



Master of Science in Development Studies

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*“Having the freedom to having freedom”
Youth Participatory Assessment of Accessibility in
Port Elizabeth, South Africa*

María Camila Gómez Fonseca
Supervisor: Ulf Johansson Dahre

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List of Abbreviations

CBD: Central Business District

IDP: Integrated Development Plan

IPTS: Integrated Public Transport System

NAC: National African Congress

NMDA: Nelson Mandela Development Agency

NMBM: Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

RDP: Reconstruction Development Programme

NTIP: National Technologies Implementation Platform

NMU: Nelson Mandela University

Abstract

This study explores the subjective definitions of *access to the city* in a group of young people in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Through semi-structured interviews, workshops, and participative observation those definitions emerged. Departing from the concept of perceived accessibility, it came apparent that those definitions gravitate around three essential elements: availability of safe and affordable public transportation, safe neighborhoods and free circulation within them, and opportunities (places and activities) for free entertainment. Accessibility is discussed as a central capability from the *Capabilities Approach* and connected to the notions of *Right to the City* and *Social Justice*. Finally, suggestions for institutional actions are offered.

Key words: *Youth, Access to the city, Accessibility, Capabilities, Right to the City, Social Justice, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.*

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1. Introduction

Without any doubt, the Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations guide most of the efforts in development policies nowadays. Specifically, SDG11 focuses on creating inclusive, safe, sustainable, and resilient cities to reduce poverty by tackling inequality and detrimental consumption/production patterns. The reason behind this focus on urban dynamics is evident. According to the United Nations' calculations, 55% of the world's population lives in cities, and by the year 2050, it is expected to reach 68% trillion. (United Nations, 2018) This demographic landscape places high pressure on local, national, and regional governments to create urban development plans that propose efficient solutions to issues such as climate change, security, pollution, services, life quality and productivity.

One of the strategies to achieve this is to promote *accessibility* to cities. Although literature on *accessibility* and *accessible cities* is broad, both from the academic and public policies perspective, there are still gaps and areas to be expanded. For example, much of the current research considers accessibility as a matter of the use of physical spaces and resources by disabled population. Another dominant perspective is that of access as transportation, which means that research focuses on the optimization of time and costs. Both views are given mainly from the design and architectural insight of urban planning, and although necessary, their scope is limited and overlooks cultural, historical, economic, and political aspects of the city experience of those who inhabit it.

1.1. Research Questions

Recognizing that there is a research gap, this thesis seeks to contribute to the topic of accessible cities from an anthropological perspective by defining the concept of accessibility from city experiences of a specific population group. Therefore, the main research question is:

How do young people from vulnerable areas in Port Elizabeth define "accessibility" to the city?

The research has three aims. First, to think of the city-citizen relationship as dynamic, one in which the city has access to the citizen and vice versa. Second, to analyze aspects of accessibility and consequently to propose public actions (from collectives, youth groups, government agencies) that cover multiple access-related dimensions. And third, to suggest *access to the city* as a mean to build democratic and just cities, in which each citizen has the right conditions (capabilities) to choose how to live a valuable and fulfilling life. To address these goals and build on the central question, the following secondary questions were formulated:

- *What elements hinder/enable "accessibility" to the city for young people in vulnerable areas in Port Elizabeth?*
- *How could Port Elizabeth become more accessible to young people from vulnerable urban areas?*
- *How could improvement in accessibility to Port Elizabeth impact the city's democracy and social justice?*

To answer these questions, I draw on the Capabilities Approach, particularly the concepts of *functionings* and *capabilities* from the perspective of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. On the one hand, this allows me to explore the definition of *accessibility* from young people's perspective, which could potentially encompass different kinds of capabilities. On the other hand, this theoretical background enables me to establish a connection between accessibility and well-being, which results useful when thinking about "access to the city" as a right.

1.2. Thesis Outline

With these questions and goals in mind, the second section sets the project in Port Elizabeth's context. The conceptual framework presented in the third section includes a literature review on the concept of *accessibility*, emphasizing on the notion of *perceived accessibility*. The fourth section introduce the theoretical framework of the Capabilities Approach, Social Justice and Right to the City. The fifth section presents the methodological choices that guided the research process, including a short reflection on ethical considerations. The sixth section presents the findings, followed by a discussion on section seven. To conclude, section eight offers a summary and conclusions.

2. Contextualization

In this section, I firstly examine how the apartheid system influenced access, configuration, and use of urban spaces. Second, describe the current transport system in Port Elizabeth. Lastly, I present a global overview, discussing how Port Elizabeth's efforts to have accessible cities are embedded in a national and global context guided by the Sustainable Development Agenda.

2.1. South African Cities and Apartheid: The Case of Port Elizabeth

According to Maylam (1995) and Christopher (1987), the history of segregation of urban space in South African cities began long before Apartheid. Port Elizabeth was founded in 1815 with the primary function of managing and processing the goods and materials that passed through its bay. Later the economy of the city included pastoral activities, mining, and manufacturing industry (Christopher, 1987). These economic dynamics provoked the city to expand, which in turn caused an increasing mixed population between Whites (European), people of mixed origins denominated *Coloured*, Cape Malays (Javanese slaves of the Dutch East India Company), and indigenous Black population.

Within this colonial context, the layout of the cities was used to highlight differences and stress the link between race and economic position, not only between colonized and colonizer but within groups. According to Christopher (1987) the result was a segmented society structured on perceived differences, where each community had its interests and was increasingly separated from its neighbors. An excellent example of this is the predominant *Coloured* population settlement in the industrial areas of North End and South End, while the western and central areas were predominantly White.

Nevertheless, the administration's approach to the Black population was different. Since 1825 Port Elizabeth had a Black settlement on the western edge,

established by the London Missionary Society with the purpose of 'civilize' them. However, it was only until 1850 when the local administration issued the legislation to create a local suburb or 'location' called the Native Strangers' Location (currently Walmer) to accommodate Black workers who did not live with their employers or owned property. (Christopher, 1987; Maylam, 1995)

Maylam (1995) argues that one of the explanations for urban segregation was the 'Sanitation Syndrome.' This phenomenon was a "*moral panic and racial hysteria, as whites increasingly came to associate the black urban presence with squalor, disease, and crime.*" (Swanson in Maylam, 1995, p. 24) For example, between 1901 and 1904, there was a spread of bubonic plague all around South Africa, which was unfortunately associated with Black urban settlements, mainly because of the 'Black death' denomination. Fearing contamination, local administration in Port Elizabeth demolished inner-city locations and built a new location six kilometers north city center, called New Brighton. This kind of urban removals happened also with the Influenza and Tuberculosis outbreak.

Another perspective about segregation, focuses on removals due to material interests regarding resentments for commercial success, control over labor force, and release of land for industrial purposes. In 1923 the Natives Act (Urban Areas Act) was announced by the national government stating that all municipalities had to establish locations for their Black population. In 1936 the Natives Land and Trust Act established that Black inhabitants could no longer purchase land outside designated areas, and had to be removed from the electoral roll, preventing Black people from political actions.

Furthermore, almost all new private housing projects were exclusive for Whites and included clauses in the deeds preventing not only Blacks but Coloured people to purchase. Additionally, in order to qualify for national housing grants, Port Elizabeth's Government zoned the city into different racial units, separated by open land, railways, or rivers with no road to connect them.

In 1948, with the National Party ruling, the already existing segregationist legislation was put into place. Their program contemplated two stages. First, to evict Black people from the cities and resettle them in all-black towns in the outskirts. To achieve this, the controls over black property, movement, and residence got more severe. New and more prominent locations were built, and the process of removal continued until 1985, when only 4% of the black population lived outside designated locations. (Christopher, 1987)

The second stage was to divide the remaining population into separate racial groups accommodation areas (White, Coloured, Chinese, Indian). The aim was a city where no residential or commercial areas were mixed, creating a sort of separate towns for each group within the city, as Christopher (2000, p. 6) argues: *"State partition became the official aim by the 1970s, with South Africa fragmented into a series of African nation-states and a large White-controlled rump entity"*.

This measure was more challenging to achieve due to a long history of mixing, but two significant actions took place: The Population Registration Act (1950) and the Group Areas Act (1950). The first one required every inhabitant to classify into a distinct racial group. The second intended to provide exclusive, separated zones in urban areas for residential and commercial use. (Christopher, 2000)

The white population had a central position in the city since no removal or resettle was needed. Moreover, they stayed close to the Central Business District (CBD), creating an urban structure where the center was White, and the periphery was Coloured or Black.

Life in the Black areas was also full of controls and regulations. For example, the creation of "Native Administration Departments" through the Promotion of Bantu Self-government Act (1959) worked as central agencies to manage townships included surveillance systems, internal laws about residence certificates, reports of visitors to the Township superintendent, restriction of leisure activities beyond those planned by the administration, liquor selling and drinking restrictions. (Maylam, 1995)

Furthermore, since the movement of Black laborers was limited, transport services were also a tool to control access. Commuter flows carried people over long distances in the morning and took them back home in the evening. Still, public transportation, pedestrian mobility, and non-motorized transport were not enforced since the government rather spend on road infrastructure for private vehicles, promoting the start of the mini-bus taxi industry. (South African Cities Network, 2016)

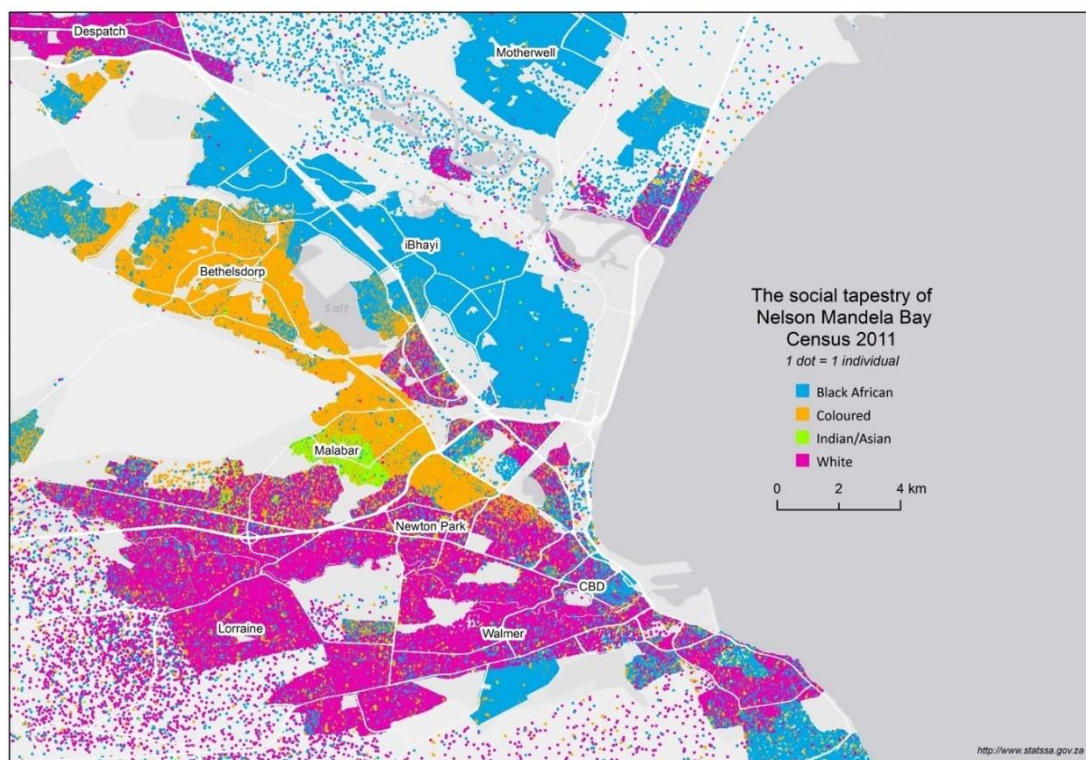
The apartheid system was "*a legally enforced policy to promote the political, social, and cultural separation of racially defined communities for the exclusive benefit of one of these communities*" (Christopher, 2000, p. 1). It was based on racial exclusion, control over Black, Coloured and Indian population, and dispossession and marginalization of the non-white residents. It determined political and legal rights according to a race classification, transformed urban spatial patterns, health services, education, job opportunities, political participation, and every dimension of South Africans.

The transition to a segregated city was gradual, taking from 1948 to 1994, through a systematic process of removal and resettlement of non-white groups. In 1994 the National African Congress issued the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP) and the White Paper on Housing, looking for a policy framework to overcome inequality, marginalization, displacement, and poor access to socio-economic opportunities. In 1996 the White Paper on Transport fostered a shift in urban dispositions by encouraging public instead of private transport, and densifying cities to increase the impact of such transportation. (South African Cities Network, 2016)

In recent decades the scale and disposition of South African cities have changed dramatically regarding public sector investments, low-income housing, essential service provision, access to services of health and education, and public transport infrastructure. Private investors developed shopping malls and gated communities, but as stated in the State of South African Cities Report (2016), the change has been slow and not inclusive enough. For example, state-funded housing still marginalizes the

urban poor since most of the integration has taken place in middle-to higher-income areas, while the low-income black communities stayed at the outskirts of the city (see Figure 1). This configuration and the housing subsidy program locked people in specific locations with low access to opportunities, keeping a large proportion of the population feeling as they were not part of the city. (South African Cities Network, 2016)

Figure 1: Social tapestry Nelson Mandel Bay, Census 2011



Source: (Government of South Africa, 2016)

2.2. Nelson Mandela Bay Transport System

As we will see in further sections, the transportation system is a crucial topic when discussing accessibility. On this regard, Read et.al (2014) argue that Port Elizabeth is

a city of mobile, diverse people that needs to come together as a community, using public spaces such as transport, as tools to encounter.

The General Household Survey (2017) indicates that in the Eastern Cape, 15.9% of the population uses minibus taxis, 8.6% cars, 6.1% sedan taxis, and 3.3% buses. This section aims to present a review of the current state of transportation in Port Elizabeth, offering a description of the primary means.

Bus

Algoa Bus Company (See figure 2) has approximately 19 routes and 265 buses (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2011). It is the only subsidized bus operator with two main terminals (Norwich and Bay Station) and 21 satellite stations. The average bus trip is 22 km, and like the minibus taxis, the AM period is busier than the PM. Nevertheless, bus routes follow the laborer's flows meaning most of the morning routes go from Northern areas to CBD and southwest, and afternoon routes take them back from CBD to neighborhoods in the north area. There are no night bus routes. Furthermore, information about fares, stops, timetables, and routes is only available through direct request at one of the terminals. Another bus system is known as *Libhongoletu*, meaning *our pride* (See figure 3). This Integrated Public Transport System was intended for the World Cup of 2010 but several difficulties and planning failure (i.e. roads were not properly planned, buses did not fit the lanes) caused delays in its operation. Nowadays it operates only from Claery Park to CBD and return.

Figure 2: Algoa Bus in Motherwell



Figure 3: IPTS



Source: Author

Minibuses-taxis

Is the most popular transportation mean. According to the Integrated Transport Plan (2011), this type of transportation is classified into three categories, depending on the area, nature, and kind of operation provided. The first category is the minibus taxi operating between residential areas and business, in low to middle-income residential areas. Due to passenger's reluctance to transfer, the operation changed from "rank-to-rank" to direct services, which resulted in the proliferation of informal ranks during peak hours. During off-peak hours these taxis operate principally from CBD, Korsten and North End ranks. Nevertheless, in recent years, there has been an increase in informal services called "Sweepers" (See figure 4) operating independently in Northern areas. (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2011)

Figure 4: "Sweepers" in Motherwell



Figure 5: 'Bakkie' in Red Location



Source: Author

The second category is Minibus and sedan taxis providing feeder or distribution service in residential areas of New Brighton, Zwide, and Motherwell area. These private sedans or sixteen seats vehicles, known as 'Jikeleza's,' or 'Bakkies,' (See figure 5) go around the streets of the neighborhoods mentioned above looking for passengers. In general, they are in bad condition and do not have a Certificate of Roadworthiness.

The third category is sedan taxis providing connecting services between Motherwell and Zwide/KwaZakhele. Many of them also operate long distances, connecting to Grahamstown and Peddie (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2011). Across town, there are around forty-nine taxi ranks, the neuralgic point is situated in the city center (CBD) close to an Integrated Transport System stop. This rank gathers more than 258 routes. Passengers have a waiting time between 15 and 30 minutes in peak hours, and more than 30 minutes in off-peak periods since taxis must wait until filled up. Fares vary depending on the route, the further the more expensive. By the time fieldwork took place, it was between 11 and 15 Rands (0.7-1 Euros). Since the CBD rank is the diffusion point, most of the commuters coming from neighborhoods in the northern part of the city must take two taxis. One until CBD and then another to their destination (i.e., Walmer, Green Acres, Airport, Cleary Park) increasing the cost. By 2010 there were approximately 2485 minibus taxis registered, with 56% operating with a license. Most of them have between twelve and sixteen years of use. (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2011)

Train

It is a 31 km rail line built for freight transport (See figure 6). Nowadays, connects Port Elizabeth with Ibhayi, Despatch, and Uitenhage, also part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. It is used predominantly by people living at a walking distance from one of the eleven stations along the line. The frequency is one train every hour from 5:30

to 18:30 (except between 12:30 and 13:30) for a total of twelve round trips a day, and no service on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays. (Adewumi & Allopi, 2014)

Figure 6: Train System in Port Elizabeth



Source: Author

2.3. Global Actions: SDG 11 and New Urban Agenda

To understand why accessibility is an issue for modern cities all around the world it is necessary to consider global trends and international policy frameworks that are defining not only priorities for urban development but the concept of the city itself. Two elements stand out in this matter, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and establishment of the New Urban Agenda in 2016.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development consists of a plan for collective action to eradicate poverty, strengthen peace and encourage prosperity, understanding all the above as a requisite and means to reach the final goal of "sustainable development." One of the central elements in this agreement is the participation, not only of governments of member states of the UN but of different stakeholders and

organizations that contribute to local debates regarding implementation. (United Nations, n.d.)

This action framework is constituted by 17 goals and implemented and measured through 149 indicators. The idea of the goals is to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental protection, social development, and economic growth.

Although the goals are quite general, one of them stands out for specifically addressing cities. The aim of the SDG 11 is to "*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*" (United Nations, 2018A) There are numerous reasons to focus on urban settlements. First, it is a question of quantity: according to the calculations of the UN, half of the world's population now lives in cities and will reach 3.5 billion in the year 2030. Second is a question of resources: cities represent between 60% and 80% of global energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions. Third, it is a question of quality of life: in 2016, 883 million people lived in slums, mostly in the global south. (United Nations, 2015)

The indicators for this goal reflect the concern to create more inclusive cities, in which inhabitants have quality services. While these measures cover a wide range of interests, from housing to culture through natural disasters and sexual harassment, there is an obvious concern about the accessibility to resources and opportunities. For example, access to safe and affordable housing, to basic services, to safe, affordable and sustainable means of transport, to participation mechanisms that involve citizens in planning and management of the city, and access to open and safe green areas. (United Nations, 2018B)

Following the SDG11 approach, the New Urban Agenda emerged in 2016 aiming to ratify the commitment made by the participating countries, recognizing that local governments have the primary responsibility, but the United Nations is the supporting force behind the consolidation of cities as drivers and sources of sustainable

development. Furthermore, the new agreement was useful to evaluate progress and identify new challenges to address poverty.

One of the crucial aspects of the New Urban Agenda is a shift in the approach to cities. Previous conferences looked at urban spaces as problematic and challenging in the fight against poverty, mainly because sustainable development was a rural matter. Currently, and thanks to local and global debates, the transformative potential of urbanization is vital for sustainable development through "*effective, transparent and participatory urban planning, economic development, legislative processes and management*," (United Nations, 2012, p. 2) especially in the "developing countries."

The report prepared by South Africa for Habitat III starts by recognizing the particularities that the post-Apartheid system meant for developmental needs. It highlights the changes in the economy, population movements, and financial flows that implied a more significant pressure on eight cities. The report considers five general topics to address with the New Urban Agenda. First, the importance of rural-urban linkages to offer development initiatives that integrate both. Second, recognizing the demographic composition of the country and differential needs, for example, youth issues (such as education, lifestyle choices, skills development, technology access, and empowerment), seniors (lack of data on housing needs), people with disabilities, or women (equity in education, job access, safety, political participation). Third, the necessity to improve policy frameworks, financial sources, urban land management, urban sprawl prevention, disaster risk reduction, and government roles. Fourth, the need to improve services such as access to health (prevention of HIV / AIDS, quality of the environment), urban mobility (integrated transport system, railways, and non-motorized options), living conditions in informal settlements, adequate housing, drinking water, sanitation, and clean energy among others. And fifth, the issue of safety and security, particularly of women, through a stronger criminal justice system, reforms to police system, and addressing underlying causes. (Government of South Africa, n.d.) (United Nations, 2016A)

What this ambitious global trend shows us is that cities have become the center of attention when it comes to development initiatives, since they concentrate not only most of the population but also the most urgent challenges and problems for development as well as the possibilities of a solution.

The general perspective of these global trends raises three fundamental characteristics that define a *modern* city: sustainability, equity, and resilience, which indicates a trend focused on the human being and their living conditions, beyond economic performance. However, it is worth asking about the unifying character of these characteristics and the definition of the city they imply. Perhaps, in the urge to measure and improve indicators, we fall into the trap of overlooking particularities, and conditions of each country. As argued by Caprotti et al. (Caprotti, et al., 2017), there is the risk of de-contextualizing and devaluing particular urban realities by rendering the problems.

3. Conceptual Framework

3.1. Definitions of 'Accessibility'

Defining the term accessibility is not an easy task since it is used in a great variety of contexts and disciplines, as well as in daily activities. Its most literal definition raises it as an entity's quality to being reached or entered, implying ease of use, understanding or appreciation. (Oxford Dictionary, 2019)

This difficulty is discussed by numerous authors, who agree that it is a challenge both to define the concept and to find measures that account for it. (Geurs & van Wee, 2004); (Gutiérrez, 2009) Nevertheless, it is possible to find shared elements between concepts. For example, two types of indicators: opportunities to travel (process indicators) and actual travels and levels of satisfaction with the service (outcome indicators). Another point in common is the relevance researchers give to factors beyond the means of transport, such as land-use, commuting time, and subjective factors such as preferences. (Lättman, 2016)

One of the first definitions of accessibility, presented by Steward (1948), posed the term as a measure of the intensity of the possibility of interaction. Nevertheless, most authors recognize Hansen's definition (1959) as the first one. Through a study on residential land-use models related to access to industrial, commercial, and residential locations in Washington D.C. Hansen developed the "gravity models." These schemes define accessibility as "*the potential of opportunities for interaction.*" (Hansen, 1959, p. 73) Considering the spatial distribution of activities in a determined area, it reflects on the *ability* and *desire* of the subject (people or companies) to overcome spatial separation. Thus, accessibility is proportional to the size of the activity (for example how many job opportunities are available in a area) and inversely proportional to the distance between the subject and the location of the activity. The empirical study showed that people establish hierarchies of activities and are willing to cover longer

distances (and therefore longer commuting times) if the activity is a priority such as work, school, and health services.

Other classic researchers combine land-use and transport focus. For example, Dalvi and Marti (1976) argue that accessibility reflects the ease to reach any land-use activity from a location by using a particular transport system. Burns & Golob (1976) refer to the freedom to decide whether to participate in activities or not. Ben-Akiva and Lerman (1979) propose accessibility as the benefits granted by a transportation or land-use system. Niemeier (1997) develop the focus on opportunities by defining accessibility as the *ease* to reach such *preferred destinations* that offer opportunities (generally employment), taking into consideration impedances (unit of distance or time) and available resources (transport and mobility systems).

Moreover, Geurs and van Wee (2004) focus on passenger transport and define it as the extent to which land-use transport system allows individuals to reach activities or destinations. They also identify four components of recent definitions that interact and influence each other. First, land-use as the combination of amount, quality and distribution of opportunities (for example jobs, health facilities, schools, shops), demand for these opportunities, and the supply-demand of opportunities (abundance/scarcity). Second, transportation referring to the disadvantages of using a specific transport system (travel time, waiting time, parking), costs, and effort (reliability, safeness, comfort). Third, temporal constraints meaning the availability of opportunities at different moments of the day. Fourth, the individual component referring to differential needs, abilities, and opportunities that influence individuals' choices.

Furthermore, it is possible to identify trends referring to measures and components. Van Wee et al. (2001) identify three trends in accessibility definitions and measures. First, infrastructure related definitions focused on transport supply and demand characteristics. Second, the activities approach, centered on land, location, and activities available in a determined range of time and distance. The third approach

combines the previous two generating complex studies. In general, accessibility research from these points of view includes elements of travel costs, demand, job clusters, availability of commercial activities. Likewise, Geurs and van Dee (2004) also identify infrastructure-based measures (transport features), location-based measures (number of opportunities within a determined time-travel interval), person-based-measures (personal limitations for freedom of action), and utility-based measures (economic benefits from having access to activities and opportunities in a specific location).

More recent surveys expand the definitions and components of accessibility to include social, cultural, and individual factors such as social exclusion/inclusion (Brand, et al., 2004); (Preston & Rajé, 2007); (Cass, et al., 2005); (Church, et al., 2000), (Grieco, 2015), social justice and sustainability (Farrington & Farrington, 2005); (Lättman, 2016). Furthermore, researchers such as Grieco (2015) emphasize the importance of differentiate mobility, focused on the potential of movement or the means to achieve access, and accessibility, defined as the goal, the potential for interaction and spatial organization of facilities and services.

3.2. Perceived Accessibility

In line with the latest research approach, this thesis is based on the concept of perceived accessibility, which combines elements of inclusion and the subjective factors of users. Lättman (2016) defines perceived accessibility as the *degree of ease to live a satisfying life*, using a transport system. This includes the perceived possibilities of using the transport system (costs, availability, safety) and the perceived opportunities to reach a location and take part in certain preferred activities. Through a quantitative study in Karlstad (Sweden), the author shows that quality (translated into reliability, functionality, courtesy, and simplicity) of transport systems, feeling safe and frequency of travel are good predictors of perceived accessibility. Furthermore, the study establishes differences between age groups that enable future researchers to make a

differential analysis to improve inclusion and equitable access to transportation and activities.

Although numerous authors (Budd & Mumford, 2006); (Lofti & Koohsai, 2009); (Titheridge, et al., 2010) have studied the gaps between objective accessibility — quantified in traditional indicators such as travel-time, cost, and availability of travel options—, and perceived accessibility, the intention of using perceived accessibility as a measure is to complement traditional indicators and methods, seeking to contribute to enhancing life quality and social inclusion by improving urban planning studies and policies.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Capabilities Approach: a Framework for Access

This section presents the theoretical framework guiding the analysis. First, I outline the Capabilities Approach as argued by Amartya Sen (2001), highlighting the central concepts and pillars of the perspective, namely: functions, capabilities, wellbeing, and agency. The second section presents the standpoint of Martha Nussbaum (2003); (2011) as a way of operationalizing the Capabilities Approach, focusing on her list of capabilities, related to accessibility, and her focus on social justice.

Sen's Perspective

In 1999, Amartya Sen introduced the Capabilities Approach, one of the most influential perspectives on development. More than a theory, this approach offers a normative, methodological and analytical framework to think about issues of inequality, poverty, and welfare —among others—, which distances from the neo-classical and utilitarian theories that focus on subjective factors (such as individual desires and mental states) as well as modernization theories of development. (Sen, 2001; Desai & Potter, 2004)

The core of this approach lies in individuals having the ability to achieve the kind of life they have reasons to value. To accomplish this kind of life, it is necessary to have certain freedoms, defined as *adequate opportunities or possibilities to achieve what is subjectively meaningful*. Thus, social arrangements should be assessed "according to the extent of freedom people have to promote or achieve the plural functionings they value." (Desai & Potter, 2004) This focus implies that the goal is not only to increase personal income or national gross domestic product but to enhance the liberties of each person —mainly to have a range of options and the freedom to choose—, and to remove the obstacles to achieve those freedoms, for example, poverty, tyranny, systematic social deprivation, intolerance, and neglected public facilities (Sen, 2001). It is through the evaluation and effectiveness of these capabilities that the wellbeing and life quality can be determined and compared. (Robeyns, 2006). Nevertheless, Sen is emphatic in

stating that 'human liberties' is a subjective category, which must be exposed to the discussion because it depends on what people enjoy and have reasons to value. (Desai & Potter, 2004)

Sen (2001) (Robeyns, 2006) argues that development's end and means is to expand human freedoms. In this sense, freedoms have a constitutive role (with the essential purpose in enriching human lives) and an instrumental role (interconnectedness through empirical connections that contribute to the general capability of living more freely). To develop his point of view, Sen (2001) presents four basic concepts: functionings, capabilities, agency, and wellbeing. I will draw mainly on functionings and capabilities for my analysis.

Functionings are the basic units to assess wellbeing. It describes various doings (reading, eating, learning, participating) and beings (being well-nourished, being literate, being educated, being part of the community) that a person can undertake and are imperative to achieve her version of wellbeing. (Alkire, 2005) (Desai & Potter, 2004) (Robeyns, 2006) This implies that functionings are subjective and reliant on the level of agency of the subject, and dependent on the context or normative framework. (Robeyns, 2006) Its nature leads to a wide range of complexity since functionings vary from basic needs to complex social requirements.

Capabilities "are the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys, to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value." (Sen, 2001, p. 87). According to Alkire (2005, p. 2) "are the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve." These freedoms refer to the real, effective opportunities to achieve functionings, given the possibility to choose whether to achieve them or not and how to do it. Capabilities are linked to freedom on its negative meaning —the restraining forces that might prevent a person from achieving functionings—, and positive meaning —the positive power or capacity to do something—. Each person sets a ranking of individually valued capabilities, based on what they have reason to value.

Agency is the individual ability to pursue and realize goals that are valuable for the person. Being an agent implies to act and facilitate change, and to have the liberty and chance to choose from different options. (Sen, 2001) The concept of agency is essential in two senses. First, to assess what is valuable on the individual level, and in consequence, to determine what kind of life each person wants to live. Second, to expand the range of concerns beyond individual, basic-needs level posing freedoms as collective and creative too. This interest suggests a concern for public debate, democratic, participation, and empowerment to promote wellbeing. (Alkire, 2005)

Well-being refers to "*an evaluation of the 'wellness' of the person's state of being*" (Sen, 1993, p. 37). It implies an assessment of the elements that a person values, that is the functionings each person considers fundamental. Then, it is possible to say that a person reached her wellbeing if she succeeded in pursuing and achieving the objectives (material, mental, social, economic, political, cultural) that has reason to promote. This concept is closely linked to the agency, and how it turns individuals into active agents of change for their wellbeing, that is deciding which functionings are a priority and how to achieve them. In line with these concepts, Sen establishes five instrumental freedoms: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. (Sen, 2001)

Nussbaum's Perspective

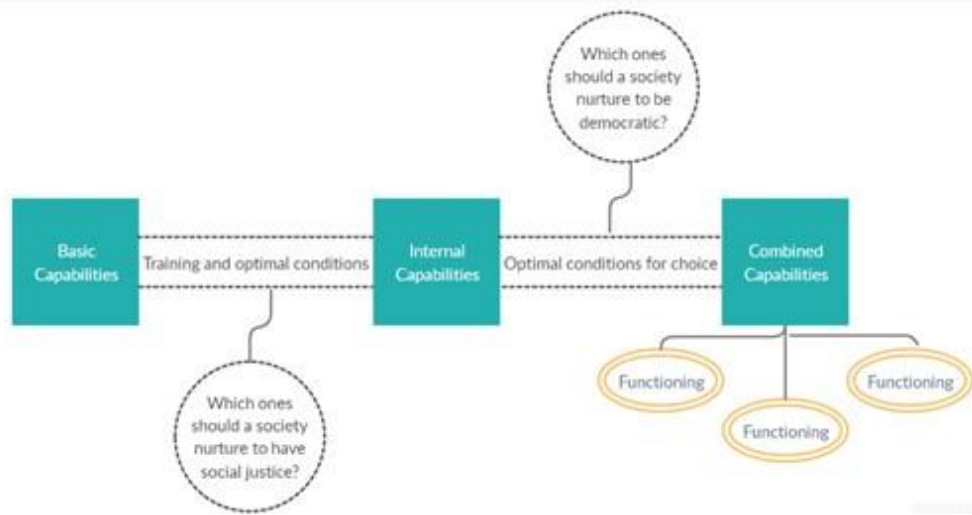
Nevertheless, one of the most frequent critiques to Sen is of being too general and flexible in his list of freedoms. Nussbaum (2003) argues that Sen refuses to make commitments about which capabilities society should pursue, and that negatively affects the idea of social justice and equality.

In contrast to Sen, Nussbaum proposes the Capabilities Approach as a '*Normative political theory*,' emphasizing the qualitative plurality, variety, and irreducibility of essential elements for life quality, i.e., health, physical integrity, and education. (Nussbaum, 2011)

The author defines the Capabilities Approach as "*an approach to comparative quality-of-life assessment and to theorizing about basic social justice*" (2011, p. 18). It has several characteristic elements. The first one is its fundamental question: *What is a person able to do or be?* This focus shows interest in each person as an end, asking about available opportunities. The second one is the freedom to choose from a range of possibilities that 'good societies' should give to their citizens. This element is related to the concept of agency and self-definition since people should be free to exercise or not those freedoms. It is also characterized by being pluralistic in its value since it recognizes that the capabilities differ from person to person in quality and quantity and therefore cannot be reduced to a global number or indicator. Finally, Nussbaum highlights the concern for justice and inequality in the form of failure or omission of capabilities, which is why it is vital to establish two fundamental elements: a specific list of capabilities and a threshold for these.

Nussbaum identifies three categories of capabilities (see figure 7). The first one is '*Basic Capabilities*' corresponding to those elements essential to human nature, those "*innate faculties of the person that make later development and training possible.*" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 24) The second group is the '*Internal Capabilities*' which groups those fluid and dynamic states of the person: intellectual, emotional capacities, health, bodily fitness, skills, personality traits, all of them trained by social interaction in different social, economic, familiar, or political environments, and resources given by society (health, education, support and infrastructure). The third category is the combination of those '*Internal Capabilities*' with the optimal conditions to choose. These '*Combined Capabilities*' are the answer to the question: *What is this person able to do or be?* It could be defined as a set of interrelated opportunities to choose and act.

Figure 7: Categories of Capabilities According to Nussbaum



Source: Author

The combination of personal faculties ('Internal Capabilities') and the right political, social, and economic context grants those opportunities.

The goal of these capabilities and conditions is that individuals actively achieve those functionings vital to them. However, the aim is not only to achieve particular 'beings' and 'doings' but to have the highest amount and quality of capabilities, as a realm of choice and freedom. Nussbaum defines social justice as the political duty of states to provide for the right conditions for every citizen to overcome a certain threshold of Combined Capabilities. In this sense, a just state is the one that gives differential conditions to its members according to their specific needs.

Regarding the list, the first question is how to select the essential capabilities. For this task, the author turns to the concepts of *dignity* and *respect*. She argues that certain conditions facilitate or not a dignified life, so the question must be: *Which capabilities, if removed, would make a life not worthy of human dignity?*

Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that not everybody must have the same central capabilities or that living conditions must be unified. It is understood that the objective of this list should be to protect the areas of essential freedoms that enable a

humanly dignified life. The ten Central Human Capabilities (see Table 1) are open-ended and are always prone to discussion through democratic dialogues. In this line of thought, the central capabilities arise from the question: *What does a life worthy of human dignity require?* (Nussbaum, 2011)

Table 1: Central Human Capabilities

Central Human Capability	Description
Life	To live a human life of normal length. Not dying prematurely.
Bodily Health	To have good health. Adequate nourish. Adequate shelter.
Bodily Integrity	To be secure against assault and violence. Being able to move freely. Reproductive choice.
Senses, Imagination, and Thought	To be able to use one's mind, senses, imagination, reason, and thought. To connect with experiences and produce works of own choice. To have pleasurable experiences.
Emotions	To be able of having emotional development. To live without fear. To be attached to things and people.
Practical Reason	To be able to engage in critical reflection. To plan own life.
Affiliation	To be able to live with and toward others. To engage in different social interactions. Freedom of assembly/speech. To be treated as a dignified being. To not be discriminated.
Other Species	To be concerned for other species and nature.
Play	To be able to laugh, play, and enjoy recreational activities.
Control Over One's Environment	To be able to participate in political choices. To participate. To be able to hold property. To be able to seek employment on equal basis.

Source: Author based on Nussbaum (2003)

This aspect of the Capabilities Approach resonates with the methodological choices of this research since it focuses on individual perspectives and inquiries about what is valuable for each participant. Furthermore, it is appropriate for the nature of the overall project and the intention of generating recommendations. The first theoretical choice was to focus on capabilities instead of functionings to be able to look at a wide range of possible ways of living (Robeyns, 2006). Furthermore, thinking accessibility as a binary relationship between two entities, inhabitants and city, calls for a theoretical perspective that considers the individual responsibility of citizens in their choices. This is the "responsibility-sensibility principle" that Robeyns mentions.

4.2. Right to the City

Coming from a Marxist perspective, the concept of "Right to the city" was first coined by Henri Lefebvre, inspired by the events of 1968 in Paris. In the search for alternatives to capitalism, the focus was on the working class as crucial players in social change. Nevertheless, this change was meant to happen at "*the experiences of everyday life of all kinds of people in their homes, in their schools, in their communities —and yes, in their cities.*" (Marcuse, 2014, p. 5)

The right to the city, opposed to the right and need for nature, is a political claim for social justice, social change and realization of human potential in order to eradicate poverty and inequality (Marcuse, 2014). It is not merely a claim to return to the city (as physical space), but to a transformed right to urban life as a place of encounter, therefore it privileges use value over exchange value giving the user of the urban space (inhabitant) a leading role. This "revolution" calls for action from the real dwellers of the city, that is:

"[...] youth, students and intellectuals, armies of workers with or without white collars, people from the provinces, the colonized and semi-colonized of all

sorts, all those who endure a well-organized daily life [...] people who stay in residential ghettos, in the mouldering centres of old cities and in the proliferations lost beyond them." (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 159)

Huchzermeyer (2014) calls Lefebvre a Marxist humanist because of his concern about people's desire for creativity, as opposed to productive work. From this point of view, the "right to the city" is the combination of liberal and humanist concepts with a Marxist perspective. The concept of "right" refers more to "a moral right, an appeal to the highest of human values" than to legal claims backed by judicial frame. Lefebvre argues that:

"The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: [sic] right to freedom, to individualization and socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city." (Marcuse, 2014, pp. 173-174)

Furthermore, "the city" is not a pre-existing space but a metaphor for a new way of life, government, social life, physical environment, and legal jurisdiction. It becomes an *oeuvre*, that is a work of art, of social relations in the city and the (re)production of human beings instead of objects. (Marcuse, 2014)

Here, it is essential to highlight Lefebvre's distinction between "the city" and "the urban." The first one is a capitalist, material, reduced, impoverished manifestation of the urban world, where everything —physical space included— is a marketable commodity. This is especially noticeable in the production of the space as isolated segments corresponding to private property, useful to separate people into "habitats" and prevent them from "*coming together in spaces of encounter, play, and interaction.*" (Marcuse, 2014, p. 149). On the other hand, "the urban" is not merely urbanization, but

a society full of meaningful social connections and engagement between residents, a place for the encounter (Harvey, 2008). It refers specifically to human interactions and how inhabitants create and give meaning to space through everyday use and practices, which requires appropriation and de-alienation of the urban space.

Giving ownership to the city to those who inhabit it goes against property rights and therefore is revolutionary. At the core of the concept is questioning to power relationships, but also the collective nature (opposed to the individual nature of liberal-democratic rights). Furthermore, the right to the city is collective insofar as it responds to the complexities of social life and the social use of spaces, and in that, it implies the beginning of a revolution to move beyond state and capitalism that is impossible from an individualistic point of view. (Purcell, 2014)

4.3. Analytical Framework

Supported by the concepts of the Capabilities Approach of Amartya Sen, the operationalization of this theoretical framework offered by Martha Nussbaum, and complemented by the concept of Right to City of Lefebvre, I offer the following analytical framework for the case of accessibility in Port Elizabeth (See figure 8):

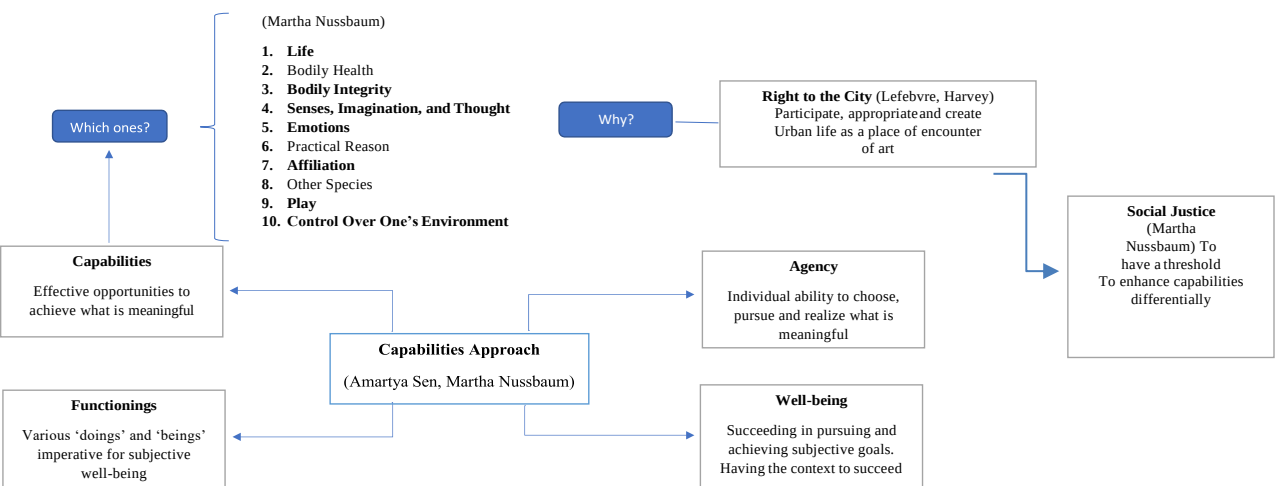


Figure 8: Analytical Framework

Source: Author

5. Methodological Framework

5.1. Worldview, Ontology, and Epistemology

As stated by Creswell (2013), the research design process starts with philosophical assumptions, nurtured by the researcher's "worldviews, paradigms, or sets of beliefs [...] and these inform the conduct and writing of the qualitative study." (2013, p. 15). In order to be transparent, the researcher needs to make these assumptions explicit to be aware of their influence on the inquiry.

In this train of thought it is safe to say that my interest is how young people perceive and give meanings to access and the city itself corresponds to a ***social constructivist worldview***. There are three reasons for this statement, the first one is that I believe individuals try to understand the world they live in, creating complex meanings out of their experience and interactions. (Creswell, 2013) The second, related to the first one, is because it aligns with the anthropological approach of the research inasmuch as I aim to focus on *culture*, understood as Clifford Geertz argues: "[...] to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an *interpretive* one in search of *meaning*." (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). The third one is that the particular historic background of South Africa and how urban space reflects political, social, and economic factors calls for a perspective that considers in how far this affects how citizens engage with the city.

These underlying assumptions point to a ***relativist ontology***, where "*categories only exist because we arbitrarily create them*." (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 21) Therefore, the research aimed to explore the participant's definitions, experiences, interactions, and complex relationships around accessibility. (Given, 2008) These subjective categories, tell a story about the different ways of representing reality and thus are capable of explaining multiples views on the city.

In this sense, the epistemology of this research is ***subjective*** since the city, and therefore access to the city does not exist independently of what people makes out of

it, so meaning is not natural but given by the interpretations. (Scotland, 2012) By focusing on people, their interpretations of the world, meanings, capacities, agency, and their behaviors and interactions I chose to conduct **qualitative research**. My role as a researcher is to collect or gain knowledge about young people's perceptions and interpretations on accessible cities (Given, 2008). My approach to uncover the multiple and socially created realities was to submerge, collect, and entwine as many points of view, experiences, and quotes as possible. To achieve this, I tried to become an insider through fieldwork in the city of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The intended result is a coherent narrative that emphasizes on the participants, privileging their interpretation (Della Porta & Keating, 2008).

5.2. Research Design

As mentioned above, the interest of this research is to uncover how young people in Port Elizabeth define "accessibility," and which factors promote or hinder it. Therefore, an ethnographic approach was selected. This research requires a closer approximation to how young people experience the city, that is, a perspective from the "*insider's or native's perspective of reality*." (Given, 2008, p. 289) This emic perspective is useful to understand why members of the social group do what they do. Furthermore, the concept of "access to the city" requires an on-site strategy that allows the researcher to experience and see how young people approach the city to then try to make sense of the collected data, in both the natives' views and the theoretical analysis, what is known as the etic perspective. (Ibid)

According to Creswell (2013) the ethnographic approach focuses on an entire cultural group. In this case, young people in Port Elizabeth. It is a process that requires involving in the day-to-day lives of people through participant observation, interviews, descriptions, and ultimately an interpretation of "*shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing*." (Creswell, 2013, p. 68) The

intended product is a story that allows the reader to understand the participant's point of view.

Moreover, the research followed specific ethical and reciprocity principles: ownership of the data, sensitivity to fieldwork issues, mutual trust, and transparency about the research. The researcher will be further discussed in the following sections.

5.3. Methods of data collection

Sampling

According to official statistics, youth population in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality corresponds to the 37,1% of total population, around 427.434 inhabitants (Stats SA, online consulted January 22nd, 2019). Knowing that it was impossible to reach the whole population, I implemented a non-probabilistic sampling strategy using two principles. The first criterion was age. Public Youth Policy in South Africa establishes that the young population range corresponds to the segment between 15 and 34 years old (The Presidency Republic of South Africa - Youth Development Agency, 2015). The second criterion was housing area. Initially the project was intended to be conducted in the neighboring towns of Ibhayi and Uitenhage, areas that are also part of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. After carrying out secondary research, preliminary conversations during fieldwork and consultations with the local development authority (Nelson Mandela Development Agency), the project changed location to neighborhoods in the northern areas of the city, primarily because commuting easiness, and convenience to reach participants. The selected neighborhoods were: New Brighton, Helenvale, Shaunderville, Korsten, Motherwell, KwaZakhele, and Algoa Park (see Figure 9). According to official information of the Municipal Development Plan, these areas are the most densely populated corresponding to more than 40% of the total population of the city. They also have the highest numbers of low income, low education, unemployment, and low health

standards. Therefore, these neighborhoods were categorized as "poor wards". (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, 2016, p. 39)

Furthermore, New Brighton, the Northern Areas, and Motherwell have the highest numbers in crime (gang violence, hijacking, and robbery) within the Eastern Cape Province (Ibid, p. 48).

Later in the field research, Walmer Location area was included as the eighth neighborhood. Although this area is west of the city, it also presents high levels of crime and violence, as well as unemployment, low levels of education, and weak infrastructure and services. (Phyfer & Jules-Maquet, 2016)

Figure 9: Map of Selected Neighborhoods in Port Elizabeth



Source: (Google Earth, 2019), modified by author

Methods

During the six weeks of fieldwork in the city of Port Elizabeth, I developed four methods. A total of sixteen semi-structured *interviews* with young people between 15 and 33 years of age of the neighborhoods mentioned above, four of them in couples and twelve individually. The participants were chosen through non-probability

sampling, combining snowballing (through four organizations: Nelson Mandela Development Agency, Masifunde, Gadluma Skills Development Project, and the National Technologies Implementation Platform-NTIP) and the help from two local gatekeepers, convenience sampling and quota sampling (seeking participants from diverse age, gender, place of origin, economic activity).

Moreover, an additional set of interviews were conducted, including two with teachers from educational centers one with an official from an urban planning and development agency, one with the local authority of one of the selected wards, one with a former officer of a taxi cooperative, and one with an official of the Youth Development Agency. All through convenience sampling.

The place for the interviews was agreed with each interviewee. In general, they took place in their place of work, school, or home. All the interviews were done in English and recorded in audio, upon presentation of the project and with written authorization to be recorded and photographed in the process (see Annex C). The interviews were open-ended, semi-structured in the format of casual conversations (see Annex B) to encourage reflexivity on both parts, and to enable the participant to elaborate on specific topics in their language (O'Reilly, 2009).

The second method was a *participatory workshop* with fourteen young people from the neighborhoods identified. For this workshop, non-probabilistic sampling with an opportunistic strategy was also used. The Nelson Mandela Development Agency recruited participants according to their databases of young people interested in participatory projects. It took place in a central and neutral venue and had the logistical support of the NMDA. This exercise allowed interaction, information sharing, and discussion not only about the topics proposed in the workshop but about general perceptions around life in the city. The workshop consisted of four activities: concept mapping, force field analysis, problem tree and briefing workshop. (Wates, 2006) The results were recorded in photography and video, as well as billboards and field notes.

The third tool was *observation* that took place through tours of the city with the gatekeepers and on my own using different means of public and private transport, and through places of entertainment, schools, workspaces and some observations in family homes. They were recorded through fieldnotes, descriptions and reflections, as well as photographs and videos of specific elements of public transport. Although the intention was to use participant observation, safety conditions (for both participants and researcher) and the context of segregation prevented this instrument from being more widely used. This limitation will be discussed in the next section.

The last method used is *reflexivity* through entries in the field journal. This tool is not limited to the process of fieldwork but during the writing process as a tool to reflect and find new research problems and questions. During fieldwork in Port Elizabeth, it was useful to situate me within the research and bring forward questions about the participants' perception and my own on being a "light-skinned" female researcher in a context of racial segregation. Furthermore, it was useful to unravel socially accepted behaviors and space boundaries, related to race perceptions, and how these images could influence the research process. This topic will also be expanded in the next section.

5.4. Data Analysis

The analytical approach is guided by the principles of crystallization that try to build a rich explanation, identifying patterns and consistent themes and using examples as support. This perspective recognizes the subjectivity of research and how it is inherently partial, situated, and contingent. (Ellingson, 2009)

Within the qualitative approach, I followed a thematic strategy for the analysis of information. Using a data-analysis software (Atlas.ti 8), I organized and classified information from literature, field notes, photographs, videos, workshop posters, and interviews. For example, by identifying definitions of *accessibility* through all these

resources I was able to compare and establish similarities, detecting similar words or ideas between participants and between my data and the literature. The result of this was a series of codes or meaningful segments that were combined into themes noticing patterns and regularities (Creswell, 2013). These issues were interpreted considering the Capabilities Approach, that is, noticing functionings, freedoms, and opportunities, and establishing empirical connections between them. With this overview, I analyzed the accessibility situation under the concept of "Right to the City" by Lefebvre and Harvey.

5.5. Ethical concerns

Concerning ethical aspects of the research, the first choice was to be overt with the participants regarding the nature and objectives of the research. A general description of the research project was sent to the organizations together with a letter from ICLD endorsing the project. Likewise, the project was presented in educational institutions along with a model of *Informed consent form for project participants*. At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and answered personal questions (country of origin, mother tongue, opinions on Port Elizabeth) and questions regarding the project.

As O'Reilly (2009, p. 59) mentions, it was more problematic to be open about what will happen with the results given that I have no control over "*secondary analysis of archived material or mass media interpretation and publication of our results*." Likewise, it is impossible to guarantee that the research results materialize through interventions or institutional measures. This was a concern that workshop participants expressed, as they claimed to be tired of being "used" in participatory exercises that did not evolve into improvements for the youth in these neighborhoods.

Driskell (2002) stresses that working with children and youth always has ethical implications. For example, the relationship adult researcher/young participant always

carries an unbalance where the adult has the power, and children and youth do not. Similarly, the researcher, as an outsider entering a lower-income community, has a history of class, gender, or race that might tilt the power scale.

Inter-cultural research and power relationships

The intercultural nature of the research raised two opposing positions regarding power relations. On the one hand, the gatekeepers, whom established connections with the institutions, always presented me as "*a researcher who came from a Swedish university*" which in my opinion created an unbalanced power relationship based on "knowledge" putting me on a higher level. This imbalance manifested in professional and personal questions. I did not feel comfortable with either of the descriptors, partly because of my perceptions about the two statements. Therefore, later, during interviews and while contacting people on my own, I tried to remove this factor by emphasizing my Latin American origin, my student status, and using relaxed language and attitudes. On the other hand, as an outsider, the power relationship reversed. Both, participants and gatekeepers perceived me as vulnerable and unaware of the situation of insecurity they noted in the city. Again, this contrasted with how I perceived my Latin American origin as an advantage. I felt that the knowledge and the *ways of my body*⁴ (Suárez-Guava, 2002) that I have for the simple fact of being Colombian gave me an advantage. This feeling led me to move much more freely through the neighborhoods of Port Elizabeth and to use the means of public transport as the main observation site. However, this generated concern in the gatekeepers, first because nobody knew me in these neighborhoods (a crucial dynamic that will be discussed

⁴ "[...] *There are behaviors, and they can be explained as customs —rituals or millenary inheritance because it has always been that way; like transporting by bus from one neighborhood to another in the city, and neighborhoods have always existed— or can be explained from the symbols shared by those who act them, the actions of the body can be related to representations of culture where the body has registered. They can also be explained as a product of the structural contingencies suffered by human groups; and that is a sociological analysis.*" (My translation)

later) and second because my light skin color dictated specific codes of behavior and especially "safe spaces" that I had to learn to negotiate (using self-recognition as a mestizo person) or respect depending on the case. This limited the ethnographic focus of the investigation as there were places and times when my presence was not welcome or explainable, risking not only my safety but also that of the participants I was accompanying.

Language

The interviews, workshop, and all the interactions during the fieldwork took place in English. Not being my native language, it worked as an advantage because it was not the native language of some of the participants either, which helped to relax the interview and deepen into some questions and terms. It also served to break the ice in some situations in which my native tongue and accent were the entry point. At the same time, it worked as a disadvantage that made me feel nervous and insecure when it came to maintaining conversations with some of the participants. Overall, it was a challenge that added depth to the whole experience.

5.6. Research Limitations

Among the main shortcomings is the fieldwork's length, since as mentioned above, it is necessary to spend more time with the community to truly delve into its dynamics and be recognized and accepted. Second, the sampling of participants limited the perspectives that were taken into account. A possible solution to this limitation is to repeat the exercise at the local level and then make comparisons between areas or develop joint exercises with representatives from each one of the neighborhoods.

6. Results

6.1. *It's just that you have to know about the city: Life in the neighborhood:*

Daily life in the neighborhoods of the interviewees can be described with ambivalent feelings. On one hand, there is a positive feeling linked to a great 'sense of community' and belongingness, fueled by the exaltation of common elements such as language, shared origins, and the history of the Township. Participants perceive their neighborhoods as a place to live, especially if they speak Xhosa, since those are communities where everyone knows each other and therefore it is possible to ask for help. This strong feeling of community is reinforced through the lack of affordable accommodation and the persistence of apartheid's spatial dispositions, that lead to many generations of the same families to settle in shacks in the back of their parents' house. As these generations grew up together, they maintained the community ties but also kept it closed to newcomers:

"People staying there they have discrimination because we are not grown here, we came to study, and a lot of young people there are not studying, so maybe they are jealous." (KzT1)

Many of the participants underscored the opportunities that exist in the Townships, nevertheless, they stated that the problem lies in youth not willing to take those opportunities, since they prefer the 'easy life' of the gangs (*Ginza life*). According to the interviewees, this is a generalized situation in South Africa, because youth faces great pressure to impress their peers and gangs become a mechanism to show off. One participant stressed the strong presence of organizations and social projects in her neighborhood, which particularly seek to support and guide the youth. These projects also allow for the neighborhood to have a more multicultural character, enabling locals to get used to the constant presence of *white people* in the streets.

On the other hand, there is a negative feeling regarding safety, violent crimes, and the lack of opportunities. One of the participants refers to this fact as *the need of hustling* or wandering around the city looking for activities to earn a living. This negative feeling is also associated with frustration, stress and fear, not only due to the lack of opportunities, but also to the emotional valence of the daily violent crimes:

“ [...] for example a young child walking to school along the way he or she saw a dead body how? maybe that person was hit by a car, he was in a car accident, or he was shot by the police, maybe he's a criminal or whatever so that are those frustrations that you collected the street before you go home (MT1)

Most of the respondents did not identify their surroundings as dangerous, however, they affirm to know about violent crimes (i.e. robbery, homicides, fights between gangs, and drug dealing) in their area and always labeled other areas of the city as more violent and unsafe. This knowledge is based on information they have heard in the media (television and newspapers) or through acquaintances, which underscores the importance of circulating information at the Municipality (media), and locally (mouth-to-mouth). Such information helps creating images about certain areas and create patterns of behavior which are appropriate for different areas, for instance:

“There are areas where you don't wanna be walking around at night” (AP1)

“Because at night you can't see, right? Depends on where you are walking as well. Obviously that is a problem in South Africa, you can't trust anyone, and at night especially if you can't just go out to someone and say 'hey, I would like to know the time' or whatever because is on the news, there is crime, there are things happening to people and you hear about all these things so you always have to act like 'hey, I am gonna protect myself and stay home at night and that is what it is but it also depends on who you know” (AP2)

One the same note, sources of information come in the form of individuals. Precisely, one of the elements emerging constantly during the interviews and the workshop is the importance of knowing someone from the different neighborhoods, who would provide with useful advice about appropriate behaviors in each one of the neighborhoods, making life easier. The interviewees affirmed that these connections have two purposes: first, to have someone that knows the streets of the area and can orient themselves in it. The second one, being seen with a recognized member of that community works as a safe-conduct for both parts, since it lessens the sense of impenetrability, and guarantees that the visitor is not a threat to the community.

“I have family in other areas so I might be able to go and party in Motherwell because I have my cousins there who are quite familiar with the area. I have been several times in the area and I kind of grew up there, a little bit, grade one and two there [...] but I don’t know New Brighton, I don’t feel much safer driving by car there” (WT3)

A generalized perception of distrust and disappointment towards public institutions and their actions regarding insecurity, specially directed to the police, exists. This is related, on one hand, to the security systems historically consolidated (See section 2.1), and on the other, to the lack of concrete action in these areas. In one of the workshops, the participants interacted as follow:

“Just when you enter the township, here is the police station, and here is the township but you will hear gunshots [pa, pa, pa] and you only hear the police coming in after fifteen minutes or ten minutes. Then you hear the vans from police coming and asking ‘What happen? Who got shot?’ Is like: ‘Guys! It happened, you were a few seconds away from the scene’ so other people they won’t take matters to the police now, instead, what they do, if they have an instance like that, they go to another gang, to pay to another gang” (NB1)

“- But the community takes control of since like the police don’t do their job these days. So, I think that’s why they take it in their own hands [...]

- but the police do their job, the problem is that the community don’t report. They have that

state of mind: if you report to the police, you'll be a snitch" (MT3)

Those two factors named above —the lack of acquaintances in other neighborhoods, and insecurity—, cause the activities and patterns of movement to be reduced to what is possible within the neighborhoods. Most of the participants, especially the underage, stated that they limited their activities to the school, home, church, visiting family members on weekends, and spending time at their friends' houses. This means that they do not have any particular reason, nor interest in visiting other areas of the city.

6.2. *Is like they forget that there are people:* Transportation in PE

When asked about how participants reach the places where their daily activities occur, they referred that they ride bikes, walk, or use taxis mainly. To a lesser extent, they use the Algora Bus line, private cars, and apps like Uber. The most used transportation mean is taxi. Among the positive aspects of this transportation form, participants mentioned to feel comfortable using it since it has been the traditional transportation. They justify existing inconveniences as 'normal challenges', being part of the experience:

"[...] if there is someone who doesn't want to pay so then we have to stop somewhere until this person face you know so you come late [...] sometimes you have traffic or maybe the person who's driving doesn't have a license so you are just standing in the middle of the way and you're late and all but those are just normal challenges" (MT1)

Additionally, taxis are perceived as a mean of transportation for the non-white people, which also strengthens the *sense of community*. Some of the young people interviewed here explained that the taxis work for them as a meeting point, in which they hear gossip, news, and new music. This translates into taxis having a social function. Furthermore, they argued convenience as the main reason for using taxis. This is due, in the first place, to the wide offer of taxis in every neighborhood of the city, which

almost always guarantees a spot at any given time. This fact is in open contrast with the scarce frequency of the Algoa Line and the Integrated Transport System, which force users to follow a fixed schedule. In some cases, taxis are the only mean of transportation, due to the lack of service of the municipal systems. Second, the participants view as an advantage the fact that it is possible to hail a taxi almost anywhere since they are always looking for passengers. This system contrasts with the institutional bus lines which have specific stops and users must abide by them, even when it implies walking more than 30 minutes. Third, all the participants stated that taxi routes are significantly faster than the municipal systems. Lastly, the lack of accurate, reliable, available information (about routes, schedules, stops, and ticket prices) about municipal systems discourage the users.

Amongst the disadvantages of taxis, interviewees mentioned the risk of crashing due to the high speed and the imprudent driving, especially in the routes from the townships to town:

“Taxi drivers drive badly. Is like they forget that there are people, humans back there. Is like maybe you have sheep or animals there” (KzT1)

One of the participants argued that this situation is the result of the lack of opportunities that force taxi drivers to an unfair competition for passengers, which leads to them going faster and being careless.

As far as safety inside the vehicles, opinions are divided. Participants in the older age range stated that they felt safer and comfortable inside the taxis, while younger participants said to feel uncomfortable and threatened due to the high robbery index and the frequent fights between passengers, drivers and taxi helpers. About this matter, one of the interviewees shared:

“Using public transport feels awkward. Because you find out that [...] maybe let’s say is your first time in the public transport they make you feel like ‘I don’t know these people, they

might rob me, something might happen to me while I am inside' [...] they rob, we actually get 90% of robberies in taxis. There are people watching you, they can do nothing because maybe they are scared of being harmed" (WT1)

A third disadvantage identified was the lack of continuity of the taxi routes, for instance, the user from the north area that commute to the southwest must take two taxis—one from the north to bus terminal in the city center and another one from here to the destination in the southwest area—, which increases the cost and time spent on daily transportation:

"Taxis cause a lot more accidents on the roads, but they are convenient though. Like a bus will take you from point A to and drop you off at point A1 but you don't get to point B. But a taxi takes you from point A to point B". (WT2)

Another negative issue is the waiting time for the route to start and the heavy traffic. Drivers wait at the terminal until the bus is full to start the route. One of the participants claimed that he did not like to use this service because it was conditioned by many external factors, such as passengers' behavior, driver, route, traffic levels and police, thus it was not reliable:

"I was always late having issues with my managers and so on you know but it was not my intention [...] no matter how if I woke up early in the morning I was still late because of traffic or whatever" (MT1)

Among the advantages of the bus lines (Algoa and Integrated System) many of the participants highlighted the safety and comfort inside those services, particularly the Wi-Fi on board, which interviewees see as a plus since most of the users do not have access to internet at their homes or in their mobiles.

As far as other transportation means, the trains and Uber were mentioned. In the first case, it was only brought up by one of the participants which lives in the northeast area of New Brighton, stating that even when the reduced student-fare represents a great saving compared to taxis, restricted schedules are a disadvantage, because they limit users to exit and enter Township between 6am and 6pm. Regarding Uber, it was mentioned as a resource in two situations: when going to new places where they do not know the exact location, nor the safety conditions. Uber serves as a safety tool allowing participants to go in and out unknown neighborhoods without exposure. The second situation occurs when they travel in the nighttime or early hours, and both the municipal services as well as taxis are not running. One of the advantages of Uber is safety, not only regarding the driving skills, but also due to the background check of the drivers, since the platform performs such checks:

Ubers covers the distance but is expensive and you are driving with a stranger. Taxi covers the distance but is inconvenient and dangerous. Buses are unclear, not enough information about stops, tickets, routes. [...] So many things to take into consideration.” (AP2)

Finally, all the participants stated that they opt to walk, depending on the distance and the type of destination. Younger interviewees walk or ride their bicycles to school, which is within 10 to 20 minutes walking-distance inside the same Township. They also consider this as a social activity. Older participants said they walk only in emergency cases, meaning when they do not have the money to pay for a bus or taxi:

“Sometimes we used to walk for four hours with my brother from the township to the city if we had a meeting because we don’t have money, you know?” (MTI)

6.3. *Young people like to be safe: City safety*

As shown in previous sections, one of the common and repetitive elements in the urban experience of the youth interviewed, is the feeling unsafe. The first issue that stands out is the relativity of the concept. While all the participants live in areas classified as “dangerous” in the official reports, youth states that violent crimes such as shootings, robberies and fights take place in “certain areas” of their neighborhood or in other city areas. This perception is founded, on one hand, upon the news circulating in the media, and on the other on their own experiences or from third parties serving teaching functions:

“There are places where you say the word and people would be like ‘Oh no, no, no. Don’t ever go there’ [For example?] For example, New Brighton, where I live! People from outside of New Brighton see it as a bad place, where you are not safe, you can get mugged at any time of the day. That does happen in other places, you know? And you don’t feel safe going there and I refrain from going there so I stay where I’m comfortable in New Brighton. You know, sometimes I can say that people don’t feel comfortable going to places they don’t know because of maybe what they’ve heard about the places, so that can make people refrain from, you know, getting out there, see other places, and things like that” (NB2).

“You hear stories from friends or news about people getting robbed or something happening, then you stop going to those places.” (AP2)

As far as the authors of such violent acts, the participants claim that sometimes they are known residents of the area that do not act against people from the community, but against strangers. In the same sense they stated that the authors of the crime are “new” people that come from different neighborhoods (it can be gangs from other areas) or from other countries like Nigeria⁵. By pointing out external people to the neighborhood, the aforementioned *community sense* is reinforced. It is also supported

⁵ Fieldwork entry (February 27th, 2019)

by the use of the language. An initial level of differentiation takes place between Afrikaans speakers (mostly colored and white people) and Xhosa and Zulu speakers (mostly black people). As mentioned by one of the younger participants, each area has an accepted language, and only outsiders break this implicit rule, leading to clashes:

[talking about Gelvandale with participants from Motherwell]

Speaker 1: "You can see all the people there, like if for example you were going to ask for directions or help, they are going to rob you, kill you"

Interviewer: ¿Really?

Speaker 1: Yeah! They are scary, and most of us don't understand Afrikaans so they could speak Afrikaans, and we would be lost

Interviewer: ¡Ahhh! So, it is also about communication?

Speaker 1: Yeah, they have their own language

Speaker 2: Yeah, so you wouldn't hear what they say. That's the reason why we are in such a danger because we wouldn't hear what they say, and they don't hear what we are saying. If they speak Afrikaans, we are gonna speak Xhosa, and there is gonna be a conflict, then we end up fighting them." (MT4)

On a second level, there is the slang difference between areas. As mentioned by a participant from Walmer Township, every area, especially townships, have specific looks, ways and jargon useful to argue membership:

If you are not from the township, then you should be like that. Don't try to think 'Ok, this is another township. Then I am black; it should be fine'. No [...] and believe me, they know you very easily that you're not from there. One, you look at the clothing, what talk, what slang you use, they can even see the way you're looking even if you try to look cool, they will still know if you are from there or not." (WT3)

In this same sense, participants identified safe zones, where they feel comfortable. These zones correspond to locations where entertainment activities take place such as

shopping malls, movie theaters and the beach. Notice that outside the case of Walmer Township, the mentioned activities are located within 14 to 25 kilometers away. The correlation between comfort and safety was pointed out repeatedly by participants, also adding that the zones where they feel safer are those identified as *white*, this not only due to the circulation of public, but also to the presence of police.

“Summerstrand is kind of safe because is mainly a white neighborhood, is like there is a lot of white people there and the Metro police are kind of wandering around, there is a lot of cars passing by so if anything happens to you, people see it.” (WT2)

“You can say you only feel safe when you are here in the suburbs. There in the townships [...] You don’t feel safe, but if you are confident enough, and you say ‘I’m not scared of anyone, I’m only scared of God because only God is going to protect you, because you can’t be scared of the person that looks like you.’” (KzT1)

In these statements, an ambivalent position regarding the police to guarantee security is evident. As the last quote shows, the participants prefer places of entertainment where there is more presence of police forces, since they have the perception of being more secure. As mentioned on the first section of this chapter, a great sense of distrust regarding the work of the police in the Townships exists, inasmuch as they judge it as slow and insufficient.

“The police would say ‘no man, is the law’ [...] stupid law! is like everybody got their rights even the criminals. I don’t mean it like that, but this law is gone crazy. That’s why in our area [...] you should see our area [...] In our area we take the law in our own hands because we know the police are not helping us. If your child is a criminal in our area, the first offense is fine, we are gonna sit down and talk to him. The second offense he gets beaten up but if he did something [...] the community is going to make sure that he is dead [...] the people in my community they don’t have mercy, they make sure that you get the same punishment” (KzT1)

6.4. Who is who? Identity and membership in the Township

As reflected on previous sections, there is a great sense of belongingness and identity among the youth at the local level. The construction of community within the Townships is given by friendship, kinship, support and justice ties. This fact generates a *sense of community* particular to each area, but also results in entering or exiting the communities to be a hard process, since it requires the adaptation or building of new ties—not to mention the safety issues—in a different location.

At the city level, identity and belongingness concepts were also explored. In this matter, it was evident that the participants feel a great deal of pride and have a high sense of belonging to Port Elizabeth, due to various reasons. The first one is that they were born and raised in the city, recognizing the opportunities they have had there, referring to some support of the municipal government. Secondly, they acknowledge the existence of fun places and activities for young people, even when sometimes they are not known or open to the public (pools, beaches):

“Because there are some very nice places around here but you [...] but they are sort of getting away [...] you can't really experience PE as PE [...] like the way it should.” (AP1)

“Port Elizabeth has a lot to offer. We have an airport, a harbor, we have the train station, we have like coal mining here, we have [...] game reserves! [...] We have a lot to offer” (WT2)

One of the elements that the participants mentioned repeatedly is the individual effort as the main axis of the urban experience. This is linked to having connections and support networks in different areas to move freely across them, to being informed about events and activities, having economical resources and access to the private transportation means.

“Por Elizabeth is very small, and all depends on who you are friends with. Sometimes gangster would show at certain places, so it is all about safety [...] is all about safety.” (AP2)

“Port Elizabeth offers you a lot of opportunities if you know what you want.” (KzT2)

Nevertheless, a sense of disappointment towards what the city represents for them at the Township level exists. This is due to seeing a division between these two spheres as if the Township was not part of the city:

“It's not the same as township [...] is a different word, is different from the city [difference from what and what?] yeah, you need to go around in the township and see [...] just observe the nature, and the culture, you know? Then you see, there is this plastic [...] is like one of the dumpsites, we are living in a dump site, do you get my point? [...] So that's why I say it is doing nothing for me. That's the point, because there is lack of development or infrastructure or whatever in the township, you know? because we still have the house that we call shacks. ¿Do you know what a shack is? [yeah] there is no shack here in the city, why? I don't know as well but there is plenty of shacks in the township and people is dying, and living in poverty, you know.” (MT1)

Participants in this research criticize especially the lack of infrastructure and housing in those areas, describing them as *sad*. Interviewees also highlight that there is a difference between the educational quality of the schools in the suburbs and those in the Townships, reason why many parents opt to send their children to schools in the city center or the suburbs, even when this means a great time and money investment.

6.5. *Nothing is perfect, but you can get close to perfect: Meaningful life for youth*

According to the principles of the Capabilities Approach (Sen, 2001) (Nussbaum, 2011) it is necessary to inquire about those elements that each person values and consider necessary to have a worthy life. With regards to this question all participants

pointed education (primary and high school, and to a lesser extend technical training and college) as a key element, because it creates a sense of pride, worthiness, empowerment, besides preparing for leadership and generating self-reflection.

Additionally, participants underscored the need to have support networks (family and friends) as spaces and opportunities to establish connections (networking) that motivate and help them in their personal and professional lives. Networks are also seen as opportunities for education and training, as they learn from members of the community (mentors) and information is exchanged.

Despite ensuring that Port Elizabeth has numerous opportunities in terms of schooling, work and entertainment, the participants point-out that it would be desirable to have more and better chances to work in innovation projects, get to know people, create networks and having new experiences.

A third common element expressed was living in a safe zone where they do not need to be concerned about their safety or about the transportation and traffic difficulties. This factor is linked to feeling comfortable and accepted inside a community, knowing there is no danger in there.

In the same direction, participants also indicated that economic security was a fourth element. Some interviewees referred to this as 'being financial efficient', 'having just enough' or simply 'having the money you need'. Respondents consider this helps to have a good life, but also to ensure the wellbeing of family and friends. At a more personal level, participants stated that autonomy and determination were some of the main elements on a meaningful life. These components are related to the definition of goals, strengths, values and standards to live a life free of complications, as well as to have objectives and passion for what they do. They also underscored having a good attitude towards the obstacles they encounter. All these ideas, result into becoming an example and a source of motivation within their community, which in turn relates to the support networks and the building of community as a key element to live a satisfying life.

“I would say for young people [...] it is [...] it would be nice [...] it is a nice city [...] but it is what you make of it [...] It depends on you.” (AP1)

When questioned about whether the city provides with those elements named as essential for a worthy life, participants stated that it was true as far as their families and friends live in the city. The lack of material infrastructure, job opportunities, entertainment-offer and mainly insecurity, were the weaknesses mentioned more frequently:

“In Port Elizabeth? No. I wouldn’t say. In Port Elizabeth, there is a lot of things happening: gangsterism, people taking people’s lives. You can have a goal, you can have a dream, telling yourself that you wanna be something and then you go maybe to New Brighton, want to visit your friend, you get out of the car, you get shot” (MT4)

Another factor in which the participants feel the city is failing is the trust the public administration of the city generates. Municipal administrations are seen as inefficient and corrupt. An example of such statements is the Integrated Transportation Systems that was supposed to be running since 2010 (with occasion of the World Cup), but up to today it only has in service the route between the center and the Cleary Park area, Norwest of the city.

Insofar as the elements required at the city level to have a worthy life, the infrastructure and the educational quality in the Townships stand out, particularly referring to services such as electricity, connectivity and technology access. In the same sense, participants highlighted the necessity to encourage artistic and special needs programs and creating institutions for technical education or craft teaching, targeting youth not enrolled into college. Yet another priority for the interviewees is to update the infrastructure of the places for entertainment as well as the public transportation system.

In the same note, participants declared that one of the main flaws of the city are those places for entertainment and leisure activities. According to the interviewees the lack of places and activities for leisure makes difficult to find spaces to get together and meet people, which in turn translates into more stereotyping and segregation. This need for entertainment spaces —added to the lack of education and job opportunities— push youth in vulnerable neighborhoods to engage in illicit activities to spend their time. The participants stress that the few options in this realm are limited to places far from their houses, which implies money and time and accentuates the center-periphery dynamics in the city, increasing the perception of living in two different worlds.

“In the city, we are divided, you know, segregated in race [...] you know colored people live there, black people live there, white people live there, Indian people live there so there is not much social cohesion. We meet each other in malls and places of work. There is not much ‘Oh! Let me visit that place’ so what they can do is maybe have a place where people came and not be scared of interacting with each other, you know?” (NB2)

Coherently, participants indicate that the leisure activities in their areas are restricted to the use of alcohol and drugs, therefore they have access to limited options within their neighborhoods. Additionally, the public events hosted in the city are not appealing to them or are not directed to them.

“Because now youth doesn’t see other things in nice life than alcohol and drugs because that’s what is being attractive. Every weekend you see a nice post about liquor launch, about free wine taste and stuff like that. Every weekend you would see ‘DJ who and who in this launch’ you see? Stuff like that. We never see much viral stuff in our city. The only thing is Iron Man and most of the time in Iron Man you won’t even find a lot of black people, to be honest because for us, is a white people thing” (WT3)

Participants suggest that the municipality should adequate more open-air spaces for entertainment, as well as spots to get together and spend time with each other and talk; those places need to be safe and suitable for socializing. When asked about the ideal location for these activities and spots, participants pointed they should be in a “neutral” place such as the city center, the beach (Summerstrand) or inside each one of their areas, so they do not have to enter neighborhoods they consider as dangerous.

“Me as an individual I would take the fun stuff in big cities, like Summerstrand, and somehow like bring it here, in the location

-In Motherwell

-Cause a lot of people like in December or like the days of events they usually go there. Like instead of going there to Summerstrand I would like that they could have their own space, they could have like [...] have fun. And at least they are trying now because we have now

KFC where you can buy fancy food

-You don't have to go to town to have those.” (MT5)

6.6. Getting exposed to things: Definitions of accessibility

Accessibility is freedom. Freedom to be able to do things that you are interested in. Freedom to go to different neighborhoods that you have never been to. Having the freedom to say, ‘I can afford to live here’. Having freedom to say, ‘I am safe’. Having the freedom to having freedom [...] not to feel scared in your own city”(NB1)

In previous sections key elements regarding the urban experience of the interviewed youth were presented, as well as what the city represents for them and how they relate to the space and urban dynamics. These elements serve as background to understand the answers they provide to the questions: What does accessibility mean? What does having access to the city mean?

Five common aspects emerged from the answers. The first one, was the association of the idea of accessibility with freedom from two perspectives: i). as a mechanism to access opportunities —according to their talents and interests—, in schools, education, health services, hobbies, sports, and in this sense being exposed to the things the world has to offer, ii). as freedom to move, to express and show themselves without fear of criticism or discrimination, to feel comfortable and welcomed in the city and to own the spaces:

“An accessible city implies being able to move around, having the capacity to actually move around the city. You know people actually don’t feel comfortable in other areas of the city, so they stay away. ‘This is too posh for me’ is your city! it doesn’t matter, so be comfortable! This is your own space and you have to be comfortable.” (NB2)

The second key element is the relationship with the transportation, since participants grasp accessibility literally as *entering* the city, being the public transportation the mean to do so. This underscores again, the relationship center-periphery that exists between the Town and the suburbs, on one side, and between Townships and the Northern, on the other.

“Access in PE [...] there are not a lot of things. And what I see is that a lot of people in Port Elizabeth, the first thing that they would like to do is to get a car [...] that is the first thing because it allows you to be accessible to more things but there aren’t more things to be exposed to, like you can go to [...] Do you see what I mean? It is what it is.” (AP2)

The third element is access related to money. This definition presents economic resources as an *end* of accessibility since having available opportunities (job, education) enable youth to have a steady income. Moreover, access related to economic resources refers also to a *mean* to approach opportunities, for example having money for commuting to work, or paying for an entrance at an entertainment place:

A lot of poor people don't have the freedom to move around the city and see it, for example Game parks, beaches, the Boardwalk [...] entertainment always requires money." (WT4)

A fourth element related to the access to the city is the access to information. It appears on one side, as the knowledge necessary to understand the city and *survive* in it. On the other side, as knowledge about what is happening in the city, either in terms of leisure activities, as well as decisions that affect the daily life. This in turn is related to the fact that participants perceive a gap in the communication between the Municipality and its inhabitants:

"The way of knowing the city, or the things happening to the city or understand the city"
(KzT2)

"I would say there are many things that we are not given access to [...] how would I put it? Water for instances, and information on like [...] why the transportation fees have gone up, or, for example, we have been having load-shedding, but we would not get an explanation on why there is load-shedding. The government will not tell us here in New Brighton, they will not give us specific details on why something is happening" (NB1)

Safety came up in the answers given about accessibility, since participants linked this concept to what is available for them, and in that sense one of the factors that facilitates or hinders the access to places and services is the safety situation of the area those are located. Two of the participants from Walmer Township linked the access to the city with freedom of movement and this in turn with the concerns about safety. On the same note, one of the participants from Algoa Park mentioned the list of variables that he must evaluate before going somewhere:

*“You find out that many citizens don’t feel free in the city because [...] for example robberies,
and hijacks, killing people and all that stuff.” (WT1)*

*To go to a place, I always think: can I get there? is it safe? can I get home safely? do I know
the place? how is the vibe? is it expensive? who goes to that place?(AP2)*

7. Discussion

In this chapter, I aim to show how the empirical categories presented in the previous section are interrelated, drawing on the type of analysis used by the Capabilities Approach. Likewise, it shows how these categories can be interpreted as freedoms or capacities from the points of view of Sen and Nussbaum, highlighting how it is possible to understand accessibility as a tool to create more democratic and just cities through these perspectives. To this end, the notions of "right to the city" of Lefebvre and Harvey are used, as well as some elements of the Nussbaum social justice framework. The section is structured according to the research secondary questions

7.1. Accessibility as Freedom

To answer the main research question: How do young people from vulnerable areas in Port Elizabeth define "accessibility" to the city? Two paths were followed. The first was an exploration of the issues surrounding accessibility (security, transport, daily life). The second was an open question during interviews and workshops about what this word meant to them.

It can be seen in the results that central axis around which accessibility concepts gravitate is freedom. On one hand, this idea alludes to the lack of restriction for mobility across the city, which in turn implies availability of infrastructure for the public transportation system (ways and vehicles), safety inside public transportation (avoiding accidents, robberies, harassment), as well as in the places of departure and destination, and affordability in terms of costs. On the other hand, the idea refers to freedom as the availability of information, as far as knowledge, about what is happening in the city (i.e. events, new, schedules for public transformation, transparency) and in terms of effective information sources (i.e. Internet, social media, radio). On a third instance, freedom is presented as the possibility to access opportunities (i.e. employment, creation of networks, income). Lastly, accessibility can

be understood in terms of freedom as the opportunity to choose —without pressures — and within the available options— the preferred activities.

These notions of freedom, that in turn are part of the definition of accessibility, can be understood from the Capabilities Approach by Sen, as a set of valued functionings: being safe, being part of a community, having networks, having available and affordable transportation, not being discriminated, having information tools, being informed about their city, having jobs, doing things they value in their free time. In this sense, accessibility becomes a capability, as far as it enhances the general capabilities of a person to live a valued life.

From another point of view, it is possible to understand various of the mentioned elements as freedoms included in the list of Central Human Capabilities by Nussbaum. For instance, *life and bodily integrity* are related to availability of safe transportation means, as well as measures and security systems in neighborhoods and streets that allow the youth “*to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault*” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 41). In the same sense, the capability of affiliation as “*being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction*” (ibid: 41), relates to the freedom of mobility and the capability of access to opportunities and choose what is valued (i.e. free-time activities, educational options and places to interact), without limit due to discriminatory space notions or safety concerns.

This freedom to choose options of entertainment according to personal interests, is also related to the capabilities of *senses, imagination, and thought*, this allows to use those capabilities, as well as to have new experiences and create products. On the other hand, the capability of *play* refers specifically to being able to laugh, play and enjoy leisure activities.

Lastly, it can be argued that the capability to have *control over one's environment* is reflected in the freedom of the interviewees to seek opportunities, especially regarding employment on equal conditions. In the same note, it is reflected in the form

of the possibility to participate effectively in political decisions, it can be stated that by having access to information means and fluid communication with the administration, the political participation would be encouraged and in the same sense would be the capability to have control over one's political environment.

7.2. Enhancing Capabilities and Avoiding Obstacles

By understanding accessibility as capability, in the sense given by Nussbaum and Sen, it is possible also to grasp urban development goals as a matter of encouraging those opportunities that allow individuals to choose and act upon a valued life, at the same time that prevents factors that hinder those opportunities. For this purpose, it is relevant to ask *What elements hinder/enable "accessibility" to the city for young people in vulnerable areas in Port Elizabeth?*

In this way, these elements can be comprehended, according to the Capabilities Approach, as the factors that hinder or enhance the fact that young people achieve the functionings they have identified as important to have a meaningful life. Table 2 shows the factors identified as obstacles, the corresponding capability and how this affects accessibility.

The first factor is the lack of security, that as stated before, limits the range of movement of young participants, determines safe/unsafe times and zones to transit, constricts the networks youth can participate in within local ranges and creates patterns of group stigmatization for neighborhoods and activities. All those elements cause that youngsters have a fragmented concept of city, limited to the more local and utilitarian level, which in turn, difficult even more their participation and involvement in the overall city identity. It also perpetuates the apartheid spatial distribution, changing the physical barriers that separated the neighborhoods, for invisible borders. This in turn locates and limits certain opportunities giving the feeling that there are opportunities out of reach depending on the neighborhood where you live.

The second element in the table is the financial security, referring to a stable and enough income source, which facilitates to have access to the activities, goods and places participants value and they cannot find in their neighborhood or within their immediate possible range of movement. The third factor, the lack of infrastructure, alludes to the scarce offer of services, activities and entertainment options that suit the financial means of the participants and the transportation offer in the city or their neighborhoods. This fact in turn limits the networks youngsters can interact with and the enjoyment of different spaces in the city. The fourth element is the lack of high-quality education within the Townships, which restricts employment opportunities accessible to the young people to those inside their neighborhoods, limiting also the housing options and ultimately closing even more the limits of the city for them. In the fifth place, the perception of corruption of the local administration appears on the table, this weakens the institutions for citizen participation, since young people do not trust their authorities nor their acts. In the same direction, corruption affects the relationship between the youngsters and the city negatively, because it gives the impression of absence of transparency and reinforces the patterns of segregation. Finally, the lack of effective channels of communication between the municipal administration and the young participants creates a gap between the two parties and hinders the perception of accessibility between the parts.

As for the factors that facilitate accessibility to the city (Table 3), social projects conducted by international and local organizations in the neighborhoods of the participants are mentioned. These projects are an opportunity to widen the interaction networks of the participants, open the neighborhoods to diverse visitors and create occasions to get to know and visit city attractions and events through paid outings. In second instance, personal elements (Basic Capabilities and Internal Capabilities, according to Nussbaum), such as determination, positive attitude and knowledge of the environment dynamics, enable accessing the city, since they constitute a sort of “survival skills”, acquired only from the interaction with the family, social, political

and economic environment of the neighborhood. These capabilities are part of the identity of the interviewees and their feeling of belonging towards their area. The third factor, support networks, is also related to the belongingness and local identity elements. By having networks young participants can acquire the above-mentioned knowledge —fourth element in the table, which connects them with information networks within their area making opportunities reachable (free time, job, education, friendship)—. Lastly, it is important to point that, even when the taxi system is far from being ideal, it represents an effective transportation mean for the young participants. In that sense, it becomes a factor that enables the mobility, since as reported, is preferred above other options that are cheaper, safer and more reliable. This transportation service offers the possibility to access employment opportunities, education and entertainment, by presenting valued characteristics such as quickness, convenience and schedule availability, not to forget the Township-identity element.

Table 2: Factors Hindering Accessibility

Factor Hindering	Capability (Nussbaum, Sen)	How is it Affecting Accessibility?
Lack of safety	Bodily Integrity, Life	Activities limited to “safe” areas and times, stigmatization. Limited networks.
Lack of financial safety	Bodily Integrity, Life	Limited free-time activities, transportation means, and education options.
Lack of infrastructure	Play	Limited spaces, activities, options for entertainment. Limited networks. Limited information sources/means.
Lack of quality education in situ	Senses, imagination and thought	Limited job opportunities outside Township. Limited expression tools.

Governmental corruption	Control over one's environment	Limited interest in politics, and democratic participation. Limited information on city issues.
Lack of information	Control over one's environment	Weak relationship city-local administration-citizens. Limited interest in city issues.

Source: Author

Table 3: Factors Enabling Accessibility

Elements Enabling	Capability (Nussbaum, Sen)	How is it Enabling Accessibility?
Existing social projects	Senses, imagination, and thought	Diversity and inclusion in neighborhoods. Opportunity for artistic expressions.
Self-determination, positive attitude, autonomy	<i>Internal Capabilities</i>	Avoiding dangerous spaces/situations. Looking/creating opportunities in/outside neighborhood.
Support networks	Affiliation	Insight on safety, events, and opportunities. Safe opportunity to know other areas. Motivation to explore city.
Local knowledge	<i>Internal Capabilities</i>	Useful information about safety and opportunities.
Use of existing transportation	Control over one's environment	Range of movement. Take available opportunities. Community-building tool.

Source: Author

7.3. The right to Port Elizabeth

One of the goals of this research is to offer insights about urban experiences and how young people live access to the city, in order to present recommendations so that from both sides, the Municipality and users, this aspect of the city is improved. To this end

I enquired *How could Port Elizabeth become more accessible to young people from vulnerable urban areas?*

This question can be approached from two different angles. The first one is a practical point of view, it corresponds to encourage actions and policies that facilitates the accessibility and remove obstacles, according to the topics revised above. The actions discussed next correspond to the specific inputs that the participants mentioned as measures they would take to make the city more accessible. From a second, more theoretical, point of view, the answer to the question refers to a vision of city and of its citizens from the “right to the city” by Lefebvre and Harvey that aligns with the relationship that Nussbaum traces between capabilities and rights. Both points of view are complementary to think the city of Port Elizabeth from the Habitat III guidelines.

Linked to encouraging the capability of *Senses, imagination, and thought*, participants argued that creating educational programs focusing in arts, sports, technical skills and special needs will be a way to recognizing talents in the young population. This would allow youngsters to have the possibility to explore and choose exercising their agency, in the sense meant by Sen, within a range of options of their interest, which will reduce the number of young people leaving the city looking for this kind of instruction and would make Port Elizabeth an attractive and inclusive city. This point relates to another suggestion about financial support for the students to remain in the city, so they do not have to migrate to look for opportunities. Additionally, participants highlighted that the city should renovate old buildings, abandoned in the city-center, to use them for educational and entertainment purposes, this would not only broaden the offer of spaces, but would also increase the safety in certain areas of the city.

Combining the capabilities of *Play* and *Affiliation*, participants emphasized the need to make the city more attractive to young people through modernization of the already existing entertainment spaces, as well as the creation of new spaces, for instance open-air sport fields, safe places to get together and open-air museums.

Another suggestion was to create spaces and activities directed and organized by the municipality, that include sports competitions, art contests (dance, singing, juggling), workshops open to the public, movie-screenings, free theater and guided tours through other areas of the city. By offering activities created and directed by the municipality, “neural zones” will be created with regards to the invisible boundaries between neighborhoods, allowing young people to have a motivation to visit other areas, by having a support group.

Both, the definitions of accessibility from the capabilities point of view, as well as the ideas given by the participants are related to the central elements of the notion of right to the city stated by Lefebvre and Harvey. The goal of the actions listed before should be to transform the urban experience of the youngsters through meeting points that privilege creativity, socialization and appropriation of the urban space. This in turn allows the city to create and renew itself constantly, more in the sense of a piece of art by its inhabitants, than as the production of objects and buildings. By proposing new forms to use and explore the city, for instance the entertainment spaces and the interaction opportunities with other youngsters, participants can own those urban spaces and give them new meanings through daily practices. The city becomes a collective right to live the life these young people value through the simultaneous transformation of the city and of the urban.

According to Marcuse's possible readings of Lefebvre, conceptualization about the right to the city, the case of Port Elizabeth represents a combination of the "Strategic reading" and the "Subversive reading." The first one insofar it could be an umbrella for historically excluded sectors in the city: *"the very poor, the homeless, those dependent on welfare grants or charity, those discriminated against because of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mal-educated, the legal restrictions of citizenship laws and gender inequality."* (Marcuse, 2014, p. 5) In that sense, and as argued by Marcuse, the claim to the right to the city would take the shape of access to adequate and affordable transportation systems, open public spaces, but most of all safety as a core

issue to guarantee mobility. This reading of the right to the city would offer to those without economic or political power the opportunity to come together as a coalition and get access not only to services and city life but to dignity, respect, and protection.

Meanwhile, the “Subversive reading” aims for transformative efforts that produce immediate results for the needs of the excluded, based on Lefebvre's arguments and including other social movements. It is also crucial to be cautious about the adoption of the right to the city approach from the municipal perspective. As argued by Marcuse, this would represent a distortion of the concept since it would not presume a challenge to the power relationships. Nonetheless, if we look at the struggle and conflict necessary for Lefebvre's vision to succeed, challenging the spatialization of power relationships in Port Elizabeth could be a departure point. That is, by challenging the spatial disposition of the city, the living conditions, the access conditions, the entertainment and free time opportunities for vulnerable young people; the power relationships, not only economic and racial but also age and gender based, would be challenged. On this regard, Marcuse stresses the argument of the Occupy Movement: *"physical space not contested in its built form, not building physically a new city, but occupying an old one with a new content [...] Building on the existing, keeping some of its usable forms, but changing the power relations that determine how they will be used."* (Ibid, p.8)

7.4. Access as a Mean for Social Justice

There is always room for improvement on how certain groups approach cities and enjoy the possibilities and services it offers. As the New Urban Agenda showed, this is a constant in development plans, nevertheless, it is crucial to ask first *Why is it necessary to talk about accessibility?*

This question emerged early in the project and worked as backdrop for the research, specifically working as a link between access to resources and central

ideas of development studies, such as democracy, equality and social change. The bottom line of this concern is to give accessibility studies a more solid base, beyond practicality, and connected to what it means to be a citizen and what a city is supposed to offer in order to be called 'fair'. This concern produced the last research question: *How could the improvement in accessibility to Port Elizabeth impact the city's democracy and social justice?*

From the perspective of the Capabilities Approach by Sen, the role of democracy is central to the development of capabilities, since it implies the protection of freedoms, legal entitlements and the open, fair discussion, specially about those capabilities that need to be a priority for governments. This role also implies to give decision-power over one's own life and this in turn generates a sense of dignity and incentives agency in the individuals. By improving the accessibility of the young people to the city, new tools and opportunities would be given to them, so they can take their own decisions in different spheres; since, as mentioned by them in their definitions of accessibility, this idea is about a range of possibilities at their disposition and the freedom to choose and be what they value. From another perspective, and perhaps connected to mobility, improving accessibility allows to break with the center-periphery system, which is a system based on inequality, as is the apartheid institutionalized in the city. This breaking immediately implies that young people would have more and better spaces to participate in the urban life, getting more involved in decisional processes and taking responsibility in actions towards social change.

Moreover, when authorities and polices acknowledge that not everyone in the city has the same opportunities and ways of approaching the city, there is an opportunity to attend differential needs of the population, according to their experience of the city. This means not giving everyone the same options and resources to access the city but giving everyone a range of opportunities according to their needs. For example, the Integrated Public Transport System is an excellent opportunity to improve mobility, nevertheless, it is not enough for people living in dangerous areas where —

even with a transportation mean— is not able to go outside during certain hours and participate of the city. In this case, removing the obstacles on other capabilities is more pressing.

In this sense, and as Nussbaum argues, it is necessary to first determine, as a society, what is the minimal threshold of central capabilities to be able to proclaim itself as fair and functional society.

8. Summary and Conclusion

This study seeks to address the issue of accessibility to Port Elizabeth from a perspective beyond mobility and proximity between users and services. By inquiring about the experiences of young people from vulnerable areas to access the city and exploring their ideas about what accessibility means, the research aims to contribute in the field of 'perceived accessibility,' raising new elements to create programs and policies with a broader impact on the field. Through interviews, workshops and participant observation, information was collected on the perceptions and experiences of young people, emphasizing the elements they consider necessary to live a meaningful life and how access to the city facilitates or hinders achieving that ideal.

The findings of this research follow the line of literature on the subject, as they underline the importance of interaction as the ultimate goal of access to the city (Hansen, 1959) and highlights factors beyond the means of transport (Lättman, 2016). However, rather than entirely subjective factors such as ability, desire or preferences to overcome distance, this study aligns with the definition of Niemaier (1997) and Lättman (2016) by emphasizing the importance of *conditions to access* opportunities offered by the city. Likewise, the results of the research coincide with the authors mentioned, regarding the relevance granted to the citizen's agency, especially in terms of choices of essential elements to living a dignified life and the freedom to choose the opportunities that align with those elements. In this regard, and according to the findings and analysis, I defined accessibility as *to have the resources, circumstances and capabilities (given by context and agency) to enjoy opportunities offered by / in the city, according to personal choice.*

In this sense, and using the analytical framework of the Capabilities Approach, it was shown that accessibility has a material component that corresponds to the physical means necessary to move from one place to another. On this point, participants highlighted safety, affordability, and convenience of public transport as critical elements. On the other hand, a perceived component was identified referring to the

circumstances that each individual considers necessary to have access to the city. These circumstances included security (to go out and enter their neighborhoods and visit other areas), availability of activities and places of interest; both in their areas and in other areas of the city, and better access to information about the city. It was argued that these two components could be interpreted as capabilities (Sen, 2001) (Nussbaum, 2003) first, because they serve to achieve specific functions valued by young people in vulnerable areas of Port Elizabeth, second because they are tightly related to other capabilities (empirical connections) contributing to people living lives they value, and third because having accessibility (as a capacity) is a tool for the exercise of the agency of the subject.

The focus of this research represents a contribution in the studies on accessibility as it helps to understand the factors that influence the preferences, abilities, and desires of citizens when it comes to accessing opportunities in the city. It also helps to understand how to improve these opportunities, making them more attractive and beneficial for users. By posing accessibility related to freedoms, agency and the right to the city, citizens are also involved in making the city more accessible through the participation and creation of local projects that attract young people. Finally, it allows us to see that the actions to improve the accessibility of a city should not be limited to measures in public transport, but rather involve thinking about how specific groups experience the city and thus reflect on associated factors that positively impact accessibility, beyond transport offer.

Although the study has limitations, these can be seen as an opportunity to improve the methodology and approach to the topic, in order to use them in future participatory urban planning processes. On a theoretical level, although the Capabilities Approach was chosen as frame, it does not always fit the case study. This incompatibility is particularly noticeable when combined with the concept of 'right to the city' since the latter is raised as a collective right while the capabilities approach is based on the individual level. However, this is useful when considering the actual

application of the approach because all the individual elements found must be translated into policies that are appropriate at the municipal level.

9. References

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10. Appendices

10.1. Appendix A: Semi-structured Questionnaire

General Information:

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

Grade/Programme:

Neighborhood:

Date of interview:

Background:

1. Are you from Port Elizabeth? Is your family from PE?
2. Who do you live with?
3. Where do you live?
4. How is it to live there?

Transport and City spaces:

5. What places do you usually go to on weekdays and weekends?
6. Why do you go to those places?
7. How do you get to those places?
8. How do feel using those transports?
9. What do you think about the transportation system here in PE?
10. What would you change in PE transport system?

Identity and relationship with the city:

11. How would you describe PE?
12. Are there places in the city where you feel more comfortable or welcome than others?
13. Are there places in the city where you never go? Why?
14. What do you think about safety (security) issue in PE?
15. Do you think PE is a nice city for young people?
16. How could PE be more open and attractive to young people?

Fulfilling Life:

17. In your opinion what does it mean “To live a worthy and significant life”?
18. Do you think the city of PE gives you what it takes to live that kind of life?
19. If you could, would you change something in the city to help you to live that life?

Accessibility Definitions:

20. If I say ‘accessibility’ what words come to mind?
21. What about ‘accessibility to the city’?
22. In your opinion, what opportunities do you have in PE in terms of _____? work/education
23. What could improve those opportunities?
24. What opportunities do you have in PE in terms of _____? access to information? (About the city and in general)
25. What could improve that?
26. What opportunities do you have here in PE in terms of _____? free time and entertainment?
27. What could improve those opportunities?

10.2. Appendix C: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardians of Project Participants

Project: *MSc. Thesis Project for Development Studies Programme, Lund University: “Get around: Youth Participatory Assessment of Accessibility in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (South Africa)”*

Researcher: *María Camila Gómez Fonseca*

I agree to take part in the study “Get Around: Youth Participatory Assessment of Accessibility in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (South Africa) conducted by Maria Camila Gómez from Lund University and founded by the Swedish International Center for Local Democracy.

I have been given enough information about this research project and I understand that my participation involves being interviewed by the researcher and/or participate in the workshops. I allow the researcher to take notes during the interview/workshops and record it in video/audio. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any report. I also understand that anonymous extracts from my interview, workshops I participated in and audiovisual material may be quoted/use in research products (thesis manuscript, articles, reports, etc.) as well as divulgation material (brochures, presentations, institutional videos, etc.) by the researcher and/or the founding organization.

I know my participation in this project is voluntary and therefore I have the right not to answer questions and if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview/workshop.

I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Signature

Researcher’s Signature

Date _____