction with perceived injustices and to demand economic reforms (Hamdi and Weipert-Fenner, 2020).	Historically, high unemployment has been associated with political unrest. Unemployed people may feel disenfranchised, giving rise to political movements that question existing structures and demand systemic change (Hamdi and Weipert-Fenner, 2020).
Psychological strain	Stress, anxiety, and a diminished sense of self-worth are among the psychological consequences of	Prolonged periods of unemployment can lead to feelings of despair, depression,

	underemployment. These factors can contribute to a negative mindset, which can lead to broader social discontent (Achdut and Refaeli, 2020).	and a sense of powerlessness. Individuals dealing with the emotional toll of their circumstances may contribute to social unrest (Achdut and Refaeli, 2020).
Impact on crime rates	Individuals who are unemployed and facing financial difficulties may resort to illegal activities as a means of survival. This can contribute to an increase in community crime rates (Fakih <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	High levels of unemployment are frequently associated with an increase in crime rates, as individuals facing economic desperation may resort to illegal means to meet their basic needs (Fakih <i>et al.</i> , 2020).

Chidi *et al.* (2023) stated that underemployment, and unemployment, within social unrest act as catalysts and interact in complex and multifaceted ways within the scope of social injustice and the consequences thereof. Addressing these challenges necessitates comprehensive strategies that include economic reforms, social safety nets, and educational initiatives to improve employability. Failure to address the underlying causes of underemployment and unemployment can have serious consequences for social cohesion, political stability, and community well-being (Tshishonga, 2022).

2.3.2 Economic inequality

Disparities in wealth and income can lead to dissatisfaction, especially when a significant portion of the population struggles financially while a small elite enjoys substantial wealth (Malleon, 2023). According to Woodcock (2019), class is defined by shared interests and socio-economic circumstances. Bell and Bell (2020) deduced that the rich or ruling class is interested in furthering individual wealth, and the working class is interested in acquiring wealth through labour and that the divide between these two groups was seen solely through economic divisions. Thus, to Marx and Engels (1848), the class struggle was quite literally a struggle between classes

for wealth, which would birth the inevitable revolution of the working class to free themselves from poverty by balancing the economic divide with the ruling class and creating economic equality.

Marx and Engels (1848) and Nilsson (2020) interpret class struggle as the economic disparity between the proletariat (the working class) and the bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production). This disparity propels revolution as workers aim to dismantle the exploitative capitalist system, paving the way for a communist society. The formation of classes as a concept and phenomenon is created due to the class inequality within a society (Zulfiqar and Prasad, 2021). Workers make little profit in factories owned by the bourgeoisie, who make large profits off the workers labour, creating an income disparity.

Vujacic (2004), on the other hand, sees Marx's belief in solely economic divides forming class as hollow, as Marx ignores an important gap in solidifying a class: unity. Marx's theory is one-dimensional in that ethnicity is the essential commonality that unites groups, and only when classes are ethnically aligned can the cause of revolution be realised (Bannerji, 2020). According to Vujacic (2004), a cohesive sense of class requires a foundation based on shared historical experiences, linguistic similarities, and ethnic affinities. According to Vujacic (2004), when these elements are combined with economic destitution, it allows for the mobilisation of a specific social class, resulting in cohesion and eventual participation in revolutionary endeavours. Notably, Vujacic's stance aligns with Marx's viewpoint, emphasising the pivotal role of economic deprivation in unifying classes and fomenting revolutionary impulses (Vujacic, 2004). However, what distinguishes Vujacic's (2004) argument is that ethnic divisions carry comparable significance to economic conflicts in shaping the collective identity and mobilisation of a class.

Barrett and Chen (2021) believe the prices, particularly for food and fuel, seem to be particularly important during a period of social conflict. Carvalho *et al.* (2022) asserted that there is no denying that COVID-19 has exposed or exacerbated many pre-existing problems in our society. Therefore, the inability to procure necessities such as food, plumbing, electricity, etc. created a disregard for governing authority. The rise of inflation, which was exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns (economic shutdowns), perpetuated economic deprivation, which ultimately equated to a lower lifestyle for many, inevitably causing social discontent (Briggs *et al.*, 2021).

2.3.3 Service delivery

According to Keller (2021), poor service delivery deprives people of dignity and basic human rights, such as access to water, sanitation, housing, electricity and refuse removal. Problems with service delivery are not only a question of convenience but also human rights and dignity. The government has a fundamental commitment to ensuring the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights for all persons within available means. In addition, the government must respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of the people to protest peacefully and to express collective opinions freely. Among the root reasons for issues with service delivery in South Africa are:

- i) Mismanagement of public funds, corruption, lack of accountability on the part of unscrupulous officials, a lack of prioritisation by the government and inadequate budget allocation for basic services (Shava and Mazenda, 2021).
- ii) Increased demand for services because of population growth, urbanisation, and migration (Balie and Horn, 2021).
- iii) A history of geographic segregation and unequal development, infrastructure and resources are distributed unevenly across the country (Magidimisha and Chipungu, 2019).
- iv) The deterioration of existing infrastructure because of neglect and vandalism (Mazele and Amoah, 2022).

Since the era of a new democracy, South Africa has faced major service delivery problems that have led to widespread dissatisfaction, frustration, and anger among the citizens (Ngcamu, 2019). Citizens often resort to protests to voice vent grievances and demand better service delivery (Mamokhere, 2019). However, these protests are not always peaceful and can end in violence, property destruction, and disruption of traffic and economic activity. Furthermore, these protests do not appear to be having much of an impact on improving service delivery because the administration has failed to respond effectively and address the core causes of the problems.

2.3.4 Poverty: A catalyst for dissatisfaction and social unrest

In a study by Adeyeye *et al.* (2023), it was found that the connection between widespread poverty and the lack of basic necessities, including things like food, clean water, education, and

healthcare, is a well-known catalyst for social unrest. Mamokhere (2019) explores the reasons why communities dealing with the challenges of poverty frequently see increased dissatisfaction and frustration among their members. The literature emphasises that denying people any basic needs not only causes short-term economic hardships but also has long-term social and political repercussions, which frequently manifest as civil unrest. Researchers have looked closely at this phenomenon (Di Baldassare *et al.*, 2019; Brown and James, 2020), emphasising how it contributes to social injustices, undermines institutional trust, and prolongs cycles of poverty and unhappiness. To advance social justice and stability, which eventually reduce the likelihood of social unrest, it is crucial to address these core causes in their entirety, as numerous studies have shown (Taquette and Monteiro, 2019).

2.3.5 Housing issues

According to Marutlulle (2019), rising housing costs, homelessness, and inadequate housing conditions can contribute to social unrest. Rapid urbanisation can cause a scarcity of affordable housing in urban areas, pushing many people into unofficial settlements or slums with subpar living conditions (Bikis and Pandey, 2022). This can lead to feelings of frustration and anger, especially if the government is perceived as not doing enough to address the issue. Resentment within the community and displacement are further consequences of housing issues, where gentrification allows newcomers to renovate or rebuild homes (Baeten *et al.*, 2020). This lack of affordable housing can also exacerbate other social issues, such as poverty and inequality, further fuelling SU (Roland, 2023).

2.4 The lack of governance

The lack of effective governance played a pivotal role in the events surrounding the July 2021 unrest in South Africa. The lack of governance became glaringly evident with the inadequate policing response, allowing the unrest to escalate rapidly. Insufficient resources, training, and leadership within law enforcement contributed to an inability to maintain public order, exacerbating the impact of the social and economic challenges faced by the population.

Corruption further fueled the crisis, diverting resources away from essential services and eroding public trust in the government. The internal factions and instability within the ANC, the ruling

political party, created a power vacuum that hampered decisive decision-making during a critical time. The reference to the "third hand" hinted at potential covert influences or agendas that might have exploited existing governance vulnerabilities, further contributing to the chaos.

Addressing the aftermath of the July 2021 unrest requires not only addressing the immediate socio-economic challenges but also implementing comprehensive governance reforms. Strengthening law enforcement capabilities, combating corruption, and fostering stability within political institutions are crucial steps toward rebuilding public trust and establishing a foundation for sustainable socio-political development. The events of July 2021 underscored the urgency of addressing these underlying issues to prevent future crises and promote the well-being of South Africa's citizens.

2.4.1 Lack of policing

One factor that has a correlational effect is policing. Effective policing is meant to deter crime and maintain order in times of mass unrest and protest. In addition, the police serve as security and law enforcement agents (Terpstra, 2011). Therefore, the police being inefficient reflects the inability within the state and government. Martin and Bradford (2019) state that neighbourhood disadvantage, disorder, social cohesion, and collective efficacy are strongly predictive of perceptions of police. In other words, like Terpstra (2011), they view the police as a state mechanism for order, security, and establishing community-state relations.

Furthermore, Brooks (2019) emphasises the importance of police mediating between government and communities in situations of government failure. However, Brooks (2019) also states that police and government, while extensions of one system, are often not associated directly with the government but rather act on their behalf. Stated differently, the police are not the authors of the laws; rather, they are trained to implement the policies set forth by the government. According to Brooks (2019), there becomes a conflation of public perception between the government and the police, and thus, when the government fails to deliver on a promise or policy, the police, by extension, are viewed as failures by association. The argument by Singh (2022), however, is that police form part of the same integral system. Therefore, corruption from higher-ups in the police department or government creates an entirely corrupt system. Issues such as police corruption are emphasised when the police fail to deliver justice

because of a lack of action in the line of duty. The police's importance in society is crucial for safety, security, and mediating other discontents caused by socio-economic or governmental issues. Thus, citizens losing trust in both the government and the government enforcement mechanism forms a lack of authority for the state itself, further fuelling discontent and enabling protests to spiral into unrest.

2.4.2 Corruption

When corruption is prevalent in government institutions and public services, people can become disillusioned and dissatisfied, believing that the system is rigged against them (Thapa, 2023). Corruption can cause people to feel unfairly treated and to lose faith in government agencies. Because it frequently leads to the misallocation of resources, corruption can also impede economic development and worsen inequality. Furthermore, corruption can lead to a lack of accountability and transparency in government operations, further eroding public trust (Tanny and Al-Hossienie, 2019). Check (2023) supports the theory that when widespread corruption reaches extreme levels, people may demand justice and accountability, which may lead to protests and social discontent.

2.4.3 Political instability

Political unrest, lack of political freedom, and government repression can create social discontent, particularly if citizens feel their voices are not heard or their rights are violated (Hove and Chenzi, 2020). Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998) believe that collective identity is formed when groups form due to aligned situations, perspectives, and experiences. In considering this notion, it appears seemingly insignificant at first glance. However, envision a scenario where a disgruntled faction directs its ire towards the state, subsequently gaining the ability to mobilise while armed. In such an event, the potential for widespread chaos within urban, suburban, or rural areas becomes alarmingly tangible. Even if their activities are thwarted, the aftermath places the burden of restoring order squarely on the state's shoulders. This not only impedes the state's capacity to enhance the lives of its citizens but also fosters greater disdain for the government, as it appears to allow anarchic elements to thrive, further eroding public trust.

This cycle feels somewhat familiar to what happens across third-world countries. Groups like Boko Haram, ISIS, etc. all came together through a collective identity (Amao, 2023). However, these groups were still given an opportune situation to achieve their message; low security, ineffective policing, ammunition, and slow response times allow even a small but determined group to cripple, at the very least, an economy if correctly targeted. Thus, from the understanding of Mongale (2021) and Barret and Chen (2021), social discontent spreads wide and far. Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998) believe that social discontent becomes the basis for forming a collective identity, which in turn can guide any dangerous direction.

2.4.4 Government institutions

According to Franc and Pavlovic (2020), from early social scientists like Marx and Engels (1848) to de Tocqueville (1856), inequality has been discussed or investigated as one of the root causes of radicalization or the first step towards extremism from the twentieth century to the present. The contribution of Buroway and Wright (2000) to the discussion of inequality and radicalization is rooted in the development of sociological Marxism. The authors' critique of Marx's underestimation of the resilience and adaptability of capitalism and its institutions further discusses that Marx downplayed the flexibility of capitalism, which has proven to be more enduring and adaptable than Marx initially predicted. This viewpoint expands on Heydebrand's (2001) critique by emphasising the role of institutions in the functioning and survival of capitalism, which contends that because these institutions are dynamic and always changing, capitalism is more resilient.

The above discussion aligns with Chouhy's (2020) view that institutions are powerful indicators and tools for state harmony, but they must be constantly renovated to be effective. However, they also believe that these institutions must be constantly renovated to be effective. Institutions such as trade unions, legal institutions, policing and service delivery, and community development projects are meant to mediate pressures between rich and poor by aiding the poor to a satisfactory economic level (Thomas and Doerflinger, 2020). Thus, the institutions must be renovated if ineffective, as the duty is to fill the gap between the rich and poor classes, and any failure to do so would result in conflict. Gallagher (2023) views these institutions as the gatekeepers of collective peace while understanding that constant change is necessary to suit the voices of the people or leave the gate unlocked for revolution. However, in the event of

institutional failure before the renovation, Buroway and Wright (2000) and Heydebrand (2001) do not disregard Marx's revolution; they merely note that it is not as simple as poverty equates to revolution. The next chapter presents a discussion on the theoretical framework.

2.5 The context of Covid-19

In Mongale's (2022) findings, the sources of frustration emanate from individuals experiencing deprivation and harsh conditions, exacerbated by the overarching constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth a range of psycho-social challenges, particularly associated with stringent lockdown measures and economic consequences. The imposition of lockdowns, while essential for curbing the spread of the virus, has led to a significant psycho-social impact on individuals and communities. Social isolation, uncertainty about the future, and disruptions to daily routines have contributed to heightened stress, anxiety, and mental health concerns. The loss of employment, often resulting from economic downturns and business closures prompted by the pandemic, has added another layer of distress. Individuals facing job insecurities not only grapple with financial strain but also contend with the psychological toll of a disrupted professional identity and the challenges of reentering a competitive job market.

In the South African context, the halting of the R350 grants further intensified socio-economic struggles. These grants, initiated as a response to the economic hardships brought about by the pandemic, provided financial relief to vulnerable individuals. The abrupt discontinuation of such support exacerbated existing inequalities and left many without a crucial lifeline. The termination of the grants deepened economic hardships, especially for those already on the margins of society, amplifying the psycho-social impact of the pandemic. It underscored the critical importance of sustained socio-economic support mechanisms to address the broader well-being of the population during times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6 Lack of access to healthcare

Burger and Christian (2020) note that poor access to reasonably priced and high-quality healthcare services can cause discontent, particularly in areas with underdeveloped healthcare

systems. This dissatisfaction can be exacerbated by a lack of trained medical professionals, insufficient medical facilities, and a lack of essential medicines and equipment. According to Ewing *et al.* (2020), the rural population is disproportionately affected, as healthcare services are often concentrated in urban areas. This disparity can lead to feelings of neglect and resentment towards the government, particularly if there is a perception that resources are not being allocated equitably.

2.7 The arrest of Jacob Zuma

The arrest of Jacob Zuma, the former president of South Africa, in July 2021, unfolded against the backdrop of widespread social unrest that gripped the nation. Jacob Zuma, a significant political figure within the African National Congress (ANC), faced mounting legal challenges related to corruption allegations during his presidency. His arrest was a pivotal moment, reflecting the country's commitment to addressing corruption at the highest levels of government. Zuma's legal troubles and subsequent incarceration became symbolic of South Africa's efforts to uphold the rule of law and promote accountability within its political leadership.

The arrest of Jacob Zuma also played a role in triggering the social unrest that erupted in July 2021. Zuma's supporters, displeased with what they perceived as a politically motivated legal action against their leader, mobilized in protest. The demonstrations quickly escalated into widespread violence, looting, and destruction of property, particularly in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. The events of July 2021 revealed the deep divisions within the ANC and the broader South African society, with Zuma's arrest acting as a catalyst for existing socio-political tensions.

Zuma's arrest and the subsequent unrest highlighted the complex interplay between political leadership, legal accountability, and social dynamics in South Africa. The events underscored the challenges faced by the nation in navigating a path towards justice and stability while addressing the grievances and frustrations of a diverse and polarized populace.

2.7.1 Socio-political unrest

Social-political unrest is characterised by the general dissatisfaction of a group and the unconventional and sometimes violent ways people tend to show it. An example is rioting, or when a large group of people behave in a violent and uncontrolled way (Wanzala-Silva, 2022). The political aspect of the phenomenon commonly appears as the dissatisfaction becomes aimed at government authority and legitimacy, causing these protests to be aimed at the state, whether as a cry for help or a manifestation of resentment (Wanzala-Silva, 2022). The varying factors that influence or form this dissatisfaction with the government can be illustrated in several perceived failures or grievances.

The factors contributing to social-political unrest are multifaceted and complex and often stem from a combination of socio-economic issues, political dissatisfaction, and perceived failures or grievances against the government. For instance, economic inequality, unemployment, and poverty can fuel feelings of frustration and resentment among the populace. These socio-economic issues often serve as a catalyst for social unrest, as they highlight the perceived failures of the government in addressing the needs of its citizens. Political dissatisfaction, on the other hand, can arise from perceived corruption, a lack of transparency, and the failure of the government to uphold democratic principles. This dissatisfaction can manifest in protests aimed at the state, serving as both a cry for help and a manifestation of resentment. Furthermore, perceived failures or grievances against the government can stem from a variety of sources. These can include policy failures, perceived injustice, or the failure of the government to deliver on its promises. Such grievances can further exacerbate social-political unrest, as they undermine the legitimacy of the government and fuel discontent among the populace.

To summarise, social-political unrest is a complex phenomenon influenced by several factors. Understanding these factors is crucial to addressing the root causes of unrest and developing effective strategies to mitigate its impact.

2.7.2 On civil unrest

The civil unrest is the conflict between different classes. This conflict occurs because each class has its own class interest (Marx and Engels, 1848). When the interests of one class hinder or

oppose the interests or goals of another class, a dialectic mechanism is set in motion. This dialectic process generates tensions between classes, giving rise to what is termed class conflict (Marx and Engels, 1848). In modern-day class conflict, a pattern of economic inequality tends to follow a similar pattern but has varying complexities in the formation of a class.

Wacquant (2019) stated that while class formation has become more complex, it is no longer solely determined by one's economic status or relationship to the means of production. Previously, the class was a much simpler concept in which people were either rich or poor, and wealth determined class. However, class in modern society is far more complicated. A person's class can be determined by various factors, including social status, occupation, and level of education (Usher, 2021). Furthermore, class is not always a fixed state, and people can move up or down the social ladder, depending on social circumstances. Consequently, Lahusen (2020) describes modern class conflicts as multifaceted, involving not just economic disparities but also differences in social status, cultural values, and political power. Despite these complexities, the fundamental principle remains the same: when the interests of one class act as an obstacle to another, civil unrest ensues. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for addressing social inequalities and fostering a more equitable society.

2.8 The South African context: A history of protests

With the number of protests annually increasing from previous years, perhaps the citizens of the country have become desensitised to the plethora of protests. Violent protests in recent years like *#FeesMustFall* (Mavunga, 2019), the Marikana massacre (De Kadt *et al.*, 2020) and Mafikeng/Mahikeng, (Swinney, 2023), are rather distant in their occurrence; however, the non-violent protests occurrence is consistent. In 2018, it was estimated that South Africa experiences over 1,500 protests every year, of which the vast majority are non-violent (SAHRC, 2018). South Africa has among the highest recorded levels of social protest of any country in the world (Visagie *et al.*, 2021). However, the annual number continued to increase. A total of 909 protest actions took place from August 1, 2020, to January 31, 2021, and in July 2020, an average of eight protests occurred per day, the highest in a single month since 2013 (Martin, 2021). Based on figures from August 2020 to January 2021, there were on average nearly five protests a day during these six months (Martin and Bradford, 2019).

The growing insurgence of protests in South Africa could perhaps be a sign of frustration and be viewed as a manifestation of increasing public frustration towards the government (Accord, 2021). This was especially evident during the July Unrest-2021 unrest, which was sparked by the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma but quickly morphed into a broader expression of socio-political discontent. Lancaster (2022) viewed the unrest, as characterised by widespread looting and destruction, as the bloodiest in South Africa since the end of Apartheid. The unrest emphasised the underlying political, social, and economic issues that have been simmering in the country for some time. The government acknowledged the dissatisfaction of its citizens and emphasised the importance of raising concerns peacefully (Mongale, 2022). However, the scale and intensity of the unrest highlighted the depth of popular discontent, which implies that similar protests might continue if these fundamental problems are not successfully resolved.

While the July Unrest-2021 is regarded as the worst of these protests turned riots, it is important to note that many issues that are assumed to be the enabling factors of the July Unrest-2021 are present in many of the everyday protests. In other words, the high levels of unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime, government corruption, and inefficient policing seem to make any additional issue unbearable. South Africa was the world's most unequal nation in 2021, with 90% of the nation's wealth held by just 10% of the population, the majority of its people (55.5%) living in poverty, unemployment at 29.81%, and the loss of over 600,000 jobs (StatsSA, 2021). This does not imply that civil unrest solely arises from economic factors. According to Rice *et al.* (2022), the legacy of Apartheid has contributed to the intertwining of race and class, amplifying racial and ethnic tensions within the country. Additionally, governmental shortcomings, corruption, and internal party conflicts have engendered political instability, further exacerbating the situation.

2.9 Summary

The colonised territory exhibits a dichotomy between two social factions: the Western bourgeoisie, representing the colonisers, and the indigenous population, commonly known as the nationalist bourgeoisie. This indigenous elite class holds a superior social standing compared to the average colonized native but lacks commensurate power and influence when juxtaposed with the Western bourgeoisie. While Marx and Engels (1848) articulated their perspectives from a

European standpoint, Fanon (1961) offered insights from a post-decolonisation lens, extending the discourse beyond class to encompass morality, responsibility, and equality.

Fanon posits that the national middle class, initially underdeveloped and possessing minimal economic prowess compared to the Western bourgeoisie, aspires to supplant its predecessor. This nascent middle class undergoes a transformation into the national bourgeoisie upon assuming power post-colonial rule. However, the national bourgeoisie in underdeveloped nations proves ineffectual in contributing to the economy, as its historical role was aligned with the colonialist agenda. These elites, having served as labourers for the colonisers, lack expertise in production, invention, construction, or manual labour.

Consequently, upon seizing power, the national bourgeoisie fails to instigate meaningful change, as its agenda is structured to perpetuate a colonial world rather than usher in a revolutionary one. The inherent limitations of their background impede their ability to bring about substantial economic or societal transformation, maintaining the status quo instead of fostering a progressive, post-colonial paradigm.

Chapter Three

Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the causes of social discontent, civil unrest, and the colonial aspect of class struggle through the theories of Karl Marx (theory) and Frantz Fanon (theory). It explores the relationship between certain factions and the factors underlying the pre-July Unrest-2021 climate. The selection of an appropriate theoretical framework is pivotal, as it provides the lens through which the researcher analyses the complex socio-political landscape of the country. The study found that the perspectives of Fanonism and Marxism form the atmosphere that embodies the core frustrations in a post-colonialist South Africa. This includes the intricate interplay of power dynamics, social inequalities, and identity politics. Marx (1848) and Fanon (1961) believe that the bourgeoisie cannot succeed because it ultimately leads to a system of oppression, and through this oppression find a protagonist, the proletariat Marx and Engels (1848) and the native (Fanon, 1961).

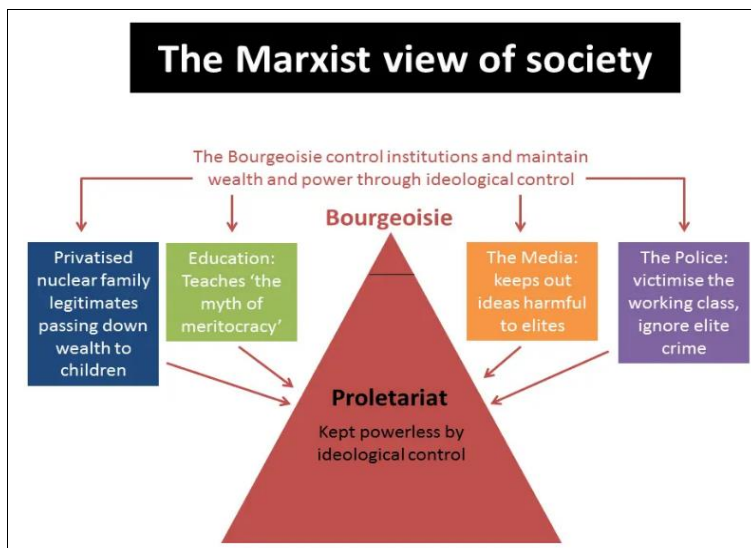


Figure 3.1: The Marxist view of society (Source: Revised Sociology, 2015)

The Marxist view of society is based on the ideas of Karl Marx, a 19th-century philosopher and economist who based his studies on these key concepts:

- i) **Bourgeoisie and proletariat:** Under capitalism, there are two basic classes - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie owns capital, which are resources such as land, factories, and money that can be used to make a profit and is a principal source of income. The proletariat owns zero capital and only labour power that must be sold to the bourgeoisie (Marx, 2020).
- ii) **Exploitation:** The amount of money the employer pays the worker is less than the total value of goods the worker produces (Rioux *et al.*, 2023). The difference between the two is called the surplus value. Marx states that the capitalist extracts surplus value from the worker (Marx, 2020).
- iii) **Control of the economic base and superstructure:** According to Marx and Engels (1848), individuals who have economic power control all other institutions. This is known as ideological control (Christodoulidis and Goldoni, 2019).
- iv) **False consciousness:** The bourgeois use the control of institutions to keep the masses ignorant of exploitation, which is also known as ideological control (Wiseman, 2019). Ideological control results in false consciousness, whereby individuals are not aware of its real class position or of being exploited by the ruling class.
- v) **Alienation:** Within the framework of capitalism, the worker becomes alienated from the process of production, from the worker's colleagues and from the products that are produced (Carrier, 2020). This alienation arises because the worker lacks control over the work and is reduced to a mere cog in the machinery of production, thereby rendering the work itself as alien in nature.
- vi) **Capitalism and social change:** Marx (1848) argues that capitalism had within it the seeds of its destruction whereby it would eventually create the social conditions that would lead to its downfall (Rioux *et al.*, 2020).

In summary Marx's theory is that the fundamental human need is met when a person identifies as a productive being because of labour. However, living in a capitalist society, the individual cannot enjoy true freedom.

3.2 Fanon's juxtaposition

Frantz Fanon was a West Indian psychoanalyst and social philosopher known for the theory that some neuroses are socially generated and for writings on behalf of the national liberation of colonial people (Jha, 2019). Fanon's insights provide a valuable lens to analyse the deep-seated psychological impacts of historical injustices and discrimination, shedding light on the complex interplay between identity, colonialism, and civil unrest. The following are some key areas of Fanon's work:

- i) Effects of racism and imperialism: Fanon used clinical research and a lived experience of being a black man in a racist world to analyse the effects of racism on individuals, particularly on people of colour, and of the economic and psychological impacts of imperialism.
- ii) Black skin, white masks: In his work "*Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*" (black skin, white masks), Fanon articulated a radical anti-racist humanism that adhered neither to assimilation into a white-supremacist mainstream nor to reactionary philosophies of black superiority.
- iii) The wretched of the earth: In "*Les Damnés de la Terre*" (The wretched of the earth), Fanon goes beyond a preoccupation with Europe's pretensions to being a universal standard of culture and civilisation, to take on the struggles and take up the consciousness of the colonised "natives" as they rise-up and reclaim simultaneously the people's land and human dignity.
- iv) Hybridity and creolisation: Fanon's work has become a central text in African thought, in large part because of the attention to the roles hybridity and creolisation play in forming humanist, anti-colonial cultures.
- v) Dialectic process: Fanon developed the view that dialectic could be the process through which the othered/alienated self can respond to racist trauma in a healthy way.
- vi) New humanism and ideas of community: Fanon's post-colonial theory's appropriation of psychoanalysis led to anxieties around cultural nationalisms and the

rise of native consciousness. This new humanism and ideas of community became influential in the international decolonisation movement.

The following juxtaposition will lay the foundational blueprint as to how Marxism and Fanonism mirror present-day South Africa in the wretchedness of the earth. The discussion will examine the phenomenon from a particular perspective, focusing on the unmet commitments of the ANC government to bridge the stark socio-economic divide between the affluent and the impoverished citizens (Ali *et al.*, 2023). This disparity has intensified the class struggle, thereby highlighting the socio-economic factors that have shaped the KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg Uprising of 2021. The analysis is conducted through the lens of Frantz Fanon's theories, providing a deeper understanding of the socio-political landscape.

3.2.1 Nationalist bourgeoisie

The mould for Fanonism resembles the ANC's abandonment of the country as it fits the style of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* describes this style as: "*The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry*" (Fanon, 1961). This understanding of the South Africa government explains the lack of interest in the factors that affected July Unrest-2021, such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, crime, and a lack of policing or funding to aid these hindrances to a stable state. According to Mongale (2022), the basic needs of the poor majority were sacrificed hence the volatile tension between the haves and have-nots increased, causing opposing groups to ignite for the smallest spark, the Zuma protests, thus creating an atmosphere for violence. Fanonism explains that it is the neo-colonialist conditions that create this ultimate discontent due to the proliferating gap between classes (Cuby, 2019); hence, this gap ignited in July Unrest-2021.

3.2.2 Native

Cuby's (2019) analysis found that Fanon's mould for the native fits that of the average looter. Both are oppressed and treated poorly by the ruling class, causing social discontent and mass frustration, which inevitably leads to violent outbreaks. The July Unrest-2021 struggle, much like the liberation struggles, begins at the street level (Nkomo and Mangiza, 2021). Fanon's

interpretations of the native's frustration with the colonial climate are consistent with modern-day South Africa. Many citizens still suffer from immense poverty, poor or no service delivery, vast unemployment, high crime rates, poor education, poor healthcare, a lack of effective policing, and an overall lack of resources. This utter lack of necessities creates within the native (poor) masses "*an anger which he deprives of [an] outlet*" (Fanon, 1961), thus leading to social discontent (Archer and Mills, 2019).

3.2.3 Native intellectuals

The concept of "native intellectuals" developed by Fanon investigates the role of intellectual figures in colonized societies (Zeiny, 2019). These individuals, who are frequently indigenous, navigate complex identities and face unique challenges in the liberation struggle. Fanon investigates how these intellectuals interact with the larger socio-political context, dealing with issues of identity, resistance, and the impact of colonialism on the intellectual class within oppressed communities (Fanon, 1961 and Smith, 2020).

During July Unrest-2021, the business owners can be seen as the native intellectuals due to a "*barely veiled desire to assimilate themselves to the colonial world*" (Fanon, 1961). In other words, the native intellectuals mimic the self-interested mindset of the ANC, without the position. During the July Unrest-2021 events, shop owners and businesses distanced themselves from the larger societal struggles by siding with either the looters or the targets. Internal divisions, according to Fanon (1961), dissolve amid conflict, exposing the vulnerability of the puppet bourgeoisie, including businessmen and shopkeepers, as well as the urban proletariat, which is typically in a privileged position. Vhumbunu (2021) emphasises that because of the dynamics of the July Unrest-2021, people were simplified into two groups: those with resources and those without, this vulnerability made store owners vulnerable targets. This created a dangerous environment in which one group posed a threat to the other. Fanon observed that "*On the other hand, the mass of the people has no intention of standing by and watching individuals increase their chances of success,*" Fanon (1961).

3.2.4 Lumpenproletariat

Villanova (2021) reflects that in traditional Marxist theory, the lumpenproletariat is viewed as a class of social outcasts, including criminals, vagabonds, and the unemployed, who lack class consciousness and are thus considered reactionary, if not counter-revolutionary. The July Unrest-2021 instigators fit the description of the lumpenproletariat. Both are criminals within the respective environments. "*Juvenile delinquency in colonised countries is the direct result of the existence of a lumpenproletariat*" (Fanon, 1961), and the instigators in neo-colonialist South Africa fuelled the July Unrest-2021 by bombing and stealing ATMs and burning many buildings, which transcended the average hunger of the common looter who stole to feed themselves. These instigators demand a more serious offence than simple theft. "*So, urged on from behind, the pimps, hooligans, unemployed, and petty criminals throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men,*" Fanon continues (Fanon, 1961). Fanon's description of the lumpenproletariat becomes a direct parallel to the criminal forces during the July Unrest-2021 and can be viewed as reflecting similar patterns of behaviour (Vhumbunu, 2021).

Marx (1848) simplifies this blueprint into the bourgeoisie, who are the rich, owners of the means of production consistently exploiting the working-class proletariat, however in South Africa, Marx's theory becomes even simpler. The bourgeoisie also includes the government and the proletariat include the unemployed and even the middle class because the government seemingly abandons all citizens of South Africa to feed an ever-growing desire for more. While Fanonism is useful in setting out a blueprint for the July Unrest-2021, it is important to consider Marx's contribution to class struggle and class antagonisms as it further describes the climate of greed and selfishness expressed in the July Unrest-2021. The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx addresses and elaborates on the Class Struggle and its implications (Marx and Engels, 1848).

The Manifesto argues that class struggle, or the exploitation of one class by another, are the motivating force behind historical developments (Marx and Engels, 1848). Furthermore, Marx's theory posits that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Fuchs (2020) describes capitalism, by the understanding that it alters the relations between people in a capitalist society according to monetary value. To Marx, capitalism alters any society, making that society to be driven by money, property, and decadence. Society increasingly splits into two rival camps, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, therefore, capitalism

fashions a greedy mentality in citizens. For Marx, this is the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; for South Africa, this is the haves and have-nots (Joseph, 2023).

In addition to Fanon and Marx, other scholars offer useful insight to the specificities of the July unrest-2021. These umbrella theories include Antonio Gramsci Cultural Hegemony, Pierre Bourdieu Theory of Symbolic Violence, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's Discourse Theory and Karl Marx's conflict theory.

3.3 Gramsci's cultural hegemony

Beginning with Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony which is a foundational concept within the realm of critical theory, offering a profound understanding of how ruling classes establish and maintain their dominance over society (Cloud, 2020). Central to Gramsci's perspective is the recognition that power is not solely exercised through coercion and force but is intricately tied to the dissemination of cultural values, norms, and ideologies. Cultural hegemony refers to the ability of the ruling class to impose its worldview on the broader society, shaping not only political and economic structures but also the very fabric of cultural and social life (Ramesh, 2021).

Gramsci argues that the ruling class achieves cultural hegemony by influencing and controlling key cultural institutions, including education, media, and religious organizations (Mayo, 2020). These institutions serve as vehicles for disseminating ideologies that align with the interests of the ruling class. In the context of the July 2021 socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal, examining the role of cultural institutions in shaping narratives and perceptions becomes crucial. Cultural hegemony involves the widespread dissemination of ideological values that legitimize and justify the existing social order (Mayo, 2020). The ruling class cultivates a set of beliefs and norms that reinforce its position of dominance, often framing it as natural and inevitable. Understanding how specific ideologies were propagated and internalized can shed light on the ideological underpinnings of social discontent.

Gramsci's theory becomes particularly relevant when analysing social unrest. The control of cultural hegemony allows the ruling class to frame narratives that shape public perceptions of dissent and resistance. Examining how certain narratives were constructed during the events in

KwaZulu-Natal can provide insights into how the ruling class sought to maintain its legitimacy in the face of social upheaval.

Gramsci introduces the concept of counter-hegemony, suggesting that subordinate groups can challenge and resist the dominant ideology. This perspective invites an exploration of how grassroots movements, activists, and dissenting voices in KwaZulu-Natal contested the prevailing cultural hegemony during the July Unrest-2021 unrest, seeking to disrupt the dominant narrative. Cultural hegemony has enduring effects on social structures (Subica and Link, 2022). Analysing its influence allows researchers to understand not only the immediate triggers of social unrest but also the historical and cultural factors that contribute to long-term discontent and resistance.

In applying Gramsci's cultural hegemony to the study of the July Unrest-2021 socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal, researchers can delve into the intricate interplay between cultural power, ideological narratives, and the dynamics of social resistance (Musekiwa, 2021). This approach offers a nuanced understanding of how the ruling class shapes and responds to social discontent through the control of cultural institutions and the dissemination of ideological values.

3.4 Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence

Secondly, Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Symbolic Violence offers a lens through which to understand the mechanisms through which dominant groups maintain and perpetuate their power over marginalised groups, particularly through the imposition of cultural norms and values (McDonough and Abrica, 2023). Symbolic violence, according to Bourdieu, extends beyond physical coercion and operates in the symbolic realm, where the dominant culture exerts influence, often leading to social conflict and resistance (Bardall, 2020).

Symbolic violence, as conceptualized by Bourdieu, involves the imposition of cultural norms by dominant groups onto marginalised groups (Yildiz, Korumaz and Balyer, 2021). This imposition occurs through various means, including education, media, and language. Examining how specific cultural norms were imposed in the socio-political context of KwaZulu-Natal during the July 2021 unrest can provide insights into the power dynamics at play.

Bourdieu's theory argues that symbolic violence plays a crucial role in reproducing social hierarchies (Fowler 2022 and Lakomski, 1984). The dominant culture reinforces its position by devaluing the cultural practices and beliefs of marginalised groups. Investigating how symbolic violence contributed to the reinforcement of existing social hierarchies in KwaZulu-Natal can illuminate the dynamics of discontent. Similarly, Duncan-Shepherd and Hamilton (2022) wrote that symbolic violence not only influences cultural norms but also impacts the identity and self-worth of marginalised individuals or communities. The theory invites exploration into how the imposition of cultural values during the unrest might have affected the identity and self-perception of those involved, potentially fuelling resistance against the symbolic violence enacted upon them.

In defence of Bourdieu's theory, Heibron and Steinmetz (2018) further suggests that symbolic violence can be a catalyst for social conflict as marginalised groups resist the imposition of dominant cultural norms. Analysing instances of social conflict during the July 2021 unrest through the lens of symbolic violence can reveal how clashes emerged as a response to the perceived violence inflicted on cultural identities. The theory acknowledges that symbolic violence is not accepted passively. Marginalised groups engage in various forms of resistance to challenge the imposition of cultural values. Aardenburg and Nel (2019) explores how communities in KwaZulu-Natal resisted symbolic violence and offers insights into the strategies employed to reclaim cultural autonomy.

Burowoy (2019) investigated Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, highlighting its lasting consequences that transcend immediate conflicts. Understanding how symbolic violence operate during unrests, allows for an exploration of its long-term implications on social cohesion, cultural identity, and the potential for transformative change. By applying Bourdieu's Theory of Symbolic Violence to the study of the July 2021 socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal, researchers can uncover the dynamics of cultural imposition, resistance, and the broader implications for social structures and identities. This approach contributes to a nuanced understanding of how symbolic violence may have played a role in fostering discontent and shaping patterns of resistance within the specific socio-political context under examination.

3.5 Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory

Thirdly, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's Discourse Theory provides a valuable framework for analysing the construction of political identities, the formation of social movements, and the role of discourse in shaping socio-political events (Boucher, 2020). In the context of the socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal in July 2021, this theory offers insights into how different discourses and identity formations played a pivotal role, particularly in the context of class struggle.

Using a discursive approach, Panizza and Stavrakakis (2020) discuss Laclau and Mouffe's argument that political identities are not inherent but constructed through discourse. Examining the construction of political identities during the unrest allows for an exploration of how different groups and individuals framed their grievances, aspirations, and demands. This sheds light on the diverse range of identities that emerged and intersected during the events.

According to Van Dijk (2023), discourse theory emphasises the role of discourse in the formation of social movements. Analysing the discursive practices employed by various groups involved in the unrest provides insights into how these movements were articulated, mobilised, and consolidated. It also helps to understand the alliances and antagonisms that emerged within the social fabric. The theory suggests that political subjects articulate their grievances through discourse, framing them in ways that resonate with broader societal concerns. Macchiarulo (2023) provides scrutiny into the various modalities through which distinct societal factions articulate grievances amidst periods of social unrest, thereby facilitating a nuanced comprehension of the linguistic and rhetorical strategies deployed to convey discontent and advocate for transformative initiatives.

Acaroglu (2020) also examined Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory and its relevance in the context of class struggle. It allows for an exploration of how discourses around class identities were constructed, contested, and negotiated. This perspective unveils the complexities of class dynamics, including the intersectionality of class with other social categories. The theory introduces the concepts of antagonisms and hegemonic struggles, emphasizing the contestation of meanings and the pursuit of dominance within a society (Boucher, 2020). Analysing the antagonisms that arose during the unrest provides insights into the struggles for hegemony, where different discourses vied for influence and legitimacy.

Furthermore, Colpani (2022) examined Laclau and Mouffe's acknowledgement for the potential of counter-hegemonic practices, where alternative discourses challenge the dominant ideology. Examining instances of counter-hegemonic discourse during the unrest allows researchers to understand how dissenting voices sought to reshape prevailing narratives and challenge established power structures. The theory highlights the role of discourse in shaping social solidarity. Exploring how discourses influenced the sense of community and shared identity among participants in the unrest provides insights into the collective experiences and the sense of belonging that emerged during the events.

By applying Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory to the study of the July 2021 socio-political unrest in KwaZulu-Natal, the researcher enables researchers to unravel the complexities of identity construction, social movements, and the dynamics of class struggle. This approach contributes to a nuanced understanding of how discourses shaped the events, reflecting the diverse range of political subjectivities and contestations that characterized the unrest.

3.6 Marx's conflict theory

Lastly, Karl Marx's Conflict Theory is a sociological perspective rooted in understanding societal conflicts arising from inequalities in power, resources, and opportunities, provides a critical lens to analyse the underlying causes of the July 2021 unrest in KwaZulu-Natal (Marx, 1887). This theoretical framework emphasises the role of power dynamics and societal structures in shaping social relations, especially regarding economic disparities and historical injustices (Marx, 1887).

Conflict theory directs attention to structural inequalities, focusing on how power imbalances contribute to social conflicts. In the context of KwaZulu-Natal, where extreme poverty and inequality persist, conflict theory helps unravel the power dynamics that perpetuate these disparities (Marx, 1887). The unrest can be seen as a manifestation of grievances rooted in the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. The theory highlights the importance of historical factors in shaping contemporary conflicts (Marx, 1887). Examining the socio-economic configurations of the region over time becomes essential in understanding the deep-seated causes of the unrest. Historical injustices, such as apartheid and economic disparities, contribute to a reservoir of discontent that may erupt under certain conditions.

Conflict theory aids in identifying triggering factors that led to the eruption of the unrest. It allows for an exploration of how specific events or policies might have exacerbated existing tensions rooted in economic inequalities. For instance, examining the role of government policies, economic shocks, or social injustices as triggers aligns with the conflict theory perspective. Conflict theory aligns with the Marxian perspective, emphasizing class struggle and economic structures. Analysing the unrest through this lens involves understanding how different social classes interacted and clashed due to economic disparities. The theory helps uncover the systemic issues that fuelled discontent and led to collective action.

Conflict theory also sheds light on power relations and resistance. Understanding how various actors, including the government, corporations, and marginalised communities, engage in power struggles during the unrest provides insights into the dynamics of resistance (Marx, 1887). The theory facilitates an examination of how power is contested and negotiated within the socio-political landscape. The theory directs attention to institutional injustices as contributors to social unrest. By investigating how institutions, such as the legal system, economic structures, and government policies, perpetuate inequalities, conflict theory unveils the systemic issues that communities may perceive as oppressive, leading to resistance and protests (Marx, 1887).

Conflict theory suggests that collective action is often driven by the desire for structural change. In the context of the July 2021 unrest, understanding how communities came together to demand changes in the socio-economic structures aligns with the conflict theory's emphasis on collective efforts to address systemic inequalities (Marx, 1887).

In conclusion, conflict theory provides a robust analytical framework for understanding the root causes of the July 2021 unrest in KwaZulu-Natal. By focusing on power dynamics, historical configurations, and structural inequalities, this perspective allows for a comprehensive exploration of the socio-economic factors that fuelled the discontent and collective action during this period of social upheaval.

3.7 Grounding Fanon and Marx in the July unrest-2021

Fanon's theory, particularly his insights on colonialism, contributes to understanding the psychosocial dimensions of social discontent. Given South Africa's history of apartheid, Fanon's lens is crucial for unpacking the psychological impact of historical oppression on contemporary

struggles. The theory allows for an exploration of how colonial legacies influenced the collective psyche and contributed to discontent (Fanon, 1961).

Fanon's emphasis on decolonization aligns with the post-apartheid context of South Africa. Analysing the July 2021 unrest through Fanon's lens allows for an examination of how identity formation, resistance, and demands for justice are intertwined. The theory provides a means to understand how individuals and communities assert their agency in the face of historical traumas and ongoing structural inequalities (Fanon, 1961).

Fanon's theory is adept at addressing the intersectionality of struggles. In KwaZulu-Natal, where social discontent involves multiple dimensions, including economic, racial, and historical aspects, Fanon's approach accommodates a nuanced understanding of how these intersecting factors contribute to complex class struggles (Fanon, 1961).

Fanon's call for liberation and social transformation aligns with the aspirations for change evident in social movements during the July 2021 unrest. By applying Fanon's lens, the study gains insight into the ways in which individuals and communities seek not only economic justice but also broader transformations that challenge the legacies of colonialism.

Marx's theoretical framework is crucial for understanding social discontent and class struggle, particularly due to its emphasis on economic structures. The events in KwaZulu-Natal during July 2021 are inherently linked to economic disparities, unemployment, and inequalities. Marx's focus on the economic base, the relations of production, and the role of class in shaping societal dynamics provides a foundational lens to dissect the root causes of discontent (Marx, 1887).

Marx's theory illuminates the concept of class struggle as a driving force for societal change. Applying this lens to the socio-political unrest allows for an exploration of how different classes engaged in struggles for power, resources, and representation (Marx, 1848). It provides a framework to analyse how economic conditions manifested in political actions, protests, and demands for structural changes. Marx's historical materialism offers a valuable tool for situating the events within their historical and economic context (Marx, 1887). By examining the specific conditions in KwaZulu-Natal, influenced by historical legacies and contemporary economic structures, Marx's theory aids in unravelling the intricate connections between socioeconomic factors and the expressions of discontent.

3.8 Summary

In choosing Frantz Fanon and Karl Marx's theories, the study is framed with a dual focus – Marx's lens provides a foundational understanding of class dynamics and economic structures, while Fanon's insights enrich the analysis with a nuanced exploration of the psychosocial dimensions, decolonization, and intersectionality. This combination of theories allows for a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted social discontent and class struggle evident in the KwaZulu-Natal July Unrest-2021 socio-political unrest, ensuring that both economic and psychosocial aspects are addressed within a robust theoretical framework. Thus, Fanonism and Marxism explain how the July Unrest-2021 shaped the way the unrest is seen as an evitable clash between an oppressive group and a self-liberating oppressed group (Matambo, 2021).

With shopkeepers in the middle of the battleground as collateral, the ANC as the oppressors, the looters as the natives and the instigators as the lumpenproletariat. Thus, with Fanonism as the lens for the July Unrest-2021, Rich (2021) and Matambo (2021) agree that class struggle and social discontent are better understood, and the violence of the July Unrest-2021 is accounted for more in-depth and precisely, as well as allowing an understanding of future eventualities surrounding this event. Chung (2023) reiterates that Marxism shapes the socio-political unrest in South Africa with the violence that was displayed because of class antagonisms via greed and exploitation.

Chapter Four

Research methodology and methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains that the research methodology employed in this study is based on Pandey and Pandey's (2021) framework, which involves a systematic approach to gathering and analysing data. The study employs a desktop/secondary research method, examining a diverse range of existing materials from reports, public libraries, websites, and surveys (Arcelay, *et al.*, 2021). This approach provides valuable insights into themes related to social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle, particularly as manifested in instances of civil unrest. Categorised as a desktop investigation, this method of research allows for a comprehensive exploration of historical events and phenomena across South Africa and various countries and periods. The study intends to offer a multifaceted understanding of the complexities involved and enrich the analysis with a diverse range of perspectives and sources by re-evaluating and interpreting historical data to provide nuanced insights into the underlying causes of events like the July Unrest-2021 (Laqua, 2023).

4.2 Method of research

According to Sileyew (2019), desktop research can be described as a method reliant on existing data, and involves the meticulous re-examination, interpretation, and review of past information. This method holds particular significance as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of literature relating to social discontent, class struggle and civil unrest, transcending temporal, and geographical boundaries (Dempsy, 2020). By harnessing secondary research, the study gains access to a wealth of historical events, both similar and occurring across diverse countries.

This methodological choice proves invaluable, as it enables the study to assimilate a wide array of data, fostering a holistic understanding of the topic (Asenahabi, 2019). By delving into varied sources, the study can offer detailed insights into the underlying causes of events like the July Unrest-2021. Furthermore, the utilisation of secondary research allows for a multifaceted exploration, enhancing the depth and breadth of the study's analysis. This approach, as discussed

by Taherdoost (2021), is instrumental in developing a robust line of reasoning, shedding light on the intricate dynamics that led to the occurrence of such events, ultimately enriching our comprehension of the phenomenon at hand.

4.3 Research approach

Research methodology includes important elements like research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, time horizons, and data collection techniques. According to Sileyew (2019), research design is the structured framework that outlines the plan, structure, and strategy used in an investigation to acquire responses to research inquiries while managing variability.

4.4 Sampling method and size

Lakens (2022) argues that the population is not limited to people but includes data sources; thus, the population for this study is the internet and print sources that have the keywords class struggle, social discontent, violence, and civil unrest. The population of documents selected from the sample frame were documents from three databases, namely Jstor, Sabinet, and ProQuest. Following this, three sources were gathered from each database within the sample frame. These sources investigate the phenomenon in third-world countries because they share common features with South Africa (De Juan and Wegner, 2019). The samples are materials that discuss social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle in South Africa and have all the keywords from the research question, problem, and topic.

The scope of sources included in this study is determined by the direct relevance of each source to the three central factors of the investigation: social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle. The review's scope is limited by each source's ability to make a significant contribution to our understanding of these three essential components. As a result, the study will take a critical stance, only including sources that relate to the main themes of social discontent, civil unrest, and class struggle. This will guarantee a more curated and trustworthy collection of academic content Sileyew (2019). By limiting the plethora of information that is easily accessible through a desktop study, the scope of sources was limited to those closely related to the main focal points and sought to improve the accuracy and consistency of the research (Maseko *et al.*, 2020).

4.5 Data collection

The study's method for data collection was obtained from various platforms where such information related to the topic may be found (Patel and Patel, 2019). Secondary research involves data assimilation from different sources, that is, using available research materials instead of creating a new pool of data using primary research methods. These include internet sources, previous studies and writings, and data from universities, government, and international institutions. Internet sources are very lucrative to the proposed study as the information is often readily accessible (Raza *et al.*, 2020). The key to the research lies in the researcher being aware of biases, contextual differences, and the purpose of the secondary sources (Kock *et al.*, 2021). Internet sources for this study will range from statistics on accredited sites where data collected on key factors for unemployment, inequality, crime and poverty is compared to data from other countries to add credibility to the analysis (Stuurman 2020).

Subsequently data from universities, governments, and international institutions, previous studies and writings are beneficial to the proposed study as they provide more detailed illustrations, useful explanations and possible relations between causes and effects on previous occurrences of the same phenomena. Ultimately, sources from secondary data from various sources must be easily accessible, to generate a diverse set of accurate information, and prove to be less time-consuming (Maseko *et al.*, 2020).

Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of desktop data collection

Advantages	Disadvantages
Time efficiency: Since desktop research utilises existing data, it saves time compared to conducting fieldwork or surveys. Researchers can quickly access and analyse a vast amount of information (Crump, 2020).	Quality and reliability: The quality and reliability of existing data can vary significantly. Researchers must critically evaluate the sources to ensure accuracy and relevance (Crump, 2020).
Cost-effectiveness: Desktop research is generally more cost-effective than primary research methods because it doesn't require the collection of new data, which can be time-	Limited control: Researchers have limited control over the data collection process and cannot tailor questions or methods to specific

consuming and expensive (Czinkota <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	research needs, potentially leading to gaps in information (Stantcheva, 2023).
Large data pool: Researchers have access to a wealth of data from various sources, allowing for comprehensive and in-depth analyses. This extensive data pool can provide a broader perspective on the research topic (Beesley <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	Limited originality: Desktop research relies on existing studies and data, limiting the opportunity for original contributions to the field (Post <i>et al.</i> , 2020). It may not be suitable for research aiming to explore entirely new phenomena.
Historical analysis: Desktop research allows for the examination of historical trends, making it valuable for longitudinal studies and understanding changes over time (Argyres <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	Outdated information: Data obtained from existing sources may be outdated, especially in rapidly changing fields. Using obsolete data can compromise the validity of the research findings (Freiling <i>et al.</i> , 2021).
Minimise bias: Since researchers are not directly involved with data collection, there is a reduced risk of bias that may be introduced during face-to-face interactions with participants (Davies <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	Lack of context: Existing data might lack the context necessary to fully understand the nuances of a particular research question. Important details and subtleties may be missing (Levitt <i>et al.</i> , 2021).
Ethical concerns: There no risk of ethical concerns related to the use of data, especially if it contains sensitive or private information. (Pietilä <i>et al.</i> , 2020).	Ethical concerns: There can be ethical concerns related to the use of data, especially if it contains sensitive or private information. Researchers must ensure they handle the data ethically and responsibly (Pietilä <i>et al.</i> , 2020).

Source: Student's table 2023

4.6 Relational analysis

Relational analysis refers to computational techniques that are used to discover specific relationships between various objects of study (Eacott, 2019). Relational analysis for this study was incorporated to explore the relationship between class struggle, social discontent and civil unrest in July-2021. Relational analysis further develops the data by examining the relationships

among concepts in the collection of data. Each type of data collected and analysed may lead to different results, conclusions, interpretations, and meanings. The secondary data will be collected and divided into 3 subcategories (Kale, *et al.*, 2022). The first subcategory is affecting extraction: an emotional evaluation of concepts explicit in a text. It accounts for the emotional and psychological state of the speaker or writer of the text to ensure bias is eliminated. The second subcategory is proximity analysis, an evaluation of the co-occurrence of explicit concepts in the text which is defined as a string of words called a “window” that is scanned for the co-occurrence of concepts. The result is the creation of a “concept matrix”, or a group of interrelated co-occurring concepts that would suggest an overall meaning (Lemon and Hayes, 2020). The third and last subcategory is cognitive mapping, a visualisation technique for either affect extraction or proximity analysis.

Cognitive mapping attempts to create a model of the overall meaning of the text, such as a graphic map that represents the relationships between concepts (Bottini and Doeller, 2020). There are various steps that the secondary qualitative data will go through in relational content analysis. First, once the sample has been selected, the researcher needs to determine the types of relationships to examine and the level of analysis: word, word sense, phrase, sentence, and themes. Second, reduce the text to categories and code for words or patterns. According to Kyngäs, (2020), a researcher can code for the existence of meanings or words. Third, explore the relationship between concepts: Once the words are coded, the text can be analysed for the following:

- i) Strength of relationship: the degree to which two or more concepts are related.
- ii) Sign of relationship: are concepts positively or negatively related to each other?
- iii) Direction of relationship: the types of relationships that categories exhibit “X implies Y” or “X occurs before Y” or “if X then Y” or if X is the primary motivator of Y (Delve, 2023).
- iv) Code the relationships: a difference between conceptual and relational analysis is that the statements or relationships between concepts are coded.
- v) Perform statistical analyses: explore differences or look for relationships among the identified variables during coding.
- vi) Map out representations, such as decision mapping and mental models.

4.7 Limitations of the methods

The limitation of desktop research is that it requires speculation rather than insight (Hoover and Cohen, 2021). This is due to the sources themselves being limited to what is searched, creating a limitation on what can be known, like what people's feelings are. What were some looter's intentions? In addition, while internet research is useful, the recency of the topic discussed limits the possible information that could be available, like eyewitness accounts, people's psychology, and what went through police officers' minds. According to Oxman et al. (2021), there is limited information on the news; videos were circulated of police officers looting together with civilians; however, there are no credible sources to prove this, and certain details may be overlooked by the study.

Delimitations in the study of South Africa's July Unrest-2021 are vital as they establish specific parameters for focused analysis. These boundaries include a defined time frame, particularly the period around the arrest of former President Jacob Zuma, enabling a detailed examination of immediate triggers (Bhattacharya and Rach, 2021). Geographical limitations concentrate the study on specific intense regions, acknowledging unique socio-economic and political factors at play (Dempsey, 2020). In a study by Ni *et al.* (2020), the demographic focus narrows down to specific groups like young adults or unemployed individuals, revealing insights into the motivations. Political delimitations centre on political parties, government policies, and leaders, providing a detailed understanding of political influences. Saadi-Sedik and Xu (2020) lists economic factors such as unemployment rates and income disparities are examined comprehensively. Social media's impact and the role of technology are restricted to precise insights into digital platforms. The comparative analysis offers a broader perspective within specified boundaries, while language and cultural factors acknowledge the impact on communication during the July Unrest-2021. These delimitations ensure a nuanced and in-depth exploration of the complexities within the civil unrest issue.

4.8 Delimitations of the study

Due to the recency of the July Umrest-2021, reliable data was limited to internet sources and recent studies that limited the availability of comprehensive data. Potential challenges in obtaining accurate and up-to-date information were challenging due to restricted access to certain

sources, government data, or limited transparency surrounding the incident. The study was further constrained by a reliance on secondary sources such as media reports, academic analyses, and existing literature.

The lack of direct interviews or firsthand accounts may have an impact on the depth and authenticity of the data gathered. Social and political unrest is inherently dynamic, with changing situations, narratives, and consequences therefore the data may be delimited by focusing on a specific geographical area affected by the unrest, in this instance, the July Unrest-2021 took place in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, broader regional or global implications may not be fully explored, potentially limiting the generalising of findings beyond the specific context under investigation.

The study also considered potential challenges arising from technological and communication barriers, such as internet shutdowns, censorship, or disruptions, which may have impeded information flow and contributed to an incomplete picture of the unrest. Therefore, the ability to forecast the long-term consequences or the post-incident trajectory of the social and political unrest lies within a limited timeframe of the incident and proved to be challenging.

4.9 Summary

The study makes use of material published in reports and similar documents that are available in public libraries, websites, and data obtained from surveys already carried out (Gumantan *et al.*, 2021). The population for this study is the internet and print sources that have the keywords civil unrest, social discontent and class struggle. The sample frame is further refined by using articles within the last 5 years and in South Africa. This study's method for data collection would be credible databases namely Jstor, ProQuest, and Sabinet. The findings are then analysed through relational analysis to explain the relationship between civil unrest, social discontent and class struggle.

Chapter Five

Research findings and analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings of the July Unrest-2021 research questions. The overall findings of each question are then interpreted by the authors mentioned in the literature review chapter. This study aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the July Unrest-2021 to understand its root causes, supporting factors, and underlying mechanisms. The primary goal was to unravel the likelihood of such events recurring and the timeframe for its potential recurrence. The findings emphasise that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated socio-economic factors such as inadequate service delivery, poverty, high crime rates, unemployment, and a lack of effective policing.

Consequently, the "*Free Zuma*" campaign primarily served as a catalyst that united disgruntled citizens who identified with the lower class in South Africa (Ani and Uwizeyimana, 2022). Moreover, the absence of significant consequences due to overwhelmed law enforcement agencies only emboldened various groups, including criminals and agitators, to exploit the prevailing circumstances.

5.2 Findings

This section addresses the research questions that were formulated for the study. The findings from various articles reviewed are captured and discussed accordingly (as seen in Table 5.1.-5.5)

5.2.1 Research question one

What factors of discontent among social classes led to the July Unrest-2021?

Table 5.1: Factors of discontent among social class

Number	Year	Title	Authors	Findings
1	2021	The July 2021 protests and socio-political unrest in South Africa: Reflecting on the causes, consequences, and future lessons.	Vhumbunu C.H.	The July Unrest-2021 arose as a point of frustration over socio-economic and political issues that the state failed to address (Vhumbunu, 2021).
2	2021	Fighting a pandemic or fighting each other: The inter-relatedness of the 2021 South African civil unrest and the COVID-19 pandemic.	Harris-Cik T.	The social unrest in South Africa in July 2021 and the COVID-19 pandemic have a reciprocal relationship. The heightened social inequality and the rising unemployment rate amidst the lockdown may have resulted in increased anger, frustration, and resentment, which in turn culminated in a politically motivated, pre-meditated protest into poverty-driven, survivalist violent riots (Harris-Cik, 2021).
3	2021	When strong institutions and massive inequalities collide	Levy B, Hirsch A, Naidoo V, Nuxele N.	The lack of government leadership and accountability when addressing issues within the country has set the government on a downward spiral. The political leaders advance themselves using

				<p>the citizen's grievances but fail to resolve any issues or disparities and underlying key conflicts. Thus, leadership needs to take the risk of mobilising new coalitions capable of trumping the vested interests that stymie inclusive change (Levy, <i>et al.</i>, 2021).</p>
4	2023	Socio-economic effect of violence and growing social unrest in South Africa: Lessons from July 2021 protests.	Enaifoghe A. and Mtshali L.	<p>The argument presented in this paper is that protest action is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. As indicated, there are multi-dimensional risk factors that serve as triggers for public discontent, such as poverty, high crime, high unemployment, violent parental disputes, poor economic safety nets, etc. These issues are frequently used as justifications for protest actions (Enaifoghe, <i>et al.</i>, 2023).</p>
5	2021	South Africa features prominently in the metrics of shame.	Parker M.	<p>The unrest was a result of key government administration shortcomings and failures on several policy fronts over the past three years. These include unemployment raging at over 36%; public sector wage inflation; bloated bureaucracy thanks to cadre deployment further exacerbated by ANC factionalism;</p>

				<p>burgeoning government and State Owned Enterprises (SOE) debt; confusion over land reforms and Expropriation without compensation (EWC); non-coherent agricultural policy; under-involvement of the private sector; lack of respect for the rule of law by self-entitled officials and party apparatchiks; failure to lift millions out of abject poverty; and failure to contain, let alone eradicate, corruption and cronyism (Parker, 2021).</p>
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5.2.2 Research question two

Why was the state’s response against acts of collective rule-breaking unable to avert the July Unrest-2021 from erupting?

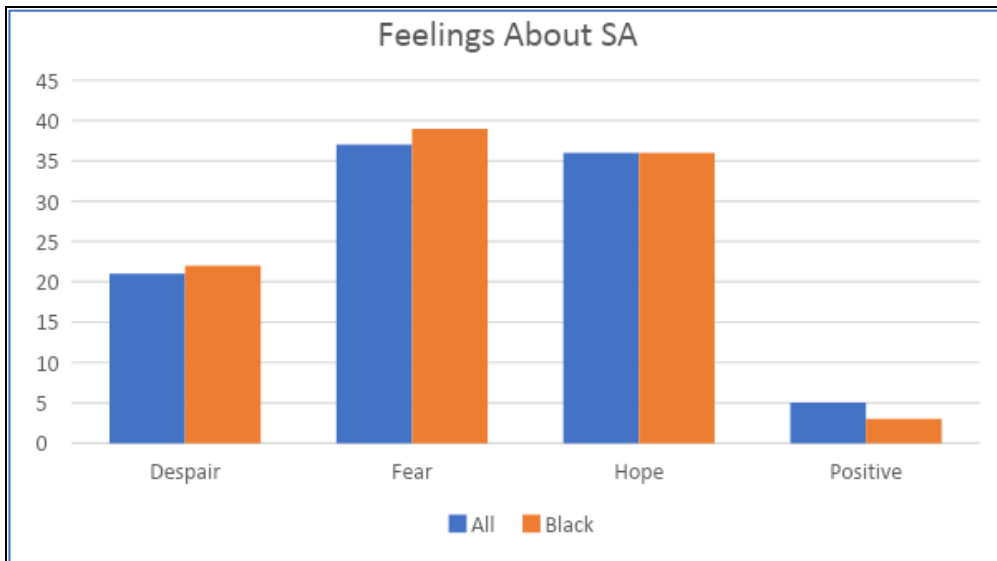
Table 5.2: State’s response against acts of collective rule-breaking

Number	Year	Title	Author	Findings
1	2022	Act to stop July 2021 unrest.	Mbanyele S.	The government was unable to stop acts of collective rule-breaking due to socio-economic factors causing dissatisfaction among looters, such as youth unemployment, pervasive poverty, and racial tensions, as well as local government

				governance crises, including poor living conditions, spatial planning, and service delivery. At a national level, corruption, state capture, and intra-party contestations fuel the lack of political accountability. The failures are manifesting in daily service delivery protests, which can be the catalyst that sparks unrest. The lack of social cohesion led to racial violence between many Indian and black people in Phoenix and surrounding areas in KwaZulu-Natal (Mbanyele, 2022).
2	2021	2020 Measures to address violence and unrest in a time of COVID-19.	Willemien Du Plessis Rene Koraan Juanita M. Pienaar Myrone Stoffels	Unrest and violence still underpin South African society, whether it is institutionalised, protest action, or household violence. The COVID-19 pandemic brought new regulations and, therefore, more transgressions—not only by members of the public but also by the security services. Perhaps the culture of unrest is embedded in South Africa’s DNA, causing constant rebellion due to perceived injustices (Plessis, <i>et al.</i> , 2021).
3	2021	Report of the expert panel into the July 2021 civil unrest.	Africa S, Sokupa S. and Gumbi M.	Those tasked with intelligence were not in communication. The violence broke out in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. The National Security Council had not been meeting regularly at the time the violence broke out, despite several red flags that were raised by the intelligence structures, in particular, National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICOC). Many

				<p>important figures in these organs of state were suspended at the time. The use of social media aided the direction and size of the unrest by allowing mobilisation quickly. In addition, socio-economic issues, combined with this opportunity, meant many would join the crowd (Africa <i>et al.</i>, 2021).</p>
4	2021	State of the Nation Address 2021	The Presidency	<p>“The events of the past week were nothing less than a deliberate, coordinated, and well-planned attack on our democracy intended to cripple the economy, cause social instability, and severely weaken—or even dislodge—the democratic state.” “Using the pretext of a political grievance, those behind these acts have sought to provoke a popular insurrection. "They have sought to exploit the social and economic conditions under which many South Africans live—conditions that have worsened since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic—and to provoke ordinary citizens and criminal networks to engage in opportunistic acts of looting”. The chaos was used as a smokescreen to carry out acts of economic sabotage (The Presidency, 2021)).</p>

Figure 5.1 - Feelings about South Africa



Source: Hartley et al. (2021)

5.2.3 Research question three

What could have been done to weaken the civil unrest and tensions between citizens and the state?

Table 5.3: Strategies to alleviate civil unrest and citizen-state tensions.

Number	Year	Title	Author	Findings
1	2022	Key socio-economic challenges in South Africa.	Hlongwane T.	Addressing the high unemployment rate by implementing policies that promote entrepreneurship involved with enterprise development programmes. Addressing poverty and inequality by implementing programmes, including the use of fiscal policy to assist

				<p>redistributive measures. The key to overcoming inequality is equalising workers' wages and salaries. The expansion of social grants has had a strong equalising effect in the country, but this effect has been offset by the much bigger role than salary inequality. Additionally, reducing South Africa's high inequality will also require improving education and spatial integration to provide the poor with the skills that are required to meaningfully participate in a capital and skills-intensive economy. Addressing limited access to public services by strengthening the integration of the social assistance system with services provided by departments such as Basic Education, Health, Public Works, and Home Affairs, along with developing an integrated social registry or an interoperable set of databases that can be used to identify vulnerable individuals and households more effectively, as well as coordinate the services they receive (Hlongwane, 2022).</p>
2	2021	Report of the expert panel into the July 2021 civil unrest.	Africa S, Sokupa S, and Gumbi M.	The cabinet and the public office bearers must be held accountable. Social cohesion and support programmes, including solidarity networks that

				<p>bridge the racial and class divides in society, must be supported by all social partners to ensure that there is accountability, restorative justice and compensation for those who have suffered harm through violence. The police must be adequately equipped and given crowd control equipment; the executive also needs to be better coordinated and aligned. The government, at all levels, must seriously attend to the socio-economic challenges facing the country. The internal contradictions within the ANC need to be resolved. Investments in development at the local level are therefore vital (Africa, <i>et al.</i>, 2021).</p>
3	2021	South Africa: Bridging the income divide.	Barret and Chen	<p>Existing policies will need to be supplemented in the future by reforms that encourage private investment, job creation, and inclusive growth if South Africa is to close its large income gap (Barret and Chen, 2021)</p>
4	2021	Policy brief: Strengthening public accountability to make democracy work.	Gumede W.	<p>There must be a clarification of roles and responsibilities between ministers and senior civil servants. Conduct regular audits of the performance of public services, including looking at the financial sustainability, quality, and impact. Ministers, senior public servants, and accounting officers at every level should be personally held</p>

				accountable for mismanagement, waste, and corruption within the respective portfolios. Furthermore, those who have been proven to be wrong should be prevented from being elected to public positions (Gumede, 2021).
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Figure 5.2: Social housing units completed and tenanted, 2019/20-2021/22

Province	MTSF Target	2019/20 Completed	2019/20 Tenanted	2020/21 Completed	2020/21 Tenanted	2021/22 Completed	2021/22 Tenanted	TOTAL Completed	Total Tenanted
Eastern Cape	1296	452	379	385	243	0	178	837	800
Free State	1296	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gauteng	6606	2140	2659	1049	456	1771	1480	4960	4595
KwaZulu Natal	2052	0	430	0	0	0	0	0	430
Limpopo	720	0	0	164	0	330	0	494	0
Mpumalanga	1026	114	114	0	0	0	0	114	144
Northern Cape	360	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North West	1908	0	362	0	0	0	0	0	362
Western Cape	2736	304	68	258	286	670	399	1232	753
Total	18000	3010	4012	1856	985	2771	2057	7637	7054

Source: Roland (2023) - Social Housing Regulatory Authority Annual Report, 2021/2022

Table 5.2. depicts little to no sector growth in the Free State, the Northern Cape, the North-West and KwaZulu-Natal. In Gauteng, Western Cape, and Eastern Cape there is the large movement of social housing. Mpumalanga and Limpopo reflect a smaller portion and no movement to remedy the shortage of housing. Overall, the housing sector's growth seems to be sluggish and inconsistent.

5.2.4 Research question four

What was the police’s role in deterring social unrest?

Table 5.4: The role of the police in deterring social unrest

Number	Year	Title	Author	Findings
1	2021	Report of the expert panel into the July 2021 civil unrest.	Africa S. Sokupa S. and Gumbi M.	The police admitted that the large numbers were overwhelming. The wide media coverage of the looting meant that crowds could plan where to go. There is no doubt that the police had insufficient capacity to stop the violence. It may be understandable that they did not have intelligence upon which they could have planned operations in the initial stages of the looting, but once it went into subsequent days, the police should have changed plans. The police failed to stop the rioting and looting in July 2021. Overall, it can be concluded that there was a failure by the intelligence structures to anticipate and respond adequately to the violence. The police were inadequately equipped, and ran out of crowd control equipment (Africa, <i>et al.</i> , 2021).
2	2022	South Africa’s unrest or an attempted insurrection?	Lancaster L.	The article praised the police for refraining from the use of excessive force but criticised the substandard working conditions, limited resources, lack of advanced intelligence systems, insufficient

		Violence in July.		capacity, and inadequate training of its members to handle large-scale unrest. Importantly, the article highlighted the lack of deep community integration, leading to low levels of trust between the police and the public. It shows most of the communities near looting hotspots to have a history of sporadic violent protests, and inter-group and public violence. These areas suffer from weak or unaccountable local governance and are characterised by tremendous socio-economic deprivation. The events in July underscore how fragile the rule of law in South Africa has become. The events and its aftermath have increased the fragility of the rule of law (Lancaster, 2022)
3	2022	The causes of police corruption and working towards prevention in conflict-stricken states.	Singh D.	Police corruption aids unrest, state capture, and acts of collective rule breaking. Police corruption takes the form of criminal conduct, misconduct, and theft and corruption trickles down from political corruption and instability as well as the absence of managers, and superiors concealing malfeasance, low wages, high opportunities, and low-risk penalties. Police corruption also heightens anti-governmental groups that attain further public support. Police and other law enforcement actors act within the interests of greedy kleptocrats, political elites, and affiliated criminal networks. This entices

				the police force to engage in corrupt activities, protect vice areas, and form protection rackets (Singh, 2022).
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Figure 5.3: Result of civil unrest



Source: Daily Maverick (2021). The aftermath of protests and looting at N dofaya Mall on July 13, 2021, in Soweto, Johannesburg (Photo: Gallo Images / Papi Morake)

5.3 Summary

The chapter's conclusion regarding the July Unrest-2021 in South Africa highlights the complex interactions between political, social, and historical elements that fuelled the emergence of widespread unrest. Based on the theoretical frameworks of Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon, the analysis demonstrates that the unrest was sparked by ingrained inequality, poverty, and unemployment, which mirrored the unaddressed legacy of apartheid. The peculiar socio-political environment of KwaZulu-Natal played a crucial role in the July Unrest-2021 events, which were not isolated incidents but rather a symptom of larger issues. The chapter highlights how crucial it is to deal with these structural problems to promote long-term social cohesiveness. The results also highlight the value of cross-national comparisons and the necessity of utilising complex strategies when dealing with civil unrest. The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

Chapter Six

Discussion of findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data gathered during the study. The overarching aim was to elucidate the key findings and the implications in the context of the research questions posed in chapter four. Each finding is examined to the research question allowing the researcher to establish a direct connection between the gathered data and the objectives of the study. The results were compared to previous research to show where the areas aligned or diverged and to gain a deeper understanding of the study within the scholarly discourse.

This chapter addresses the research questions that were formulated for the study. The findings from various articles reviewed are captured and discussed accordingly in Tables 5.1–5.5, addressing the research questions.

6.2 Research questions

The following research questions will be discussed in detail.

6.2.1 Research question one

What factors of discontent among social classes led to the July Unrest-2021?

South Africa has a rich history of social movements advocating for change, including labour movements, student protests, and community activism (Almeida, 2019). These movements have played a crucial role in shaping public discourse and influencing policy decisions. The factors of discontent among social classes that led to the July Unrest-2021 were socio-economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, crime, COVID-19 lockdowns, inequality, and service delivery (Mongale, 2022). All five sources in Table 5.1 agree that the above factors created social discontent between different social and economic classes, which invariably aided the unrest.

Many of these factors are thought to be the result of government inadequacies or shortcomings; on the other hand, most unresolved factors are thought to be the legacy of Apartheid, which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns, which made many factors, such as unemployment, much worse (Mongale, 2022). Protests against service delivery, poverty, unemployment, crime, inequality, and education are among these factors.

Similar thoughts are expressed by Mongale (2022), who characterises these factors as the aggravation of cold and hungry people whose opportunities were already restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing wealth and poverty inequality, unemployment, internal party disputes, and ANC-factionalism, which encompasses stereotyped Zulu nationalism and racial tensions in South Africa. Human insecurities such as exacerbation of poverty, food and fuel shortages, effects on the health sector (amid the COVID-19 crisis), loss of lives, and increase in unemployment are enough to constitute social discontent specifically in South Africa. According to Monteil (2020), these factors negatively affect social cohesion and economic stability.

The various socio-economic issues mentioned above form classes between citizens through a common interest in seeking justice and socio-economic conditions. These conditions form relative deprivation, which Marx (1848) believes is an essential component of both class position and interest. Furthermore, the inequality discussed simultaneously antagonises the opposing class. This is reiterated by European Committee on Democracy and Governance (2016), who states that social discontent is related less to people's situations and more to society. In addition, the feeling of anxiety among citizens is related to the precarious state of society. This point is in the background of both the civil unrest and social discontent; it reflects the comparative nature of society, in which one is defined by another, whether status, class, finances, or property. A house looks great when compared to a shack but fails in comparison to a mansion. Thus, from this understanding, European Committee on Democracy and Governance (2016), is referring not just to the individual's comparison but to the group's comparison. In other words, this comparison is not just between a rich man and a poor man, but, as Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998) state, between the collective identities of poor men and rich men. It was turning collective identities against each other in an unequal economic state.

Figure 5.1 shows an indication of the number of housing available to citizens against the need for housing. The availability of affordable housing for all citizens is identified as a contributing

factor to unrest in South Africa. Challenges to address this factor have proven to be unsurmountable due to various obstacles:

- i) Government grants – Citizens are demanding to know why no new social housing developments are planned (Adabre and Chan, 2019). One reason is that the current grant funding model does not meet the needs of social housing providers, who want to build many more units but are operating in a difficult environment. The program's primary target tenants have monthly household incomes ranging from R1,850 to R6,700. Tenants are also struggling to afford the current rates of rental within the current economy.
- ii) Gap market – A research by Todes and Robinson (2020), highlights a significant ‘spatial drift’ of social housing in major cities. The trend in new social housing development is away from projects in the inner city and core suburbs, where economic opportunity and public services are concentrated, and toward more affluent areas where the process is simpler and less expensive.
- iii) Land release - Housing activists have urged local governments to expedite the release of strategically located public land at a substantial discount for affordable housing, including social housing (Sobantu and Maphosa, 2019). *The Social Housing Act* delegated this responsibility to local governments, but it can also be delegated to provincial or national governments, as in the case of underutilised land on military installations. The slow pace of land release jeopardizes land release. Due to underspending, the proportion of the national housing budget allocated to social housing is also decreasing year on year.
- iv) Rising costs - with rising costs, contractors need to get to a scale in construction operations to keep within the allocated budget from the government (Adabre and Chan, 2019). There is a critical need to obtain better service provider rates because of the volume of buildings and the number of properties.

6.2.2 Research question two

Why was the state's response against acts of collective rule-breaking unable to avert the July Unrest-2021 from erupting?

The findings in Table 5.2 are indicative that the state's response against acts of collective rule-breaking was unable to avert the July Unrest-2021 from erupting due to the intense motivation of the looters, who just days prior were ordinary dissatisfied citizens and exacerbated by COVID-19 insecurity (Mongale, 2022). This factor is important as it is made up of various factors all rooted in socio-economic issues. According to Kausar et al. (2021), citizens who were frustrated at a lack of assistance from the government lost respect for government authority and sought to seek justice. Along with looters' frustrations, the intra-party tensions of the ANC played a role, as even President Ramaphosa believes there were forms of instigation by those who knew the government's exact weaknesses at the time. Joining the instigators were the criminal elements that emerged due to the opportunity for collective rule-breaking. In addition, the many protests that take place in South Africa every year display a form of injustice that is constantly spoken out against, meaning that the July Unrest-2021 was not far from shocking in a country where small-scale protests occur so often.

Thus, the state's response was void because many socio-economic issues were dealt with in time and left to fester until the government's rule of law was completely tarnished, and those involved in the July Unrest-2021 could manipulate crowds that emerged simply because the government had not assisted the citizens before the incident. Masson (2021) stated that the police being overwhelmed, unprepared, and ill-equipped only added to the riots spreading and increasing in size as the lack of policing meant that consequences would simultaneously be in lack as well. The combination of angry, ever-growing crowds with no consequences propelled the frenzied atmosphere of the July Unrest-2021 and resembled the last words of Marx's communist manifesto, "*The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win*" (Marx, 1848). The state could not enforce any response until the deployment of just under 22,500 (Al-Jazeera, 2021).

These factors may have been attributed to the vigour of the riots; according to this characterisation, the July Unrest-2021 initially appeared as a manifestation of civil unrest, a phenomenon that had become somewhat commonplace and less impactful in the eyes of the

South Africa populace (Mongale, 2021). However, President Ramaphosa attributed the escalation of the unrest to what could be termed "an invisible third hand." This orchestrated anarchy implication is synonymous with civil unrest, which is the disruption of public order. The fact that other actors or bystanders were drawn into the frenzy by the crowd's contagious emotions, moods, or behaviours reveal that perhaps the state's response came too late and with no authority behind it due to the lack of policing, thus making the state's response void.

The various forms of discontent such as protests, instability and revolution depend only on the economic well-being of the individual and the distribution of wealth (Nagel, 1974 and Smith, 2020). Income inequality is proportionate to the radicalisation of the poor, it further augments class polarisation. In turn, this creates hostility between classes as the poor lose empathy for the rich and vice versa (McDermott et al., 2019). The result is a lack of tolerance that becomes a reciprocal relationship and thus wealth distribution and income inequality have a direct relationship on citizens forming classes. Therefore, mediating the pressures between these groups is instrumental to de-escalate conflicts and create social cohesion.

However, political institutions must do this effectively as the mechanisms for peace and consensus. These institutions such as the police failing to contain protests due to lack of intelligence, equipment and training would make mediation unlikely as it requires crime prevention rather than crime fighting. Furthermore, trade unions and government organisations would have to be efficient in mediation. Thus, the need for widespread participation can serve as an instrument for peaceful political expression to advocate for equitable distribution of wealth Acemoglu and Robinson (2006). However, if citizens feel unheard and lose faith in this channel's ability to mediate then the tensions between classes become inexorable. In sum, the importance of economic equity is pivotal to curbing or easing tensions between classes and without equity or mediation these classes become unmoved by factors resulting from their violent outbreaks like deaths, damages, and further job losses Polacko *et al.* (2021). Thus, the disparities between rich and poor form the 'by any means necessary' psychology.

The link between widespread poverty (and lack of necessities) and unrest is one of causality Adeyeye *et al.* (2023). Deprivation of necessities builds resentment that becomes aimed in whatever direction best suits its short-term interests. The hungry man is an impatient one, therefore the unrest becomes the natural cause if this hunger is collective. The communities often suffer collectively with similar issues due to the history of Apartheid, specifically, the Group

Areas Act that was put in place during Apartheid as the communities often share the same sentiments. This has a dual effect as communities are often the same ethnicity, race, and economic class (Taquette and Monteiro, 2019). Simultaneously, these communities suffer from the same issues and struggles like power outages, issues with service delivery and crime. This forms a bond and sense of togetherness within communities Mamokhere (2019). Hence, these communities form the basis of the collective issues. Should these communities feel resentful toward the government or just do not care for government authority, protests centred around social injustices can rapidly transition to civil unrest using the “us vs them” mentality which undermines institutional trust and prolongs cycles of poverty and unhappiness (Di Baldassare *et al.*, 2019; Brown and James, 2020).

Citizens lose faith in the government's ability when the government is perceived as corrupt and by extension unjust. Government institutions, municipalities and public services are the balancing factors between classes and when perceived as corrupt, the citizens not only lose faith in but also view state institutions as obstacles or powers rigged against them (Köbis *et al.*, 2022). Thus, government corruption impedes economic development and social cohesion (Tanny and Al-Hossienie, 2019). High levels of corruption then become a contributing factor to unrest as right and wrong become blurred through the lack of accountability and transparency. This hopelessness and discontent perpetuate protest action and can fuel instigators to take charge and create opportunities outside of the law to satisfy the voices of the hungry in a somewhat Robin Hood fashion Check (2023). These feelings can erode public trust in government's contribution to unrest and further desensitises citizens for unlawful actions during unrest.

The augmentation of socio-economic issues formed the basis of collective discontent. This discontent forms protest action (Bhorat *et al.*, 2017). The lack of policing then allows the protest to rapidly increase. This continues until the protest is now unrest and it becomes too large for police to adequately contain it. The lack of government authority forces perpetuates the protest action as the protesters slowly become violent at first towards stores by looting and vandalism (Elumalai *et al.*, 2022). Then the ever-growing tensions between protestors and their opposing class inevitably create civil conflict between these groups Visagie *et al.* (2021).

Underemployment and unemployment affect both economic and social aspects of unrest as they lead to frustration and marginalization not just for individuals but also for their families. This drives communities and households to express their discontent and demand social change

(Mncayi, 2020; Galea and Abdalla, 2020). In addition, this is seen as the major cause of poverty. Poverty and unemployment form the basis of socio-economic issues as the result of high deprivation which along with governmental corruption and ineffective policing contributes to crime and a disregard for the law. Employment thus is perceived as a beacon of hope from poverty and therefore, unemployment removes that hope (Monteil *et al.*, 2020). Individuals who are unemployed and facing financial difficulties may resort to illegal activities as a means of survival. This can contribute to an increase in community crime rates (Anser *et al.*, 2020).

Unemployment-related frustration can show up as support for or involvement in protest movements. Individuals may seek to express their dissatisfaction with perceived injustices and demand economic reforms (Hamdi and Weipert-Fenner, 2020). Historically, high unemployment has been associated with political unrest. Unemployed people may feel disenfranchised, giving rise to political movements that question existing structures and demand systemic change (Hamdi and Weipert-Fenner, 2020). Stress, anxiety, and a diminished sense of self-worth are among the psychological consequences of underemployment. These factors can contribute to a negative mindset, which can lead to broader social discontent (Barret and Chen, 2021).

Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998) believe that collective identity is formed when groups form due to aligned situations, perspectives, and experiences. In considering this notion, it appears seemingly insignificant at first glance. However, envision a scenario where a disgruntled faction directs its ire towards the state, subsequently gaining the ability to mobilise while armed. In such an event, the potential for widespread chaos within urban, suburban, or rural areas becomes alarmingly tangible. Even if their activities are thwarted, the aftermath places the burden of restoring order squarely on the state's shoulders. This not only impedes the state's capacity to enhance the lives of its citizens but also fosters greater disdain for the government, as it appears to allow anarchic elements to thrive, further eroding public trust.

6.2.3 Research question three

What could have been done to weaken the Civil Unrest and tensions between citizens and the state?

As shown in Table 4.3, government accountability would have weakened the civil unrest and renewed trust in government institutions by cushioning the poor citizens, creating a lifestyle equilibrium between the poor and rich, resulting in less tension between citizens of different groups and the state (Mongale, 2022). Furthermore, the tensions begin with feeling hopelessness for a better future, and by working to eradicate poverty, crime, and unemployment, the government can revive hope for citizens (Africa News, 2021).

In modern-day class conflict, a pattern of economic inequality tends to follow a similar pattern but has varying complexities in the formation of a class (Marx, 1848). Class formation is fluid in the context of South Africa, the racial, ethnic, language, economic status and political following are diverse and complex. This diversity and complexity stems from the diversity of the African continent in terms of genealogy, but also the Dutch settlers, Indian settlers, British colonialism and then Apartheid. Therefore, class itself is no longer simply rich and poor, but ethnically, culturally, and politically motivated Woodcock (2019). Race and economic class are invariably intertwined due to Apartheid but in recent years the divide has surpassed racism and classism formations. The income disparity is a primary factor in the formation of class but the government's inability to deliver key services and shield the poor from being deprived of necessities are also major contributors to the government resentment and tensions between those who do and do not share their resentment Bell and Bell (2020) deduced that the rich or ruling class is interested in furthering their wealth, and the working class is interested in acquiring wealth through labour.

The civil unrest is therefore perpetuated by the inability of mechanisms to mediate the tensions between opposing classes (Heydebrand, 2001). Furthermore, poor access to necessities such as reasonably priced and high-quality healthcare services can cause discontent, particularly in areas with underdeveloped healthcare systems Burger and Christian (2020). Barrett and Chen (2021) believe the prices, particularly for food and fuel, seem to be particularly important during a period of social conflict. Carvalho *et al.* (2022) asserted that there is no denying that COVID-19 has exposed or exacerbated many pre-existing problems in our society. Therefore, the inability to procure necessities such as food, plumbing, electricity, etc. created a disregard for governing authority. The rise of inflation, which was exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns (economic shutdowns), perpetuated economic deprivation, which ultimately equated to a lower lifestyle for many, inevitably causing social discontent (Briggs *et al.*, 2021).

Combined with effective policing to decrease crime and add security to citizens, the July Unrest-2021 may not have gained the popularity that it did, and with effective policing, it may not have ever become the July Unrest-2021. Thus, programmes and policies to hold the government accountable, close the wage gap, create effective service delivery, strengthen education, create employment, and deal with socio-economic issues could have been implemented to weaken the civil unrest and ease tensions between citizens and the state.

In the event of institutional failure, institutions (such as trade unions, legal institutions, policing and service delivery, and community development projects) can mediate pressures between rich and poor by aiding the poor to a satisfactory economic level. Buroway, Wright (2000), and even Heydebrand (2001) do not disregard Marx's revolution; they merely note that it is not as simple as poverty equates to revolution. However, the socio-economic factors that caused the July Unrest-2021 and the July Unrest-2021 itself are evidence of these institutional failures. Masson (2021) adds that the state has had various opportunities to address and deal with citizen issues before they eventually escalated, such as violent protests in recent years like Fees Must Fall, the Marikana massacre, and Mafikeng/Mahikeng, to name a few examples (Mongale, 2022). Therefore, the institutions should have been renovated upon each failure to curb or lessen the socio-economic issues from culminating together. Hlongwane (2022) discusses strategies to address major socio-economic issues in South Africa that include high unemployment, poverty, inequality, and limited access to public services:

- i) Promoting entrepreneurship through Enterprise Development programmes to tackle unemployment.
- ii) Combating poverty and inequality with the implementation of redistributive measures using fiscal policy is proposed.
- iii) Equalising wages and salaries, which are identified as a key solution to inequality, although social grants have helped mitigate the impact of salary inequality.
- iv) Improving education and spatial integration is necessary to equip the poor with skills for a capital and skills-intensive economy.

- v) Improving access to public services, the integration of the social assistance system with other departments is suggested, along with the development of an integrated social registry for better identification and coordination of services for vulnerable individuals and households.

6.2.4 Research question four

What was the police's role in deterring social unrest?

The role of the police during the July Unrest-2021 unrest in South Africa has been a subject of intense scrutiny. The discussion in Table 5.2 indicates that the police's role in deterring social unrest was pivotal (News24, 2022). Thus, the absence or failure of the security forces to deter social unrest is seen as a major contributor to the July Unrest-2021's rapid spreading (News24, 2022). The SAPS and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations (DPCI) were tasked with investigating the crimes committed during the unrest.

However, a report found that the response by the police and intelligence services to the unrest was inadequate and insufficient. The police were scapegoats for the lack of intelligence and information that other security agencies were tasked to find and deliver to the police. Furthermore, the police were under-equipped, untrained, and short-staffed (Africa, *et al.*, 2021). The lack of cohesion between state institutions, police and the community are similar issues that exist with corruption within the governmental sphere. Police and political corruption both lack the accountability and cohesion necessary to deter any acts and in fact, these very forms of corruption become embedded in the culture of the country forming a disregard for the rule of law which entices acts of collective rule. The use of social media accelerated the rule-breaking and propelled this phenomenon to an uncontrollable level.

Civil disobedience is made up of a range of activities from group protests, demonstrations, disruption of order, and violence Vorster (2023). These incidents are not all necessarily violent but there is an undertone of violence due to the lack of government authority, policing, and history of violent protest action. However, civil disobedience can devolve into civil unrest due to event triggers such as Marikana when workers were killed during protests. A more common trigger for civil unrest is social injustices and unheard protests as they expose the resentments

and inequality in society. Thus, effective policing is crucial to overcoming the resentment of citizens reaching a boiling point. Civil unrest is directly caused by the factors propelling it such as poverty, crime, police inability and lack of government trust. Civil unrest encapsulates the racial, ethnic and class divides between citizens, the government cannot respond effectively because the underlying issues have not been dealt with Binder (2024). In other words, each protest has the potential to escalate because of the unchecked resentments of citizens being multifaceted, thus each protest is compounded with other resentments (Hartley *et al.*, 2021).

Social unrest is initiated by individuals expressing a grievance and is reaffirmed when forming a group to express their collective grievance Earl *et al.* (2022). These groups are communal, their shared interests enhance group cohesion which ultimately forms a class that can quickly be mobilised. A crisis, such as perceived injustice, inequality, or fear, may generate group cohesion and unleash the potential for social disturbances. In this context, group dynamics can override individual autonomy of thought and even intellect. Individuals can more easily engage in actions contrary to their ordinary norms and values when drawn into the collective Earl *et al.* (2022).

Terpstra (2011) views the police as nothing else than a mechanism for the distribution of situationally justified force in society' similarly making the police a symbolic extension of the state itself, thus the police's involvement would have deterred collective rule-breaking to some extent by acting as the consequence and law that was absent in the event. In addition, Martin and Bradford (2019) agree that neighbourhood disadvantage, (dis)order, social cohesion, and collective efficacy are strongly predictive of perceptions of police. Brooks (2019) stated that the police would often end up mediating between the government and communities, reaffirming Terpstra's (2011) claim. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by summarising the key research findings in relation to the research aims and questions and discussing the value and contribution. Recommendations are also provided in this chapter. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and opportunities for future research are proposed.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings for each research question, the following recommendations are provided:

7.2.1 Research question one

What factors of discontent among social classes led to the July Unrest-2021? Based on the findings for research question one, the following recommendations are provided:

i) Address socio-economic and political issues

The state should proactively address socio-economic and political issues to prevent future unrest. This includes addressing high unemployment rates, social inequality, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. Implementing policies that promote job creation, reduce inequality, and provide social safety nets can help alleviate discontent among social classes.

ii) Government leadership and accountability

Strong government leadership and accountability are essential. The government should take responsibility for addressing citizens' grievances and resolving disparities. Leaders should focus on inclusive change, mobilise new coalitions, and prioritise the interests of the people over vested interests within the government.

iii) Multidimensional risk factors

Recognise the multidimensional risk factors that contribute to public discontent, such as poverty, high crime, unemployment, and economic insecurity. Policies and interventions should target these root causes to prevent future protests. This includes improving economic safety nets, reducing crime, and promoting economic opportunities.

iv) Policy reforms

Implement policy reforms in various areas, such as unemployment, public sector wage inflation, bureaucracy, land reforms, agricultural policy, private sector involvement, rule of law, poverty reduction, and anti-corruption measures. These reforms should aim to create a conducive environment for economic growth and social stability.

v) Transparent governance

Foster transparent and accountable governance by addressing corruption and cronyism. This includes strengthening institutions and enforcing the rule of law. Transparent governance can help restore public trust and confidence in the government, reducing the potential for future unrest.

7.2.2 Research question two

Why was the state's response against acts of collective rule-breaking unable to avert the July Unrest-2021 from erupting? Based on the findings for research question two, the following recommendations are provided:

- i) Strengthen early warning systems: Enhance communication and collaboration between intelligence agencies to ensure the timely detection and response to potential threats. Regular meetings of the National Security Council should be prioritised, and red flags raised by intelligence structures should be taken seriously to prevent future unrest.

- ii) **Address socio-economic issues:** The government should focus on tackling underlying socio-economic issues, such as youth unemployment, pervasive poverty, and racial tensions. These factors contributed to dissatisfaction among looters and should be addressed to reduce the likelihood of future unrest.
- iii) **Promote social cohesion:** Initiatives aimed at fostering social cohesion and racial harmony are essential to prevent the recurrence of racial violence, as observed in areas like Phoenix. Promoting understanding and tolerance among different communities is crucial.
- v) **Effective use of social media monitoring:** Law enforcement agencies should enhance their capacity to monitor and respond to social media-driven mobilisation quickly. This can help prevent the rapid escalation of unrest and violence during crises.
- vi) **Community engagement:** Engaging with communities and addressing local grievances, such as poor living conditions, spatial planning, and service delivery issues, is vital in reducing the potential for protests that can lead to widespread unrest.

7.2.3 Research question three

What could have been done to weaken the civil unrest and tensions between citizens and the state? Based on the findings for research question three, the following recommendations are provided:

- i) **Promote entrepreneurship and job creation**

Implement policies that encourage entrepreneurship, particularly through enterprise development programmes. These initiatives should focus on job creation and providing opportunities for citizens to start and grow their businesses, ultimately reducing unemployment.

- ii) **Poverty and inequality alleviation**

Develop and implement programmes that target poverty and inequality reduction. Utilise fiscal policies to support redistributive measures, with a focus on equalising workers' wages and salaries. Expanding social grant programmes can help in this regard.

iii) Education and skill development

Improve education and skills development to empower the poor and enable them to participate more effectively in a skills-intensive economy. This should involve enhancing the quality of education and ensuring equal access for all citizens.

iv) Integrated social assistance services

Strengthen the integration of the social assistance system with various government departments responsible for public services, including Basic Education, Health, Public Works, and Home Affairs. Develop an integrated social registry or interoperable databases for identifying vulnerable individuals and coordinating their services more efficiently.

v) Government accountability and coordination

Ensure accountability at all levels of government, holding public officeholders accountable for their actions. Establish social cohesion and support programmes that bridge racial and class divides within society and promote restorative justice for those who have suffered harm during the unrest.

vi) Law enforcement and public safety

Equip the police adequately and provide the necessary crowd control equipment. Improve coordination and alignment within the executive branch of government. This recommendation suggests ensuring that the police force is well-prepared and adequately equipped to handle large-scale events or public disturbances. It emphasises the need to enhance coordination and collaboration among different government departments and agencies to facilitate a more effective response to security challenges and emergencies.

7.2.4 Research question four

What was the police's role in deterring social unrest?

The "Free Zuma" campaign primarily served as a catalyst that united disgruntled citizens who identified with the lower class in South Africa. The absence of significant consequences for violations, which can be attributed to the overburdened state of law enforcement, has provided a boost to the confidence of various groups, including criminal elements and activists, allowing them to take advantage of the current circumstances with greater boldness. Recommendations for addressing the police's role in deterring social unrest, based on the findings, are as follows:

i) Enhance police capacity and training

Invest in improving the capacity, training, and resources of the police force. Equip them adequately to handle large-scale unrest effectively. Ensure that police personnel are well-trained to manage situations of this magnitude.

ii) Community policing

Establish closer ties between the police force and the communities they serve. Improve community policing efforts to build trust and cooperation among residents. Address the historically low levels of trust and cooperation in affected areas.

iii) Local governance and socio-economic development

Work to enhance local governance and socio-economic conditions in areas with a history of violent protests and socio-economic deprivation. Promote community development initiatives to address underlying socio-economic issues.

iv) Rule of law and anti-corruption measures

Strengthen the rule of law and anti-corruption measures within the police force. Implement stricter anti-corruption policies, conduct regular integrity checks, and hold officers accountable

for misconduct. Address the factors that contribute to police corruption, such as low wages and opportunities for corruption.

v) Public awareness and transparency

Promote public awareness and transparency in policing efforts. Encourage the public to report corruption and misconduct within the police force. Implement whistleblower protection mechanisms to encourage reporting.

vi) Reform leadership and management

Implement reforms in police leadership and management to ensure accountability and effective decision-making. Address the absence of managers and superiors concealing malfeasance.

vii) Enhance community resilience

Support programmes that enhance community resilience and the ability to cope with socio-economic challenges. This can reduce the vulnerability of communities to external influences and unrest.

viii) International collaboration

Collaborate with international law enforcement agencies to combat cross-border crimes and corruption that may contribute to unrest. Exchange best practices and intelligence to address regional challenges.

7.3 Study limitations

This study encountered several limitations that are worth acknowledging. Firstly, the reliance on desktop research limited our ability to capture firsthand experiences and real-time insights from participants directly involved in the event. Conducting interviews and surveys with event stakeholders would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Secondly, the study's inherent limitations stemmed from its reliance on online sources, which could have skewed the data by excluding viewpoints and information that was not readily available to the public. The recent occurrence of the phenomenon being studied proved to be difficult in gathering sufficient data for the sample size and in obtaining historical records and resources, which limited the scope and depth of the analysis. These limitations should be considered in the interpretation of the findings and warrant avenues for future research to address these constraints.

7.4 Areas of further research

There is a strong argument for more research on the July Unrest-2021 unrest in South Africa, which was brought on by former President Jacob Zuma's imprisonment and presents a compelling case for further research. Investigating the corruption of state institutions and bad management can reveal the existence of a "nationalist bourgeoisie" mentality, providing light on the legacy of Apartheid's ongoing influence. Additionally, exploring the efficacy of various nation-building programmes and identifying the most effective strategies could present a promising avenue for future research. Understanding the interplay between these factors and their impact on social discontent and civil unrest in the South African context is an area ripe for further exploration.

The socio-economic and political dynamics at work can be examined through a particular lens during this period of socio-political unrest, which was characterised by widespread looting and destruction, especially in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Investigating the root causes of this unrest, including the role of economic inequality, unemployment, and the impact of unforeseen crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, could provide valuable insights into the factors driving social discontent in South Africa. The government's response to the unrest and how the cases against those involved were handled in court may provide insight into how the nation's legal system and rule of law are doing.

Moreover, the unrest provides an opportunity to examine the influence of political figures and movements on social stability. The 'Free Zuma' protests, for instance, raise questions about the power of political narratives and their ability to mobilise public sentiment.

7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the July Unrest-2021 represented a profoundly unexpected phenomenon for the majority of South Africans, although subtle indicators were predicting its arrival. The long-standing grievances that had gone unresolved for decades served as the event's catalysts and ultimately resulted in a discontented eruption. This study examined the underlying causes of the July Unrest-2021 using relational analysis, emphasising how, if left unchecked, they could increase the likelihood of future unrest. As such, the study's recommendations and identified areas for further research emerge as pivotal elements in deterring the recurrence of such unrest. By heeding these insights, the country can work towards preserving the spirit of Ubuntu and fostering national unity, ensuring that the country stands together as a cohesive nation rather than becoming fragmented along class lines.

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Appendix A: Ethical clearance approval



16 March 2023

Ryan Liam Henry (218061548)
School Of Social Sciences
Howard College

Dear RL Henry,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005226/2023

Project title: Social discontent and class struggle: A case of KwaZulu-Natal July 2021 socio-political unrest.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 25 January 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

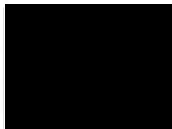
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 16 March 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

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