

**ABANDONED BUILDINGS AS BREEDING GROUND FOR CRIMINAL  
ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF LIBODE TOWN UNDER NYANDENI LOCAL  
MUNICIPALITY IN THE EARSTERN CAPE**

BY

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**Dissertation Submitted to the institute in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of degree of Master of Criminology, University of Fort Hare.**

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**February 2020**

## DECLARATION

### **“ABANDONED BUILDINGS AS BREEDING GROUND FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES: A CASE STUDY OF LIBODE TOWN UNDER NYANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY IN THE EARSTERN CAPE”**

I hereby declare that this project is entirely my original work, except where indicated and where references have been provided. This research has not been submitted for any other degree at any university.

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**STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR**

I confirm that the dissertation of the student Baliwe Mthuthuzeli Christopher (201303358) has been submitted with my consent.

Dr T.O. Magadze

Supervisor's signature.....

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my parents, my mother Nomzuvukile Baliwe and My father Solanga Baliwe who gave me full support; with nothing in their hands, and only depending on social the grant that they receive from government, they have still managed to give me everything. They never let me down, especially my mother who fought through thick and thin to make sure that I receive this degree. I am grateful to have them in my life. I thank them for supporting, protecting and raising me to become the man I am today, and more specifically for seeing to it that I do not engage in criminal activities. I also dedicate this work to my sponsor Service SETA for the support it gave me throughout these two years of doing this research. I also dedicate this work to Libode town, specifically the Police station and Nyandeni local Municipality. To my colleagues (Criminology Masters class of 2018) and the department of Criminology, I say forward with research future criminologists/ Scholars. I would like to dedicate this work to my God and Ancestors for giving me strength to finish this work. It was not an easy journey; thank you so much.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank my heavenly Father for the strength he has given me to complete my research as it has not been an easy journey; it had many sleepless nights. I would also like to express gratitude to my supervisor Dr T.O. Magadze for the guidance, support and encouragement he has given me throughout this project. The academic support that Dr Magadza also gave me in his capacity as the Department of Criminology head of department is also invaluable. An unceasing extreme thanks goes to the Services SETA bursary for the financial support they gave me to further my studies. Without the tuition fees and meal allowance they afforded me, I would not have managed.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my adorable and supportive parents for the physical and emotional support throughout my childhood to the teenage stage. Further, I would like to thank my one and only brother Mkhusele Baliwe for the support and encouragement he has given me throughout this degree; without him I would have not finished this line. To my adorable 17 year old nephew Siphesihle Baliwe, may he grow, follow in my footsteps and become a criminologist that can help combat crime in South Africa. To my dearest friend ZukoMkono who is undertaking his degree in Business management at Nelson Mandela University, I would like to wish him the best through the journey; let us keep on pushing for "the sky is a limit". I would also like to thank say to the community of Mamfengwini Location where I come from; may it be blessed and live fruitful and productive crime free life.

## **ABSTRACT**

Buildings and houses are neglected by their owners/ government for different reasons, but money tends to be the leading reason in most instances. That then needs minds to work hand in hand; owners of the buildings must co-partner with the government to reduce the crisis by ensuring that there are no abandoned buildings in the community as these have proved to be breeding ground for criminal activities.

The study was conducted in Libode town, which is under Nyandeni Local municipality in the Eastern Cape. Around Libode town there are abandoned buildings that have not been used for years. In most cases criminals use these for their criminal activities and hide outs from the law. There have been multiple cases reported about crimes committed inside and around these buildings, and still no intervention from the local government has been instituted. The aim of this study was to explore the influence of abandoned buildings on criminal activities in Libode Town.

The study used a qualitative design in data collection and in describing the results. A sample of 8 key informants, 10 members from Qhankqu and 10 members from Belmont Township formed participants of the study. These were selected using the Snowball sampling method. In-depth / one on one interviews were used to collect data from key informants and focus group interviews were used to interview two groups, one from Belmont and the other from Qhankqu.

Data were analysed and drafted using thematic analysis and transcription. Interviews were recorded and notes were taken to collect data. Findings indicate that indeed abandoned buildings are the source of so many criminal activities as it was explained by the researcher that youth hangs on these buildings and formulate gangs. These gangs are utilised by drug dealers to distribute their merchandise. Findings also explained that these buildings are located on places which are dangerous and it motivates wrongdoers to even carry on their doings. Findings indicated that lack of attention to these buildings by the government and the relevant owners was the main factor that led criminals to utilise abandoned buildings for their wrongdoings. Findings further showed that the government failed to ensure that these buildings are checked at least twice a month in order to keep control on these buildings, causing criminals to target the abandoned buildings. The study recommends that SAPS and Nyandeni

local municipality draft Laws/ restrictions for the use of these buildings so that if anyone wants to use these buildings they must follow these laws and restrictions, which will help to restrict criminal elements from using these buildings without permission. To solve the problem of criminals taking advantage of abandoned buildings, the study recommends, the buildings should be either destroyed or fixed.

**Key words:** Abandoned buildings, Criminals, local government, wrongdoing/ crime and SAPS (South African Police service).

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study was an investigation of abandoned buildings as a breeding ground for criminal activities. This is the social phenomenon which occurs in Libode town under Nyandeni local municipality in the Eastern Cape. It usually takes place in pockets of the community where where criminals acknowledge that law forces are not tight and it will take time to recognise that there is something going on (Spelman, 1993). In economically distressed neighbourhoods, abandoned houses and apartments can become hangouts for criminals such as thieves, drug dealers, and prostitutes. In addition, Spelman (1993) stresses that crime rates in the places with open abandoned buildings were twice higher than in places without open abandoned buildings. Even if 90 percent of the crimes presented are merely distributed to the surrounding area, securing abandoned buildings appears to be a highly cost-effective crime control tactic for distressed neighbourhoods (Spelman, 1993). Weisburd (2015) states that criminologists and crime prevention practitioners are aware of the importance of places of crime.

According to Tonry (2015), vacant housing is often proposed as a risk factor for crime. Consistent with the broken windows theory, vacant houses could signal physical disorder and invite crime by communicating the sense that no one cares. Vacant housing offers unguarded crime targets that make situational aspects of crime more attractive. Consistent with the situational crime prevention theories, vacant houses may be less likely than others to have effective locks and other security measures (Tonry, 2015).

#### **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Libode is a small town in the Eastern Cape under Nyandeni Local Municipality, made up of mostly poor communities. Around Libode town, there are many old government buildings or infrastructures that have not been used for years, even though some of these buildings belong to private owners. In most cases criminals target quiet and

easily accessible places to operationalise their wrong criminal activities, and abandoned buildings become their primary places to commit crimes. Within Libode town, several cases reported have been linked to abandoned buildings, but there has not been any intervention from the local government.

Libode town is located near rural areas. People from these rural areas have livestock and young boys are responsible for herding the cattle and they often return home late. In most cases, livestock goes to the forest near the town and other buildings are near the forest, which puts these young boys in danger. They may not know what is inside the buildings. Furthermore, some of these buildings are located next to roads, where there is no street lighting, and at night people who are passing by become vulnerable to being victimised. Criminals often run to these buildings and disappear whenever they have done something wrong.

### **1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY**

To explore the influence of abandoned buildings on criminal activities in Libode Town.

### **1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To identify factors that lead criminals to use abandoned building as target spots for criminal activities;
- To describe the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities in Libode Town;
- To identify preventives measures that can be utilised to reduce the rate of crime occurring inside and around abandoned buildings.

### **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was guided by the following operational questions:

- What are the factors that lead criminals to use abandoned buildings as target spots for criminal activities?

- What is the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities occurring in Libode town?
- What preventive measures can be utilised to reduce the rate of crime occurring in and around abandoned buildings?

### **1.6. MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

The searcher observed what was happening in the community for a number of years. The researcher then got interested in knowing what the rest of the community thought and felt about this subject. Further, the researcher's observations had established an 'escalation of crime in Libode town most particularly caused by abandoned buildings in the town', and the law enforcement and the government were doing very little to address the matter. The study was, therefore, motivated by the need to involve both the community and the local government in coming up with effective strategies of solving crime.

### **1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Saving communities from the dangers of crime is the primary goal of the local authorities. In South Africa, so many researchers have attempted working hand in hand in order to show the government or lead the government to the right direction as to how to attend to certain criminal incidents. This research project, through its findings, will manage to help protect the lives of Libode people from victimisation that is happening, and bring significant understanding about the role of vacant buildings around Libode in crime.

Libode people will gain knowledge about the dangers that can be cause by abandon buildings and also it will alert them in how to work with the local government in dealing with these problems. Nyandeni local municipality will also get to know some of the strategies to deal with abandon buildings and how to manage them so that they cannot be utilised for criminal activities.

## **1.8. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Spelman (1993), abandoned buildings provide direct evidence of property crimes in two ways. First, the building itself might have suffered crime damage. From almost all of the unsecured buildings things of value have been removed by trespassers. For example, walls have been destroyed to make it easier to take copper pipe and wire. Appliances, carpets, and furniture also often get ripped out of the walls and off the floors. Thieves often found appliances such as stoves and refrigerators too heavy to move easily; instead, they removed parts for reuse or resale (Spelman, 1993). Secondly, the building might have been used to hide stolen property (Spelman, 1993). Moreover, Spelman's study found, empty wallets, lawn equipment, and other obviously stolen property were found in five buildings (8 percent). In one building, all or parts of some two dozen bicycles were found stashed in a back bedroom. Squatters were found to be living in four buildings (7 percent). These buildings were structurally sound, and entry could be made only through a re-opened back door or window. Furniture was present and neatly arranged; sheets were on beds. One of these buildings was also the site of stolen property (Spelman, 1993).

Jon (2011) suggests three strategies that can be employed in preventing crime caused by abandoned buildings. The first is prevention, aimed at keeping the current homeowner in the house; In this case those that own buildings should keep on using their buildings and if there are any chances to co-partner with the government they do so. Jon (2011) is of the view that many people leave their buildings because of money, they do not have means to sustain the building and in other cases they do not get buyers for their buildings (Jon, 2011).

The second strategy suggested by Jon (2011) is management, which is aimed at enforcement action and seizure. As soon as the problem is discovered, the law enforcement agencies should take the toll and do their work. Management starts at the highest level so that lower levels will have the basic protocol on how to handle different matters. That then calls to account the government to have to control or manage the matter.

Jon's (2011) third strategy is reuse, where owners have to occupy their building. Other buildings belong to the government; these need to be sold to private people and

entities so that these can be used for other purposes such as schools, hotels or motels (Jon, 2011).

In contrast Jon (2011) stated that one would expect more crimes around unsecured, illegally used buildings. On the other hand, it is not hard to imagine how an abandoned building, even though secured, could lead to an increase in crime and disorder. Youths or transients still might be tempted to hang out or sleep in the yard; thieves might stash their plunder out of sight behind a wall. In addition, some of these buildings could have been open, used illegally, and then secured at some time before the inspections conducted for this study (Jon, 2011).

## **1.9. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this section, attention falls on the theories that were used to analyse the study. The study employed the following theories; the crime prevention through environmental design, the situational crime prevention and the routine activity theory. While these are discussed in detail in the relevant chapter, brief discussions are given below.

### **1.9.1 Crime prevention through Environment Design**

Tonry (2015) states that in crime prevention through the Environment Design Theory, features of the building environment make places more or less attractive to would be offenders. Such features include poor visibility, unguarded opportunities, and permeable streets that make it easy to escape detection or apprehension (Tonry, 2015). Features that make the place more or less amenable to crime include the level of natural surveillance, access control, target hardening, and signs of territoriality (Cozens, Saville and Hillier, 2005). According to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), the built environment influences crime in the ways it shapes criminal opportunities for motivated offenders.

As highlighted by Cozens et al. (2005), "the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life. They further indicated that CPTED emphasises crime prevention techniques that exploit the opportunities in the environment both to naturally and routinely facilitate access control and surveillance, and to reinforce

positive behaviour in the use of the environment (Cozens et al., 2005). There is strong evidence that improving management of rental properties can reduce drug related crime (Cozens et al., 2005). Vacant premises have been found to represent crime magnets and smaller buildings were a preferred site for drug dealing since they had less management and financial resources to regulate such criminal activities (Cozens et al., 2005).

### **1.9.2 Situational crime prevention theory**

According to Clarke (1997), Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) departs radically from most criminology theories in its orientation. Proceeding from an analysis of the circumstances giving rise to specific kinds of crime, SCP introduces discrete managerial and environmental change to reduce the opportunity for those crimes to occur. Thus, it focuses on the settings for crime, rather than upon those committing criminal acts. It seeks to forestall the occurrence of crime, rather than to detect and sanction offenders (Clarke, 1997).

### **1.9.2 Routine Activities Theory**

According to Felson and Cohen (1980), the Routine Activities Theory provides a macro perspective on crime in that it predicts how changes in social and economic conditions influence the overall crime and victimization rate. Criminal activities are a “structurally significant phenomenon”, meaning that violations are neither random nor trivial events (Felson and Cohen, 1980; 390). In consequence, it is the routine activities people partake in over the course of their day and night that make some individuals more susceptible to being viewed as suitable targets by a rationally calculating offender. The theory relates the pattern of offending to the everyday patterns of social interaction. Crime is, therefore, normal and is dependent on available opportunities to offend. If there is an unprotected target and there are sufficient rewards, a motivated offender will commit a crime (Felson & Cohen, 1980).

In terms of suitable targets, the choice is influenced by the offender’s perception of the target’s vulnerability; the more suitable and accessible the target, the more likely that a crime will occur. The number of motivated criminals in the population also affects

crime levels. It is held that offenders are less likely to commit crimes if they can achieve personal goals through legitimate means. This implies that criminal motivations can be reduced if offenders perceive that there are alternatives to crime.

#### **1.10. SPATIAL DELIMITATION/ DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

This study was conducted in Libode town where the matter is situated and in the communities around the town because they were actually affected by wrongdoings happening in town.

#### **1.11. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology is a scientific and systematic way of solving research problems. A researcher has to design his methodology, and in addition to the knowledge of methods/ techniques, he or she has to apply the methodology as well. The methodology may differ from problem to problem. Thus, the scope of research methodology is wider than research methods. In a way, research methodology deals with the research methods and takes into consideration the logic behind the methods we use (Bhattacharyya, 2006). The research methodology will help the researcher to attend the social phenomenon under study and helps him to compile powerful strategy to attack the problem, more especially to identify specific techniques that best suit the research.

##### **1.11.1 Research design**

The study used the qualitative research method, and applied the exploratory research design since it relates well with qualitative research. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013), an exploratory research design seeks to gain deeper understanding of the social phenomenon.

##### **1.11.2 Sampling**

Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008) highlight that population refers to all constituents of any clearly described group of people, events, or objects who are the focus of an

investigation. Populations may be quite large (theoretically infinite) or they may be fairly small (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). In this study, the population consisted people living in Libode.

A good research design provides information concerning the selection of the sample population treatments and controls to be imposed (Singh, 2007). Non-probability sampling is the best approach for qualitative research. The study used non-probability and Snowball sampling methods. The study used twenty eight (28) participants to collect data. Snowballing assisted the researcher to identify people that were difficult to find. The researcher only picked a few participants and they led the researcher to the right people. In the communities around Libode Town, the researcher selected a community leader in each community as the first respondent, and this helped to find other respondents within the community.

### **1.11.3 Data collection**

The researcher used focus group interviews as a means of data collection, and this was done using (10) participants from one community and (10) participants living inside town. Data was further collected key- informant interviews with eight (8) community leaders. These are the initial people to hear and suffer from the criminal activities hence the researcher considered them as the key-informants of the study. Each focus group consisted ten (10) participants and for data collection the researcher had two focus groups of ten participants each. Key-informants were interviewed using one on one interviews. Focus group interviews assisted the researcher to record the data from participants when they were sharing their experiences during the course of the interview. Then key-informants helped to collect significant data about cases reported to them that happened on those buildings. In addition, the advantage of the focus group interview is that respondents actually express their views working hand in hand with other participants in the group and they helped each other to remember some data that had been forgotten unlike in one-on-one interviews. In the one on one, a researcher gets bored sometimes but it also helped because participants freely answered questions. The researcher used both open-ended close-ended questions to acquire ideas.

#### **1.11.4 Data analysis**

According to Gibbs (2007), the idea of analysis implies some kind of transformation. You start with some collection of qualitative data and then you process it, through analytic procedures, into clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis (Gibbs, 2007). In addition, Gibbs (2007) highlights that other researchers emphasise the idea that analysis involves interpretation and retelling and that it is imaginative and speculative (Gibbs, 2007).

The study uses thematic analysis to collect data. Sgier (2012) indicates that thematic analysis is the most common type of qualitative analysis that seeks to identify patterns (commonalities, contrasts etc.) in the contents of data. It proceeds through a series of well-defined steps such as category building, coding and categorising that are useful not only for those who engage in this type of analysis, but also for the general understanding of the nature of qualitative analysis (Sgier, 2012).

Thematic analysis helps the research to compile a clean and narrow analytic study. It also helped the researcher to create themes from the data collected from the focus group interviews. During the interviews, the researcher wrote down the conversation and used the recording tap. The recordings were transcribed. These transcriptions were written in the form of thematic analysis, and the transcribed texts were broken down into units of meaning. The units of meaning were placed in categories and the themes systematically identified. When collated, the themes gave insight into the issue being studied.

#### **1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Most respondents gave out false information but with the help on focus group the researcher managed to get the truth behind an stories that were given by the the participants. Most of the respondents were bored because questions were asked in English, the researcher then decided to ask questions in Xhosa. In a situation where the researcher gets in hold with the people from nearest communities, it was difficult for them to answer questions because in most cases questions on the interviews were written in English, therefore not all people understands English.

### **1.13 WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE LIMITATIONS**

Most of questions on the questionnaire or interview should at least be written by the language of the research participants so that it will be easy for them to answer questions. The solution for a researcher to get truthful information from the participants, the researcher should collect data from participants that are reliable to the study.

#### **1.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **1.13.1 Voluntary participation:**

Voluntary participation refers to the idea that participants should be willing to participate without being coerced to partake in the research study (de Vos et al., 2011). In this study, participants were made aware that they were not coerced to partake in the study. They were told that they were participating willingly and if they felt uncomfortable they had a right to withdraw at any time. Participants were neither forced nor coerced to participate in the study.

##### **1.13.2 Informed consent**

Informed consent is defined as the right of participants to be clearly informed about willingness to make independent decisions to participate in the research (McBurney & White, 2010). The participants of this study were made aware of everything about the study before they volunteered to take part.

##### **1.13.3 Anonymity**

As human beings, participants have the right to make a decision whether to reveal or not their identity. According to de Vos et al. (2011), privacy entails the aspect of personal privacy that everyone is unrestricted to, while anonymity signifies that no one should be able to determine any subject matter after data has been analysed. For the purpose of this study, Participants were assured of their right to anonymity and privacy, as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) that no real names should be exposed

when publishing the results. Participants were given a right to anonymity; their names do not appear in the research report.

#### **1.13.4 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality refers to an ethical concept that articulates the formal duties of the researcher not to reveal or personify the information about research participants (Blanche, Durreim & Painter, 2006). Therefore, in this study, the researcher informed the participants that after raw data had been obtained and analysed, the instruments used would be destroyed.

#### **1.13.5 Risk to harm**

Risk to harm implies protection of participants from both physical and psychologically harm. There are two strategies that strengthen the privacy and protection of the participant from harm; confidentiality and anonymity.

### **1.14. RESEARCH OUTLINE**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

This is the introduction and background of the study. The chapter also highlights the significance of the study. It includes the problem of the study, objectives of the study as well as the methodology and theoretical framework used in the study.

#### **CHAPTER 2**

Chapter two is literature review of the study. It also defines key concepts that are used throughout the study.

#### **CHAPTER 3**

Research methodology is described in this third chapter. Also explained in this chapter is qualitative research procedure, research design, data analysis and instruments for collecting data. The chapter also explains how data is analysed. It also discusses the suitable ethical considerations made in the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis of data and presentation of the study findings.

## **CHAPTER 5**

Chapter five is general conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter also discusses the approaches that can be employed to prevent crime in abandoned buildings in Libode town.

### **1.15 SUMMARY**

This chapter was a general overview of the study and it presented the general orientation of the study. It provided the background to the study and highlighted the literature review of the study. Theories that guided the study were also explained in this chapter. The chapter also described the research problem, main questions and objectives of the study. The chapter also highlighted the theoretical framework and methodology of the study. The chapter ends by highlighting the ethical considerations made in the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is dedicated to the review of literature related to the study. Webster and Watson (2002) state that review of prior and relevant literature is an essential feature of any academic project. An effective review of literature creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed (Webster & Watson, 2002). The chapter explores the context of abandoned buildings as breeding ground for criminal activities and some of the factors that lead to the use of abandoned buildings for criminal activities in other countries.

Sphelman (1993) indicates that in economically distressed neighbourhoods, abandoned houses and apartments can become hangouts for thieves, drug dealers, and prostitutes. Sphelman's study established that in one low-income Austin, Texas neighbourhood, Forty One (41) percent of abandoned buildings could be entered without use of force; of these open buildings, Eighty Three (83) percent showed evidence of illegal use by prostitutes, drug dealers, property criminals, and others. Crime rates in streets with open abandoned buildings were twice as high as rates on matched streets without open buildings (Sphelman, 1993).

According to Ordway (2018), vacant and abandoned buildings are such serious problems that some local governments threaten steep fines if owners allow their unused buildings to fall into disrepair or become safety hazards. Some states have adopted laws to fight urban blight. For example, in 2016 New York governor Andrew Cuomo signed a sweeping legislation to prevent foreclosures and rehabilitate "zombie properties". A law in Washington State that took effect in May 2018 allows cities to force lending institutions to maintain properties that are empty during foreclosure (Ordway, 2018).

Akindele (2012) states that there are five types of crime that can be associated with abandoned buildings, and these are: arson/fire hazard, theft, rape, drug or hemp

smoking and property vandalization. Also associated with abandoned buildings is property value decline (Akindele, 2012).

## **2.2. RISK FACTORS OF ABANDONED BUILDINGS**

According to Plerhoples (2012), policy makers and academics argue that one link between vacant buildings and depopulation is crime. Not only does crime cause depopulation and vacant structures, but vacant structures cause crime through increased incidences of arson, the sheltering of criminals, and the creation of general disorder. With this as a central justification, the United States Government spends millions of dollars a year demolishing vacant buildings. Plerhoples (2012) further states that between 2008 and 2011, the government spent almost \$200 million on vacant building demolitions under the Neighbourhood Stabilization Program, which is only one of several funding sources for demolitions. The city of Flint, Michigan alone was awarded over \$3 million in 2010, the same year in which the number of murders in the city reached an all-time high (Plerhoples (2012)). In fact, the city budget was so constrained that year that the jail was shut down and, as a result, police officers had to issue tickets rather than arrest warrants for many offenses.

In addition, Wilson and Kelling (1982) describe the nature of an abandoned building, and how it attracts crime. They indicate that the Broken Window Hypothesis states that if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, the rest of the windows in the building will soon be broken as well. Window breaking, they argue, does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers. Rather, one unrepaired window is a signal that breaking more windows costs nothing (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

In the case of vacant buildings, the hypothesis implies that one vacant building lying decrepit leads to further crime, solely based on the signal that the probability of being punished is low. This suggests that demolitions cause positive spill over effects in which crime is reduced not only in the immediate area but in surrounding areas as well (Plerhoples, 2012).

Branas, Rubin and Guo (2012) hold that violence remains a significant public health issue in some of the communities in the United States. Their study sought to determine if urban vacant properties were associated with an increased risk of assaultive violence and if this association was modified by important neighbourhood institutions (e.g., schools, parks/playgrounds, police stations, and alcohol outlets). Various factors that may influence violence have been well researched, in particular behavioural risk factors. While some of these factors have been tied to intervention strategies, the relationship of physical structures to rates of violence has been less well proven as a potential modifiable target for intervention. Indeed, neighbourhood physical disorder remains a consistent concern for community leaders and residents and may be associated with aggravated assault (Branas, Rubin & Guo, 2012).

In contrast, Branas, Rubin and Guo (2012) have articulated that abandoned properties have been identified as key, highly modifiable, and easily palpable signs of physical disorder that may also be specifically related to the commission of aggravated assault. Vacant lots and buildings potentially offer refuge to criminal and other illegal activity, and very visibly symbolize that a community has deteriorated, that no one is in control, and that violent or criminal behaviour is welcome to proceed with little if any supervision. The Broken Windows theory has led to initiatives that have sought to reduce violence by restoring deteriorating neighbourhoods and sealing or removing vacant buildings.

In the work of Plerhoples (2012) it is highlighted that abandoned houses can attract crime, and bring down property values, and become eyesores nobody wants to see. Further, neighbours may begin to lose faith in their community. Residents nearby start worrying about schools, about crime and the direction their community is going (Plerhoples (2012). As people and businesses start leaving their buildings and homes, other homes become unsellable. Plerhoples (2012) further states that when a house looks vacant, break-ins start. Strange people show up in the yard where there is an abandoned house or where there is an abandoned building (Plerhoples (2012).

According to Knight and O'shea (2011), the empty buildings are magnets for gang activity, depreciating the value of nearby properties. Drug abuse violations and burglaries are the most common crimes taking place in abandoned properties in West Englewood. They further stated in their work that in Austin, burglaries and illegal drug

use make up 74 percent of the 66 incidents reported in the past three months (Knight & O'shea, 2011).. In Englewood, those crimes (Burglary, Murder and Drug dealing) were 58 percent of the 85 reported cases of illegal activity. In West Englewood, drugs and burglaries constituted high percentage of incidents (Knight & O'shea, 2011). Moreover, vacant homes create so many risks for a community. The police officers found dead people in some of the abandoned buildings in West Englewood. Attempted murder, rape and all kinds of things common in abandoned buildings stress a huge danger for the town and the community in general (Knight & O'shea, 2011).

Ordway (2018) highlights that communities and cities grapple with what to do with their vacant and abandoned buildings, which, over time, can become eyesores. Not only are dilapidated buildings ugly, they can hurt the value of surrounding properties and become hangouts for drug dealers, prostitutes and the homeless (Ordway, 2018). Elected leaders know abandoned buildings are also major barriers to revitalizing urban areas such as downtown shopping districts and low-income neighbourhoods (Ordway, 2018).

Akindele (2012) submits that abandonment correlates with crime in the study area. The differences in occurrence of crime as a result of abandoned buildings among the densities and cities are also verified. To achieve this, respondents were required to indicate the type of crime in existence in the area as well as rate the degree of occurrence. They were asked if abandoned buildings had facilitated crime in their area. This is in case of when they do not have abandoned buildings in their area or cannot link the abandoned building in their area with a specific crime (Akindele, 2012).

### **2.2.1 Criminals hiding stolen stuff in abandoned buildings**

As highlighted by Felson (2006), stolen goods have been stashed by criminals in some abandoned buildings around their areas. The burglar or thief goes to another setting afterwards to trade booty for money or sometimes for drugs. In most cases, these trades happened on empty places where there was no manager of the place (Felson, 2006). When detectives receive a high number of house burglaries, they identify the location and go to that area and ride up and down the streets to identify some of the abandoned homes, because inside those, people like to hide stolen merchandise (Felson, 2006). In these buildings the police find everything from weapons, jewellery

to televisions and other electronics. Oftentimes, when criminals break into homes, they will take the merchandise into a nearby abandoned home, then they'll come back at night to retrieve it under the cover of darkness (Felson, 2006).

Apel (2015) submits that some will try to sell the goods on the streets, but some will take them to pawn shops and other venues. Fortunately, pawn shops have extensive software programs that can help alert authorities if the merchandise has been reported stolen (Apel, 2015). Further, many pawn shop employees know how to tell when the goods that come in might not be on the up and up. Sometimes it is easy to hide stolen goods in abandoned properties that still have belongings inside because of the camouflage effect (Apel, 2015).

According to Cowan, (2015) additionally expresses that an expanding number of empty Empangeni homes are getting to be safe houses for criminal components, just as being deliberately deprived of any substance of money esteem. One such house on Moberly Road, which has been empty for right around a year, has turned into a blemish as vagrants and suspected lawbreakers travel every which way, leaving decimation afterward. Within the sight of Empangeni SAPS individuals, the Zululand Onlooker took a voyage through the broken down home. In the carport, the floor is covered with a heap of old, disassembled mobile phones, while an old shower lay disposed of in congested brush behind the carport (Cowan, 2015)

Cowen (2015) additionally expressed that the external facade is dismal, throwing a dull shadow on the neighboring homes. Our principle concern is that is has turned into a sanctuary for crooks,' said a neighbor, who requested to stay mysterious. About once per week vagrants come and rest there. It is an issue since we are altogether stressed over what will befall us who live close by. It is accepted sharp crooks are utilizing the house to access encompassing homes. Despite the remaining parts of what has all the earmarks of being stolen property littered all through the house, no undeniable indications of drug use could be found.

### **2.2.2. Buildings used for Prostitution**

According to Laldas (2017) the South African Police Service (SAPS) arrested 16 suspects who were found in abandoned buildings Ireland Street in Verulam. All were found in possession of drugs, and others were found in possession of weapons. The Chairperson has stated the association has been inundated with calls from the public

reporting that drug addicts and prostitutes have moved to a new building. We can confirm we have received complaints from the community that prostitutes and drug addicts are occupying the building (Laldas, 2017). South African police service (SAPS) have been proactive in patrolling the site. The law indicated that the whoonga (drug) addicts and prostitutes simply return after the police have left.

Khubisa (2017) additionally included that the empty part that keeps running close to and behind this area is utilized exclusively for drug purchasing, utilizing, and prostitution. Two areas of fence would verify this property for the security of the network and the numerous individuals strolling from the city allotted parking areas to the different organizations in the encompassing lanes. The region is immersed with individuals chasing and utilizing drugs due to the covered up and disregarded territories they are permitted to uninhibitedly use with no dread of being caught (Khubisa, 2017).

In contrast, the town is tormented by empty structures which have throughout the years been abandoned by their proprietors. While the committee has been effective in finding a few proprietors, including one who claimed a structure on Wick Road, which was involved by drug addicts and prostitutes, there are as yet numerous other people who should be found. The structure arranged on Wick Road was beforehand a general store and a butchery before the proprietors betrayed it. The structure started an objection from inhabitants who asserted that the property was a drug cave and utilized by prostitutes as a massage parlour (Khubisa, 2017).

### **2.2.3. Accommodation for Serial killers**

It has been confirmed by Sadovi (2019) that indeed criminals like serial killers utilise abandoned buildings to commit their crimes. Furthermore, Sadovi (2019) highlights in the article that there were bodies of women found near abandoned buildings in Gary. The name of a serial killer was released by the law enforcement agency, but on Saturday officials corrected the address where she was found. She was found in an abandoned building at 22nd and Massachusetts Street in Gary, where five of the other bodies were found. Law enforcement personnel highlighted that the killer confessed to killing seven women and led police to six of their bodies, all of which were stashed in vacant buildings in Gary (Sadovi, 2019). The serial killer is serving life in prison after

strangling seven women to death and stashing six of their bodies in abandoned homes around Gary, Indiana in 2013 and 2014.

#### **2.2.4. Territory for gangs/drug dealer**

According to Felson (2006), drug dealers and buyers make their trades using either social networks (based on prior acquaintance) or routine activities. If they use social networks, they are not dependent on special settings, and are more secure. But the use of networks restrict the number of customers a seller can find easily, and limits the buyer to just a few sellers. Felson adds that this is why trades often rely on settings where routine activities bring more opportunities for drug exchanges; for example, outdoor drug markets tend to spread many more illicit drugs to a wider clientele. But the best drug vendors are often located in small apartment buildings with no apartment manager and no locked gates. Sometimes, drugs are openly sold through windows (Felson, 2006).

In addition, Felson (2006) indicates that some illicit trades can involve two settings. Illicit prostitutes might solicit on the streets, and then take the customer to a sex hotel, a wooded area or an abandoned building. Into that emptiness has washed a flood of urban ills. Drug dealers use the abandoned houses to store their stashes, and addicts break in to shoot up. Sexual predators drag victims into empty houses and prostitutes find decrepit ruins convenient for doing business (Felson, 2006).

Moore and Kleiman(1989) highlight that many urban communities are now besieged by illegal drugs. Fears of gang violence and muggings keep frightened residents at home. Even at home, citizens feel insecure in fear of drug-related break-ins and burglaries. Open dealing on abandoned buildings stirs the community's fears for its children.

According to Stein (2016), everything about an abandoned building is negative; nothing is positive as there is drug dealing and gang activity (Stein, 2016). Furthermore Stein (2016) highlighted that People fear the buildings because someone could leap out. It is even more of a danger to children playing in the area. There are robberies,

rapes and people dragged inside. Drug dealers and drug abusers find many uses for the buildings (Stein, 2016). Some dealers hide drugs there, and then allow customers into the building while the dealers act as lookouts for police. Abandoned buildings are many times used as easy-access places where drug dealers and abusers do not have to pay rent or be accountable to anyone (Stein, 2016).

## **2.3. RISK PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

### **2.3.1. Demolition of buildings**

Jon (2011) states that demolitions cause positive spill over effects in which crime is reduced not only in the immediate area but in surrounding areas as well. Demolishing abandoned buildings, particularly those declared unsafe, removes blight, eliminates the source of crime and disorder conditions, and provides a fresh start for the area (Jon, 2011). Razing buildings is costly and is typically a last resort when the government is relatively certain it will not recapture its previous population level and the property can be put to better use (Jon, 2011). Demolition is best when it is part of a comprehensive redevelopment strategy that includes pursuing state and federal grants and funding for neighbourhood revitalization. The government must be willing to absorb the costs associated with demolition until it can sell the property (Jon, 2011).

It was addressed by Plerhoples (2017) that tearing down vacant buildings can make people safer, even in a city facing depopulation and crime. Plerhoples (2017) find that tearing down one blighted building reduces crime, on average, by slightly more than nine crimes per year, including two violent and five property crimes. It would be even better to rehab these vacant houses or replace them with parks or other projects that benefit the community. But in many neighbourhoods, the expected value of a rehabbed house is less than the cost of rehabbing it (this was the case for all the Saginaw houses in the data), and parks are often too expensive for depopulating cities to afford to build in every vacant lot (Plerhoples, 2017). Some groups have come up with innovative uses for vacant lots, such as community gardens and pop-up shops, which could have an even stronger impact on the surrounding community. In the meantime, demolishing vacant buildings can reduce crime and improve neighbourhoods, even if the lots remain empty (Plerhoples, 2017).

### **2.3.2. Building renovation**

William and Gennaro (2018) explain that replacing broken windows and doors is an effective deterrent of crime and a low-cost alternative to demolishing abandoned buildings. They further outline that taking care of small quality of life offenses in a neighbourhood, like fixing the windows in abandoned buildings, will eventually head off more serious crimes.

### **2.3.3. Installation of formal surveillance (CCTV)**

According to Jon (2011), installing CCTV on the streets around abandoned properties may increase formal surveillance. CCTV permits surveillance of multiple locations from a secure central location, where a permanent record of the activity can be made for investigation and prosecution. Other benefits include improved place management, improved information gathering, reduced fear of crime and a diffusion of benefits. Supplementing a CCTV program with a publicity campaign and signage may increase the deterrent effect; however, it is difficult to reach the majority of the public to create such a heightened perception of risk (Jon, 2011). Once offenders learn of the cameras, particularly following a well-publicized incident, they may adjust their behaviour, which diminishes the cameras effectiveness. CCTV works best when coupled with other strategies (Jon, 2011).

### **2.3.4. Building owners' accountability**

Kondo, Keene, Hohl, MacDonald and Branas (2015) highlight that in 2010, Philadelphia identified approximately 25,000 vacant buildings, and enacted legal tools to hold owners responsible for property remediation. The main tool was the Doors and Windows Ordinance, which was signed into law in January 2011. This ordinance allowed the city to fine owners of a building opening that is not covered with a functional door or window on blocks that are more than 80% occupied. Plywood coverings deteriorate quickly, look dishevelled, signal obvious blight, and are often penetrated to allow illegal entry into abandoned buildings. Under this ordinance, plywood is deemed an unacceptable door and window covering (Kondo et al., 2015).

Kondo *et al* (2015) add that the city began issuing out Compliance citations in January 2011. This involved posting a notice on the abandoned structure and sending a notice of citation to the identified owner indicating that they would be taken to court if they

failed to comply with the ordinance. The city records the number of openings out of compliance, and assesses fines of \$300 per day per opening (Kondo et al, 2015). As of May 2014, the Licensing and Inspection Department had cited 2,356 buildings, and assessed at least \$1.5 million in fine, this was addressed by Kondo *et al*, (2015) on their project. Furthermore, Kondo et al. (2015) state that the money was assessed to make it easier for property owners to comply in a timely manner, and the city does not require them to obtain renovation permits to meet the ordinance requirements. Inspectors visit the property approximately every 35 days to assess compliance (Kondo *et al*, 2015).

## **2.4. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

### **2.4.1. The United States of America**

In the United States, abandoned buildings have contributed too many negative activities to the cities and neighbourhoods. According to Charles, Branas, Rubin and Guo (2012), violence remains a significant public health issue in the United States. As evidence of this, many major cities, such as Philadelphia, have seen consistently increasing rates of aggravated assault despite national trends to the contrary. Leadership continues to seek evidence based violence reduction strategies that can be readily implemented and that resonate with community members. In addition, various factors that may influence violence have been well researched, in particular behavioural risk factors (Charles, Branas, Rubin and Guo, 2012). While some of these factors have been tied to intervention strategies, the relationship of physical structures to rates of violence has been less well proven as a potential modifiable target for intervention. Indeed, neighbourhood physical disorder remains a consistent concern for community leaders and residents and may be associated with aggravated assault (Charles et al. 2012).

Kondo et al. (2015) stipulate that housing abandonment and vacancy is increasing in the US. This is especially the case in the centres of so-called “legacy” cities where, over the past half century, processes such as suburbanization, residential flight, urban disinvestment, and redlining have resulted in rapidly increasing numbers of vacant properties. They further submit that post-industrial cities like Chicago, Cleveland,

Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Baltimore have also experienced rapid declines in manufacturing jobs, further exacerbating residential flight and the growth of vacant properties. As one example, in 2010 Philadelphia had some 40,000 vacant properties, including over 3,000 with abandoned buildings or other structures (Kondo et al., 2015).

According to Jon (2012), as portions of a city gentrify, speculators may purchase abandoned buildings and, instead of filling them with low or moderate-income tenants, purposely leave them empty with the hope of renting to high-income tenants in the future or selling the buildings for a large profit. Although the properties are abandoned, the government has little mitigation recourse if the property taxes are current and the properties are maintained. Speculators may treat levied fines as the cost of doing business and feel unconcerned that these costs are passed along to future renters or buyers. A variation on speculation is when developers buy empty lots (or lots with buildings that they then raze), and, while waiting for land values to appreciate, convert the lots for short-term income generation and forego any investment in security. As an example, parking lots may crop up in areas for which they are not zoned, and the minimal security may invite other crimes. Although the parking lot is not technically abandoned, it can be deemed less than fully protected for its present use, which creates new conditions for police and government agencies to address (Jon, 2012).

Khondo et al. (2015) suggest that vacant and abandoned properties also have a negative impact on communities' health and safety. For example, research in Philadelphia found an association between the presence of neighbourhood vacant properties and an increased risk of neighbourhood assaults. Beyond Philadelphia, other studies have found associations between presence of boarded-up buildings with drug-dependence mortality, rates of sexually-transmitted disease, and premature mortality. Moreover, residents in neighbourhoods with numerous abandoned homes and vacant lots describe the many negative impacts these features have on community well-being, physical, and mental health. According to these residents, vacant properties reduce community cohesion, invite trash, rodents, and crime and increase fear, stress and anxiety (Kondo et al., 2015).

Dwelling more on the issue, Charles et al. (2012) state that vacant properties have been identified as key, highly modifiable, and easily palpable signs of physical disorder that may also be specifically related to the commission of aggravated assault. Vacant lots and buildings potentially offer refuge to criminal and other illegal activity and very visibly symbolize that a neighbourhood has deteriorated, that no one is in control, and that violent or criminal behaviour is welcome to proceed with little if any supervision. The Broken Windows Theory has led to initiatives that have sought to reduce violence by restoring deteriorating neighbourhoods and sealing or removing vacant buildings (Charles et al., 2012).

According to Charles et al. (2012), examining the unadjusted relationship between vacant properties and aggravated assault revealed a significant overlap of higher aggravated assault rates in block groups with higher levels of vacant properties. Comparing the kernel density maps of vacant properties, total aggravated assaults, and gun assaults provided as partial visualization of the distribution of vacant properties and aggravated assaults, with the darker colour intensity signifying a higher density of vacant properties or assaults.

Jon (2012) stresses that abandoned properties become problems for the police when they attract crime and disorder. As a crime attractor, abandoned buildings provide cover, concealment, and opportunities for motivated criminals. Criminals are drawn to an abandoned property because it suits their needs and has few controls (Jon, 2012). As its reputation for being a suitable criminal environment becomes known, the property is used by offenders more frequently, which increases crime and disorder conditions. Because no one is present to guard it or to regulate behaviour, crime and disorderly conduct may escalate, which gradually erode the sense of caring and ownership for the property and increases the risk of victimization and offending (Jon, 2012). Charles et al. (2012) state that in their analysis of violence in neighbourhoods, they found a significant association between vacant properties and the risk of aggravated assault and particularly gun assaults even after controlling for important demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the neighbourhoods. Vacant properties also had the strongest effect size, prevailing over almost a dozen well-

known indicators of disadvantage. These data potentially identify vacant properties as a modifiable target for intervention to reduce assaults in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, they would urge caution in interpreting the data given the need to demonstrate generalizability of the findings to other cities and regions of the USA and the limited ability from our observational design to infer causality (Charles *et al* 2012). For example, the possibility of unmeasured confounders that could explain the association between vacant properties and aggravated assault remains plausible, particularly without within-block group changes to strengthen causal inference. However, the proportion of the model variance explained by vacant properties far outweighed the contribution of all other factors in the model, and upon more detailed analysis, their study period was not of sufficient length to study the within-block group effect. In fact, less than 5% of block groups experienced a change in the category of vacant properties during the study period (Charles *et al.*, 2012).

According to Kondo *et al.* (2015), a number of potential mechanisms explain why abandoned properties generate negative crime and health outcomes. The broken windows theory, for example, posits that visible disorders such as vacant buildings and lots signify that a neighbourhood is uncared-for, has little informal surveillance by those who live there, and that various incivilities are tolerated. These perceptions of disorder are thought to send a signal to would-be offenders that committing crime is acceptable, and likely to go unchallenged or unseen. A substantial body of research supports the relationship between perceived incivilities and other subjective measures such as neighbourhood satisfaction and fear of crime. Others have suggested that structural conditions such as poverty, rather than physical disorder, are the primary sources of crime and fear of crime. In addition, Kondo *et al.* (2015) indicate that concentrations of poverty are thought to erode a neighbourhood's collective efficacy, or the ability to engage in shared expectations of social control related to neighbourhood problems and neighbourly trust, which in turn is correlated with crime. Criminological research, often taking a social-ecological approach, has examined the relationships between neighbourhood disadvantage, physical disorder and crime. These studies have not used experimental or quasi-experimental approaches to test the effects of how varying environmental attributes of places affects crime. As an exception, one study, which included six controlled field experiments, found that the

presence of physical disorder (such as presence of graffiti) led to a significantly higher occurrence of minor offenses (Kondo et al., 2015). Abandoned properties contribute to a self-perpetuating cycle of blight: tenants and building owners will not rehabilitate the property when fear and crime exist, and the government cannot reduce fear and crime when the neighbourhood is beset by abandoned properties. The properties are indicators of blight that symbolize that no one cares about the neighbourhood; the message to onlookers is that the area is ungovernable, no one is willing to challenge another's behaviour, and the risk of being caught is low.

Jon (2012) indicates that estimates on the prevalence of abandoned buildings in the United States vary because there is no central clearinghouse of such information, the data are not consistent across jurisdictions, and definitions may vary. Counting abandoned buildings is difficult partly because vacant lot and "housing unit" affect how each is counted, and they may be grouped together when they are separate issues. The United States Census estimates the number of abandoned properties was 19 million at the end of the first quarter of 2010. Many larger cities such as Detroit (33,500 abandoned houses and 12,000 vacant lots), Baltimore (14,000 abandoned houses and 91,000 abandoned residential lots), and Philadelphia (40,000 abandoned houses and lots) had thousands of abandoned properties, but mid-sized and smaller cities such as Newark and Camden, New Jersey; Flint, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; and East St. Louis, Illinois had higher proportions of abandoned buildings and lots (Jon, 2012). Although abandoned buildings are typically an urban problem, suburban locales have seen increases in these due to bank foreclosures (Jon, 2012).

Jon (2012) stresses that the signs of disorder as well as fear, crime, and social control are thoroughly studied, but whether or not more serious crime inevitably follows is not as well understood. Fear of victimization in areas beset by abandoned buildings leads residents to exercise outdoors less frequently, which affects their physical and psychosocial health and increases their feelings of isolation. The elderly are particularly fearful when their environment contains vacant buildings. Serious violent crimes such as murder, robbery, and sexual assault sometimes occur in or around abandoned buildings and lots. Absentee owners do not live in the buildings they own.

They typically collect rent, but fail to invest in property maintenance, install upgrades, or control tenants' behaviour. Full occupancy overrides safety and order; owners do not exercise control over the space and do not screen tenants before renting to them. As the building deteriorates, respectable tenants move out. The building begins to command lower rent, less desirable tenants move in, and crime and disorder follow. These conditions tend to spread to adjacent areas, which supports the belief that slumlords contribute to neighbourhood decline, and initial blight that is left unattended can have adverse consequences on the existing housing market (Jon, 2012).

## **2.5 EXPLANATION AND DISCUSSION OF THEORIES.**

### **2.5.1 Crime prevention through Environment Design**

According to Deutsch (2019) Crime prevention through environment design is a set of design principle used to discourage and promote building security. The concept is simple: buildings and properties can be designs to prevent damage to the force of the elements and natural disasters, they should also be designed to prevent crime. Crime prevention through environment design principles are based on anticipating the thought processes of a potential offender and create an environment that discourages follow-through. Crime prevention through environment design has the added advantage of creating a sense of security and well-being among employees and tenants (Deutsch, 2019).

### **2.5.2 Situational crime prevention theory**

As highlighted by Freilich and Graeme, 2017, Situational crime prevention (SCP) is a criminological perspective that calls for expanding the crime-reduction role well beyond the justice system. Situational crime prevention theory sees criminal law in a more restrictive sense, as only part of the anticrime effort in governance. It calls for minutely analysing specific crime types (or problems) to uncover the situational factors that facilitate their commission. Intervention techniques are then devised to manipulate the related situational factors. In theory, this approach reduces crime by making it impossible for it to be committed no matter what the offender's motivation or intent, deterring the offender from committing the offense, or by reducing cues that increase

a person's motivation to commit a crime during specific types of events. SCP has given rise to a retinue of methods that have been found to reduce crime at local and sometimes national or international levels. SCP's focus is thus different than that of other criminological theories because it seeks to reduce crime opportunities rather than punish or rehabilitate offenders (Freilich and Graeme, 2017).

According to Futo, 2020, Traditional crime prevention strategies aim at reducing crime and violence by changing criminal tendencies. Situational crime prevention (SCP) focuses on the more immediate opportunities for offending. Situational crime prevention seeks to reduce the harms caused by crime through altering immediate or situational factors in the environments where crime regularly occurs (Futo, 2020).

### **2.5.3 Routine Activities Theory**

According to Kitteringham, 2010, Routine activity theory is one of the main theories of "environmental criminology". The theory states that a crime occurs when the following three elements come together in any given space and time: an accessible target, the absence of capable guardians that could intervene and the presence of a motivated offender. Routine activity theory as a crime prevention methodology focuses on essential elements that make up a crime. This theory provides a framework within which to prevent crime through altering at least one of these elements (the offender, the target or the presence of capable guardians). Furthermore Kitteringham, 2010, highlighted that the most effective crime prevention strategies will focus on all three of these elements. A capable guardian has a 'human element', that is usually a person who, by their mere presence, would deter potential offenders from perpetrating a crime. A capable guardian could also be CCTV, providing that someone is monitoring it at the other end of the camera at all times. Some examples of capable guardians are: police patrols, security guards, Doorstaff, vigilant staff and co-workers, Friends, neighbours. Some of the guardians are formal and deliberate, like security guards; some are informal and inadvertent, such as neighbours (Kitteringham, 2010).

Kitteringham, 2010, expressed that it is also possible for a guardian to be present, but ineffective. For example, a CCTV camera is not a capable guardian if it is set up incorrectly or in the wrong place or is not monitored. Staff might be present in a shop, but may not have sufficient training or awareness to be an effective deterrent. Routine

activity theory looks at crime from an offender's point of view. A crime will only be committed if a likely offender thinks that a target is suitable and a capable guardian is absent. It is the offender's assessment of a situation that determines whether a crime will take place (Kitteringham, 2010).

## **2.6. SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on and aimed at delivering the literature that is available based on abandoned buildings as a breeding ground for criminal activities in towns. The chapter also highlighted perspectives of other countries on this problem. This was obtained by reviewing whatever has been published in relation to the subject the research was preoccupied with.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This section covers the application of research methodology. It explains the qualitative research procedure, research design, data analysis and instruments used for data collection. It explains how data were analysed and addresses the suitable ethical considerations made in the study.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

As has been highlighted by Buchanan and Bryman (2009), research methodology is defined simply as a technique for collecting data. Supporting this supposition, Rajasekar (2014) stipulates that research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a science of studying how research is to be carried out. Essentially, the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena are called research methodology. It is also defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is gained. Its aim is to give the work plan of research. This study applied qualitative research method in order to uncover or resolve the research problem. This method was relevant to this study since it aimed at exploring community understanding about the challenges created by abandoned buildings (Rajasekar 2014). Research Methodology is a logical and deliberate approach to take care of research issues. In addition to the learning of strategies/systems, the research needs to apply the procedure too. The technique may vary from issue to issue. In this way, the extent of research technique is more extensive than research strategies. As it were, look into philosophy manages the exploration strategies and thinks about the rationale behind the techniques we use (Bhattacharyya, 2006). Research Method helps the researcher to take care of the social marvel under investigation and encourages him to incorporate power full approach to tackle the issue, more an uncommonly to distinguish explicit strategies that best suit the exploration (Bhattacharyya, 2006).

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

De Vos and De Vos (2001) presented research design as a logical plan utilised to study a phenomenon under study. However, De Vos and De Vos (2001) also stress that social research needs a design or a structure before data collection or analysis can commence. A search design is not just a work plan. A work plan details what has to be done to complete the project but the work plan will flow from the project's research design. In addition the function of the research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables researchers to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. There are two concepts of research design, which are internal validity and external validity. Ideally research design should be both internally and externally valid (De Vos & De Vos, 2001).

De Vaus (2001) indicates that for the term research design to be used in the book, an analogy might help. When constructing a building there is no point ordering materials or setting critical dates for completion of project stages until we know what sort of building is being constructed. The first decision was whether we need a high rise office building, a factory for manufacturing machinery, a school, a residential home or an apartment block. Until this is done we cannot sketch a plan, obtain permits, work out a work schedule or order materials. De Vaus (2001) explains that, similarly, social research needs a design or a structure before data collection or analysis can commence. A research design is not just a work plan. A work plan details what has to be done to complete the project but the work plan that flows from the project's research design. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible. Obtaining relevant evidence entails specifying the type of evidence needed to answer the research question, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately describe some phenomenon. In other words, when designing research we need to ask: given this research question (or theory), what type of evidence is needed to answer the question (or test the theory) in a convincing way (De Vaus, 2001). This study employed exploratory research design in order to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives. Stebbins (2001) defined and explained exploratory research design as about putting one's self deliberately in a place again and again where discover is possible and broad, usually (but not always) nonspecialized interests can be pursued. Exploratory research requires lengthy periods of field work (of various

kinds) and the sort of personal concern and long standing interest in a topical area that sustains such fieldwork (Stebbins, 2001).

### **3.3.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

This method has many definitions because many academic scholars present this method in various ways. Jackson, Drummond and Camara (2007) note that qualitative research is primarily concerned with understanding human beings' experiences in a humanistic and interpretive approach. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) submit that qualitative research is a broad umbrella that covers a wide range of techniques and philosophies, thus it is not easy to define. In broad terms, qualitative research is an approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies. Hammersley (2013) outlines that qualitative research can be defined along the following lines; a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity cases in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis.

As highlighted by Boeije (2010), qualitative research generally agrees upon the assumptions attached to constructivism, but there are many nuances, traditions and specifics that cause the equalisation research practice to be very diverse. Some research projects are interested in the use of language and communication processes, for example, conversation analysis. In these types of research, the analysis of data is language orientation (Boeije, 2010). In this paper the researcher opted to utilise Qualitative research design and apply exploratory research design since it is the actual method of qualitative research. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013), an exploratory research design seeks to gain deeper understanding of the social phenomenon. In line with this, the researcher sought to find deeper understanding about abandoned buildings in Libode and their relationship with crime within the town. This assisted the researcher to get in-depth data and help residents to be aware of what is happening. Moreover, that deep evidence highlights the strategies to be utilised to deal with the research problem under study.

### **3.4. EXPLORATORY RESEARCH**

As its name suggests, the objective of exploratory research is to explore a problem or situation (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). The authors also state that exploratory research has several key uses in solving ambiguous problems. It can help organisations formulate their problems. Through initial research, such as interviewing potential customers, opportunities and pitfalls may be identified that help to determine or refine the research problem (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011). It is crucial to discuss this information with the customer to ensure that your findings are helpful. Such initial research also helps establish priorities and to eliminate impractical ideas (Mooi & Sarstedt, 2011).

Since this study was based on finding ways to deal with the contribution of abandoned buildings to criminal activities that are occurring in Libode Town, the researcher collected data from the people around these buildings and dug deeper to get more information about their initial actions to reduce criminal activities from these buildings. Moreover, the researcher used interviews to collect data from the key informants (which were Community leaders around Town). The researcher ensured that interviews were held only when participants free whenever. The study also utilised Focus group interviews.

### **3.5. POPULATION**

Drew et al. (2008) state that the population under investigation is fundamental, both with respect to identifying appropriate participants for the research question and with respect to obtaining a representative sample. Drew et al. (2008) define population as all constituents of any clearly described group of people, events, or objects who are the focus of the investigation. Population may be quite large or fairly small. For example, a population might be defined as all third year nursing students in the Republic of South Africa who are enrolled in degree programs. This population would include a rather large number of individuals who are potential participants (Drew et al., 2008). In addition Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) stipulate that the entire set of objects or people which is the focus of the research and about which the research wants to determine some characteristics is called the population. The population of interest in this study were community members living in Libode town and in areas around town that were affected by these criminal activities.

### **3.6. SAMPLE**

As has been stressed by Bless and Higson-smith (2000), sampling theory is the scientific foundation of this everyday practice. It is a technical account device to rationalize the collection of information, to choose in an appropriate way the restricted set of objects, persons, events and so forth from which the actual information will be drawn. Sampling theory is in fact the study of the relationship between a population and the sample drawn from it (Bless & Higson-smith, 2000). Drew et al. (2008) indicate that population refers to all constituents of any clearly described group of people, events, or objects who are the focus of an investigation. Population may be quite large (theoretically infinite) or they may be fairly small (Drew et al., 2008).

Non-probability sampling is the best approach for qualitative research. The study used non-probability sampling, under which it also used the Snowball sampling method. This method assisted the researcher to get a participant who also contributed in identifying participants who were relevant for the study. The study used twenty eight (28) participants to collect data and that was the overall total sample size of the study. This method assisted the researcher to identify people who were otherwise difficult to find, only by just picking few participates and having them lead the researcher to more of the right people. From the communities around Libode Town, the researcher selected a key informant in each community as the first respondent, which helped to find other respondents within the community that could be helpful trough out data collection.

#### **3.6.1. Non-probability sampling**

According to Showkat and Parveen (2017), unlike probability sampling method, the non-probability sampling technique uses non-randomized methods to draw the sample. The non-probability sampling method mostly involves judgment. Instead of randomization, participants are selected because they are easy to access. One of the major shortcomings of the non-probability sampling is that the findings established through this method lack generalizability. Even though findings obtained through this method apply mostly to the group studied, it may be wrong to extend these findings beyond that particular sample. Through the non-probability method, we can study

particular phenomena with a potential to generate valuable insights. The non-probability sample is used to study existing theoretical insights or developing new ones. This method of sampling is considered less expensive, less complicated and easy to apply as compared to its counterpart (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

Snowballing is one of the sampling methods under non-probability sampling which is used in this study. It is a simple and quick method of collecting data that assists the researcher to finish on record time and it does not consume a lot of time. The study aimed at developing new strategies that could be used to reduce criminal acts related to abandon buildings, the researcher will get those strategies through data collection.

### **3.6.2. Snowball sampling**

Showkat and Parveen (2017) state that in snowball sampling, also called "chain referral sampling", the sample is actually collected in various stages. Snowball sampling is basically sociometric in nature. Although snowball sampling is considered to be a form of accidental sampling by some, this method is appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate; for example, homeless people, migrant workers etc. It begins by the collection of data from one or more contacts, usually known to the person collecting the data. At the end of the data collection process (e.g., questionnaire, survey, or interview), the data collector asks the respondent to provide contact information for other potential respondents. These potential respondents are contacted, interviewed and further asked to provide more contacts. This process goes on till the purpose of the researcher is achieved (Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The reason this study used snowball is that the researcher was not familiar with the population and was hard for the researcher to select sample from the population. The researcher decided to assign community leaders from each community that was used by the researcher to collect data and two executive committee members whom are from the township called Belmond which located within town, to choose 10 participants in the community which will form part of focus group and that is snowballing. The research uses the community leader to get hold of other participants, as snowball method highlights that one participant helps the researcher to locate participants who are difficult to get hold. The community leader is the one that know who the relevant people that can help throughout data collection are.

Snowball sampling is most useful when there are very few methods to secure a list of the population or when the population is unknowable.

### **3.7. DATA COLLECTION**

As highlighted by Drew et al. (2008) data collection refers to the actual execution of the investigation. This may include the process of administering a questionnaire, conducting an interview, or presenting a math test to a participant and recording responses. This is the point at which the study is implemented (Drew et al., 2008). While deciding about the method of data collection to be used for the study, a researcher should keep in mind the two types of data, which are the primary and secondary data (Blaikie, 2010). As specified by David and Sutton (2004), primary research involves the researcher undertaking the data collection themselves. It allows the researcher to determine the research design, the conceptual framework, the sampling technique, and the research method and measurement tools. On the other hand, the analysis of the second data needs to be understood within the context and conceptual framework of the original study. Secondary data enables the researcher to analyse data from larger samples than would be possible within the financial and time restriction of their own research project (David & Sutton, 2004).

This study used Interviews to collect data from key informants. The researcher organised appointments to interview participants at those times that they were free. Often key informants have sensitive information that they could be afraid to voice in focus groups so the researcher decided to use one on one interviews with them. Focus group interviews were used for other participants to get knowledge of the phenomenon under study.

### **3.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Vosloo (2014), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is described as messy, ambiguous and time consuming, but also as a creative and fascinating process. He further states that data analysis does not proceed in linear fashion; it is the activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorizing data that signifies a search for general statements among

categories of data. Therefore, one could infer that data analysis requires some sort or form of logic applied to research. In this regard, it is clear that the analysis and interpretation of data represent the application of deductive and inductive logic to the research. On the other hand, the interpretive approach, which involves deduction from the data obtained, relies more on what it feels like to be a participant in the action under study, which is part of the qualitative research (Vosloo, 2014). The study employed the qualitative approach and made use of two qualitative data analyses methods, which are the interpretive analysis and thematic analysis.

### **3.8.1 Interpretive analysis**

Sgier (2012) highlights that interpretive analysis (discourse and narrative analysis) is a family of analyses that look less at what the data say than at what they do, and namely, how they construct universes of meaning, or frames, by means of often implicit categorisations, the creation of hierarchies and boundaries, attributions of blame and responsibility, the narrative construction of temporal sequences (Sgier, 2012).

### **3.8.2 Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis, the most common type of qualitative analysis, seeks to identify patterns (commonalities, contrasts, etc.) in the contents of data. It proceeds through a series of well-defined steps such as category building, coding and categorising that are useful not only for those who engage in this type of analysis, but also for the general understanding of the nature of qualitative analysis (Sgier, 2012). All the information that was collected from the interviews was broken down into themes and subthemes to structure the study and the other that was on tap records was firstly transcribed before being written down (see chapter four for themes and subthemes).

Ruggunan (2012) describes steps of thematic analysis as follows:

#### **Step 1. Familiarise yourself with the data**

If you have done the data collection on your own, you still need to re-listen to audio and read transcripts a few times. It is easier to do with 15 to 20 interviews than 80 but it needs to be done.

## **Step 2. Generate initial codes**

Code the interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set (Semantic or latent). Collate/ organise data relevant to each code. Code manually or use software. Be strategic in your choice. Your interview schedule questions are not your codes.

## **Step 3. Discovering themes/searching for themes**

This is an active process. Please write in an active way. Do not use passive 'themes emerged'. Engage in a broader level of analysis. Codes become themes/sub-themes. Software/mind maps/ visualisation are good for this (Ruggunan, 2012).

## **Step 4. Reviewing Themes**

You now have 'candidate themes' that have to be reviewed. They are candidates because some may not have enough data to support them for example, or you may want to merge or separate themes or even remove certain themes. You want to reduce data further.

## **Step 5. Defining and naming themes**

This is about describing the themes in a way that captures the essence of the theme. Do not demand too much from a theme.

## **Step 6 Writing the Analysis**

The best way to learn this is to read peer reviewed qualitative articles and to read journals about Qualitative research. Do not summarise each interview. You are not a journalist so do not report facts only. You need to provide an analytic narrative (Ruggunan, 2012).

### **3.8.3 Aims of qualitative data analysis**

Flich (2014) indicates that the analysis of qualitative data can have several aims. The first aim may be to describe a phenomenon in some or greater detail. The phenomenon can be the subjective experience of a specific individual or group (e.g. the way people continue to live after a fatal diagnosis). The analysis can also compare several cases and zero in on what they have in common or on the differences between

them. The second aim may be to identify the condition on which such differences are based. This means to look for explanations for such differences. The third aim may be to develop a theory of the phenomenon under study from the analysis of empirical material (Flick, 2014).

### **3.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Rogelberg (2004) postulates that the word ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means one's character or disposition. Today, ethics refers to a branch of philosophy concerned with how people should act, judgments about those actions (e.g. right versus wrong, good versus bad), and developing rules for justifying actions. Ethics evaluates behaviour in terms of right or wrong according to principles or guidelines. In the context of research, ethics focus on providing guidelines for researchers, reviewing and evaluating research, and establishing enforcement mechanisms to ensure ethical research (Rogelberg, 2004).

#### **3.9.1 Plagiarism**

As defined by Rampolla (2004), plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, or research of another person and putting them forward without citation as if they were your own. It is intellectual theft and a clear violation of the code of ethics and behaviour that most academic institutions have established to regulate the scholastic conduct of their members. Colleges and universities have their own policies that define plagiarism and establish guidelines for dealing with plagiarism cases and punishing offenders, but the penalties for plagiarism are usually severe, ranging from an automatic fail in the course to temporary suspension or even permanent expulsion from the school. Plagiarism, in short, is considered a very serious academic offense (Rampolla, 2004).

#### **3.9.3 Manipulation of data**

As articulated by Abedin and Kumar Das (2015), data manipulation introduces the state of the art approach called split, apply and combine to manipulate datasets. Data manipulation is an integral part of data cleaning and analysis. For a large dataset, it is always preferable to perform operations within the subgroup of a dataset to speed up

the process. This type of data manipulation can be done with base functionality, but large datasets require a considerable amount of coding and eventually takes longer to process. In the case of a large dataset, we can split the dataset performing the manipulation or analysis and then combine them again into a single output (Abedin & Kumar Das, 2015).

### **3.10. SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined and discussed the research design and methodology used in the study. The chapter further examined the population from which the sample was drawn, and the selection of sampling techniques to identify participants of the study and procedures of data collection. Data analysis approaches were also explained and discussed in detail. The next chapter focuses on discussion of research findings and analysis of the results.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This section covers the presentation of results collected or obtained from the instruments that were used to collect data, which are in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. With the use of thematic analysis, code tables were drafted to illustrate themes, sub-themes and categories that were generated from the data collected. The above mentioned items are then discussed to explain the association of abandoned buildings with criminal activities occurring within these buildings and around town. In-depth interviews were only used to interview key informants and focus groups were used to interview other participants. The analysis is divided into two; in Section A the researcher discusses the biographical information of the participants and in Section B the study discusses the association of abandoned buildings with crime in Libode town and measures to be implemented to reduce this problem. For analysis and clarity purposes, key informants are identified as Key informant 1 to Key informant 8 and those participating in the groups are identified as Participant in group 1 or Participant in Group 2).

#### **4.2 SECTION A: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

The section presents the biographical details of the research participants. This study was deeply concerned about crime within Libode and the association of crime with abandoned buildings around town. It was also concerned with what should be done to reduce crime of this nature. In the form of tables, below is a presentation of biographical information of the participants.

#### 4.2.1 Table 1: Representation of the Ages of Key-Informants

<b>35-45 years</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>40 – 60 years</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>60 -70 years</b>	<b>1</b>

**Total number of participants 8**

Table 4.2.1 presents the age groups of the key informants as the researcher. As outlined in Chapter one, the study used 8 key informants. These key informants were six (6) community leaders and two (2) members of the executive committee from the township next to town. Group one ranged from 35-45 years, group two from 40-60 years, and group three from 60-70 years. From the 8 participants, 2 participants were between ages of 35-45 years, 5 were between ages of 40-60 years and 1 participant was between the ages of 60-70 years.

#### 4.2.2 Table 2: The Ages of Participants of Focus Group number 1

<b>18-21 years</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>21-35 years</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>35-45 years</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>45-50 years</b>	<b>1</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

Table 4.2.2 above presents the age groups of the participants who took part in focus Group number one as the researcher. Participants in focus group one were from the communities close to town. Group one ranged from 18-21 years, group two from 21-35 years, group three from 35-45 years and group four from 45-50 years. Of the 10 participants, 3 participants were between ages of 18-21 years, 2 were between ages of 21-35 years, 4 were between ages of 35-45 years and 1 participant was between ages of 45-50 years.

#### 4.2.3 Table 3: The Ages of Participants of Focus Group number 2

<b>18-21 years</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>21-35 years</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>35-45 years</b>	<b>3</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

Table 4.2.3 above presents the age groups of the participants who took part in focus Group number two. Participants in focus group number two were from the Township next to town. Group one ranged from 18-21 years, group two from 21-35 years, and group three from 35-45 years. Of the 10 participants, 5 participants were between ages of 18-21 years, 2 were between ages of 21-35 years, and 3 were between ages of 35-45 years.

#### 4.2.4 Table 4: Marital Status of Key-Informants

<b>SINGLE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MARRIED</b>	<b>7</b>

**Total number of participants 8**

Table 4.2.4 above identifies marital statuses of the key informants of the study. The marital statuses were categorized into two groups' married and single key informants. Seven key informants were married while one (1) was single.

#### 4.2.5 Table 5: Marital Status of the Participants of Focus Group 1

<b>SINGLE</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MARRIED</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DIVORCED</b>	<b>1</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

The table above identifies marital statuses of the participants who took part in focus group number one (1) of the study. The marital statuses were categorized into three groups; single, married and divorced participants. Out of Ten (10) participants, five (5) were single, four (4) were married and one (1) was divorced.

#### 4.2.6 Table 6: Marital Status of the Participants of Focus Group 2

<b>SINGLE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>MARRIED</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>DIVORCED</b>	<b>3</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

Table 4.2.5 identifies marital statuses of the participants who took part in focus group number Two (2) of the study. The marital statuses were categorized into three groups; single, married and divorced participants. Out of Ten (10) participants six (6) were single, one (1) was married and three (3) were divorced.

#### 4.2.7 Table 7: Criminal background of the participants in focus group 1:

<b>EX-CRIMINALS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NEVER TOOK PART</b>	<b>6</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

The table above shows the historic involvement of the participants in crime. This table has two categories, which are; ex-criminals and those who never took part. Those who were involved in crime in the past are under ex-criminal category and those who did not take part in any criminal act in the past are under never took part. Out of ten participants in group one (1), four (4) were ex-criminals and six (6) had never taken part in any criminal act.

#### 4.2.8 Table 8: Criminal background of the participants in focus group 2:

<b>EX-CRIMINALS</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NEVER TOOK PART</b>	<b>10</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

Table 4.2.8 above shows the historic involvement of the participants on crime. This table has two categories, which are; ex-criminals and never took part. Those who were involved in crime in the past are in the ex-criminal category and those who did not take part in any criminal act in the past are categorised as *never took part*. In this group all participants never took part in any criminal act in the past.

#### 4.2.9 Table 9: Employment Status of Key-Informants

<b>EMPLOYED</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>UN-EMPLOYED</b>	<b>6</b>

**Total number of participants 10**

Table 4.2.9 shows the employment statuses of the key informants who participated in the study. Most six (6) participants were unemployed while two (2) were employed.

### 4.3 SECTION B: FINDINGS ON FACTORS ASSOCIATION OF ABANDONED BUILDING

Below is the analysis of data collected in relation to the association of abandoned buildings with criminal activities around Libode and those happening within these buildings. The table below shows the themes the researcher came up with after the coding process.

#### 4.3.1 CODING TABLE

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Categories</b>
FACTORS THAT LEAD CRIMINALS TO USE ABANDONED BUILDINGS AS THE TARGET SPOT FOR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance of abandoned buildings by government or relevant owners</li> <li>• Secure place for criminals.</li> <li>• Lack of or no restriction to the buildings</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of the abandoned building</li> </ul>	
ROLE OF ABANDONDED BUILDINGS IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal's territory for personal use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal Meetings</li> <li>• Place to hide stolen stuff</li> <li>• Place for drug trades</li> <li>• Territory for gangs to hang around</li> </ul>
PREVENTIVE MEASURES THAT COULD BE UTILISED TO REDUCE CRIMES ASSOCIATED WITH ABANDONED BUILDINGS AND THOSE HAPPENING INSIDE THESE BUILDINGS AT LIBODE TOWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovation of the buildings</li> <li>• Destroying the buildings</li> <li>• Enforce security</li> <li>• Sub-theme four: Create awareness campaigns to alert children about crime and about the dangers of abandoned buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category one: Street lights installation and CCTVs</li> <li>• Category two: Police forum patrolling around town and on these building</li> </ul>

### **4.3.2 THEME ONE: FACTORS THAT LEAD TO CRIMINALS ACTIVITIES**

Criminals mostly utilise vulnerable places to commit their crimes. This way, they know it will not be easy for anyone to notice that. This theme is discussed further in the sections that follow.

#### **4.3.2.1 Sub-Theme 1: Renovation of Buildings**

When participants were asked about factors that led criminals to use abandoned buildings for their criminal activities in Libode, they expressed a lot on the issue of attendance of these buildings. One key informant said;

*For my time in this chair I have observed that building next to social development department is not attended by anyone including the government. I been on this chair for 5 years now and there have been cases reported to the police and nothing has happened to the building till now. At least I would understand if they could locate the owner if it has the owner or the government do something that will help to fix it. Since I am the leader of this community I tried to engage with other leaders from other communities for us to reach resolutions that could be applied. I can say I failed because they were not keen to help on this matter saying that they have so many matters to deal with (Key informant 1).*

In response to the same question key informant 3 stated that;

*It is hard to resolve this issue because two of these building including some of the neglected houses inside town are owned by residents who moved out of town long time ago and it is not easy resolve the matter. As I am telling you if we could try to demolish these building then two or three days after the owner of the building or house show case him or self then what would we do and that will put us in trouble and we are afraid of the law in fact I personally I don't want to be in the wrong side of the law.*

Key informant 6 stated that;

*Due to the number of case reported to us as community leaders of crimes associated with some of the abandoned buildings there at town. I asked myself that since the numbers are increasing each and every year while government does not try to locate*

*the owners of the building because I don't want to lie; those builds at town are not attended. I was hoping by now at least two of these build would have been destroyed by now and that one used for accommodation.*

Key informant number 8 expressed their sentiments thus;

*The only problem for these buildings are not attended there are government politics involved (that's when the researcher acquired new information and opted to add that information on the study as section B of this chapter: check Section B for more information based on this matter) and it is hard now to fix or utilise these building again and I guess this will take year to resolves. I fully agree that there must be something done to solve the matter but let me ask how if the government themselves are fighting over this buildings.*

One of the participants in group 2 responded to the same question above in the following manner;

*I know two people who died because they tried to buy these buildings and change them to create accommodation sites. The reason for their deaths was that there are people within the government structure who want these buildings for the same purpose (rumours). I think it won't be easy to come with the solution because of that. Attending these buildings will have to come by trying to locate owns and that building owned by the government being demolished that's all because there will be so much deaths as I can see.*

Another participant from group 2 highlighted that;

*I live next to one of these buildings I never saw any government official inspecting the house just for check-up or seeing police going inside not unless the is a case reported I mean police were supposed to check this buildings at least one or two times a month to an sure that there is control over within this buildings.*

On the same topic Key informant 5 stated that;

*Due to this abandonment or negligence by the government or departmental officials, criminals saw a chance to use these buildings for their wrong doings. If you can see some of these buildings have drawings on them, some are written stuffs like 28 or 27's. Those according to my understanding are gangs.*

A participant from focus group 1 stated that;

*I was part of the group Big Nuz when I was a teenager robbing people. I ran away from home, we were staying in one of these building in town (he didn't want to state which one). We basically knew that it has been years that building existed with no attendance and we observed it for a long time before using it. We saw that it could be our best place to stay in and keep a low profile. Then we anticipated that no one cares about what we are doing inside that building that's when we decided to stay on it.*

From the excerpts above, it is transparent that these buildings need attendance as there is no attendance at all. Participants indicate that the police need to patrol the town at all times and ensure that they sometimes visited the abandoned buildings within town to avoid criminal activities being carried out in those buildings. Mostly, participants articulated the fact that the government needed to trace the rightful owners of the buildings and houses so that they could reach an agreement on the way forward about the buildings. They indicated that if this did not happen then there would still be too much in the town.

#### **4.3.2.2 Sub-Theme 2: Secured place for criminals**

With the acknowledgment that these buildings were not attended by the government, the criminals saw these buildings as their safe place to utilise for their wrongdoings. In most cases they even stayed in these buildings as their shelter, as it was expressed by a participant from focus group 2. According to Key informant 2:

*The moment government tends to avoid these buildings, that's when criminals see them as their hot spot to use. Even if I was a criminal I would use them as well. Tell*

*me if I hide something on these buildings who would know it is there because police are not patrolling.*

Focus group 1 had four (4) ex-offenders. One of them had been detained because he and his group had been caught red handed mugging a lady in town. He said;

*We used one of the buildings to meet because it was a right place for us and we had no problem when we are on that building. If you can look even now that building is used by other guys for their personal things. In most cases we were looking for a place where we are sure that we are safe on it and there won't be any disturbance.*

Another participant from focus group 1 also stated that:

*We never felt uncomfortable, we always met on these abandoned builds and sometimes we leave our things there and when we come the other day our things are still there. I would say that it was safer meeting in these buildings than public.*

#### **4.3.2.3 Sub-Theme 3: Restrictions or Laws on utilisation of these buildings**

Participant on group 1 highlighted that;

*In most towns there are places where you will see a board or a sign that shows no one allowed to come near this place. I never saw any here at Libode town. Yes, I understand it is the small town but due to the number of cases and crimes occurring in town and some are associated with these buildings there has to be laws employed to reduce that matter. With the support of another participant in the same group addressed that there are no even written laws then that could articulate the fact that no one is allowed to use an abandoned building in town.*

When ask on the same question, key informant number seven (7) stated that;

*I am part of the executive committee of the community we have our own laws that we want people to follow and we always ensure they are followed. I have no right to tell the government what to do or not to do but what we are practising as the committee I never saw it done based on these buildings. I have an assurance that if government*

*can issue out laws to restrict people on using these buildings no one would ever go near them.*

Key informant 2 stated that;

*I went to the police station regarding the case we were investing on. As a community leader I was asked to take part it was involving some of the boys that are living in my community. I asked the police man that was in the room with me that are there any laws or restriction that are based on the use of these buildings. He told me that it is hard for them to restrict people from using some of these buildings because they are not owned by the government it may happen that the person who is using it is the owner who knows. With that being said I asked him tell me now we are facing crisis because now you know it is not the owner who use these buildings they are used by criminals. He said maybe the station commander can answer that one.*

Throughout the interview with focus group 1, it was clear that everyone (participants) accepted that without laws to restrict people from using abandoned buildings in Libode town, criminals would continue to utilise these buildings for their criminal activities. Some of the participants articulated that the criminals knew exactly that no one was going to disturb them during their meeting and, usually, the criminals chose a particular time to meet where they knew that there would be no disturbance.

#### **4.3.2.4 Sub-Theme 4: Location of the abandoned building**

Key informant number 4 when asked a question based on the location of these buildings if is it the safe place or are these buildings on good condition, the response was:

*Where these buildings are located, the area is not in a good condition. Let us talk about the one next to village there are trees next to it and lot of flowers and even myself I would never go near that place and it's been a while that area looks like that. Everybody knows it exactly that criminals in most cases they like scary places they that police officers are human as well the will be afraid to go to such places. If the government see that this is the problem why don't they just clean the area?*

Another participant from focus group 2 highlighted that;

*I know the house that has 12 years abandoned next to the clinic but deep in the bushes, that house is too far for people to hear anything that happens there and we have children who go and fetch castles in these bushes. It is not safe for our children we need to come together as communities to convince the government to tighten up security and clean the areas where these abandoned building are located and I would like for some building to be destroyed like the one I just talk about.*

Key informant number 6 was an executive committee member of the township next to town. He explained;

*We sat with the government a few years back but we talked specially about cleanliness in town and this issue was raised that the government need to cut all the bushes next to this buildings and ensure that all the flowers around them are removed as well not for safety but it was just for cleanliness. The response we had was that the government is responsible to clean the town and only the property that belongs to them since we all know that out of the three abandoned buildings in town only one building belongs to government (it is an unfinished project that was that was left in 2001). Then two belong to private owners but we don't know where they are not located to fix the matter. All these buildings are in a tight space and the environment is not great, it's scary.*

#### **4.3.3 THEME 2: ROLE OF ABANDONDED BUILDINGS IN CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES**

Abandoned buildings play a huge role when it comes to criminal activities. Criminals either hide in these buildings or use them to hide their stolen things. The buildings generally provide cover for illicit activities.

##### **4.3.3.1 Sub-Theme 1: Criminals' territory for personal use**

The researcher is of the opinion that once the building is neglected it becomes the criminals' den. They will first observe it for years and then start to test the ground to see if that will not alarm the police. If nothing happens then things turn ugly. In the

literature reviewed in this study scholars outlined whenever they committed crimes like house breakings, most gangs hid their stuff in abandoned structures. From the data collected in relation to the above theme, the following sub-themes emerged.

#### **4.3.3.2 Category: Meetings**

So many cases have been reported to the South African Police Services in Libode town, including the well-known case of gang members from Mega com who were shot and killed a few years back. Key informant 7 indicated that these used to relax in some of these buildings and nobody knew what they were plotting; all people could see was the chaos in town.

Another participant voiced that;

*Because I was part of some of the wrong doings that were happening around town few year back can stress that we ensured that before we go and do our thing (Umshika-shika) we used to first make our gathering on that building next to social work offices in the bush. To ensure that everybody know what to do at what time. But we made sure that no one when he is caught run back to the building.*

Another participant from focus group 1 also stated that;

*Due to unemployment I decided to be a criminal, not through mugging people nor stealing, but by selling drugs. I used to have a station next to the rank but nobody knew what I was doing only my clients knew. So for me and my competitors to get our stuff we were supposed to meet in a safe place with our dealers and I can't disclose the place but it was one of the buildings in town.*

With the support from the same group by another participant said that:

*I did not have a station at town, it was not easy to get the station in fact it is not easy even now to get the station in town you need to know people. So I decided to sell my stuff here at my community by use small boys for delivery to a client. To get the stuff I used to go the same place we participant above stated it was one of the building there in town because we wanted to see the person whom we buying from.*

Another participant from focus group 1 also stated that;

*Mna (I) was not selling any drugs but me and my gang we use to go there and discuss what should we do whenever we need a change in our style remember when you part of the gang there are rules to follow and you need to ensure that you bind by the so that there are no problems when it is time to work. So we use abandoned house for those meetings.*

Most key informants indicated that in most cases if there is a vacant house or building and it turns to be neglected for years you should know one thing that there are high chances something wrong is going to happen in it. They stated that several cases reported to them by the police seeking assistance were associated with these buildings. One of the key informants further stated that there was rumour that there were meetings held in these buildings but one would never track their time as you only hear about the meeting when the meeting is done. What this indicates is that the police are dealing with people who are far more intelligent than they often assume.

#### **4.3.3.3 Category: Place to hide stolen stuff**

During an interview with group two participants, they outlined that in most of the crimes that happened in town, such as mugging and shop break-ins, the things that were stolen were found in one abandoned building or the other in town, but in several occasions the police only clear out stashed stuff. Key informant eight (8) said;

*Here in the townships there have been break-ins in 2008. We heard that there are stuff sold in other communities by young boys. The executive committee tried to trace that story and the findings were that these items are exactly the items stolen in the township but these boy stash them on these buildings first to lower the pressure of the residents after sometime they go and fetch them.*

Another participant from focus group two said:

*I could say these abandoned buildings are vulnerable when it comes to crime because they have all the characteristics of negligence you can see, so if I stole something the first place to hide it would be them just to keep a low profile up until the investigation*

*based on them is done. Then when everything is done I go and collect my stuff to sell them or do whatever I want to do with them. The only point I am raising is that abandoned buildings are so vulnerable when it comes to association with crime and hidden stuff inside them.*

Key informant 8 states also stated that:

*Criminals have different methods of stashing their stolen things in these abandoned buildings, in 2008 during that time of break-ins we sent a team to check these abandoned buildings since we had a lead but we were sure they will just get these things easily since its an open space rooms. As we expected some of the stuffs were found in the back rooms of the apartments but it was not easy to get others we had to investigate and interrogate the perpetrators in order for them to spit out the truth. Then one of the perpetrators during interrogations finally said the truth 'that they made holes inside some other rooms and put stolen things inside holes then they closed the holes so that the room will look the same as before. That's when as the committee we saw that if these buildings are not dealt with the township will have to do something by their own but that did not succeed because the government heard about what we were about to do.*

#### **4.3.3.4 Category: Place for drug trades**

It is of significance to state that the buildings in which the crimes occur are filled with dirty stuff, broken glass and discarded clothing and papers. The windows are broken, providing easy entry, and doors are no longer there. With that being said it is so much easy for criminals to use these buildings. Everything about a vacant house or an abandoned building is negative; there is nothing positive about these buildings. There are drug Pimp or kings who utilise these buildings for dealings and gang activity. As is said before, people fear the buildings because someone could leap out anytime. "It is a danger to children playing in the area, and there are robberies and drug trades within these buildings" (Participant from focus group two).

Another participant from focus group two supported the above statement by saying;

*Remember we have children whom we expecting them to go and fetch cattle from fields and bring them back home. They pass these buildings every day and anything they see there it could affect them negatively, one: if they happen to see a guy raping do you think he would let the go, so they are at risk and in most cases gangs hang there and smoke these drugs tell me our children are not exposed into bad things?*

A participant from group 2 further stated that;

*You will never see any adult with drugs here in the community; the only people that we find with drugs are teenagers and young boys. Whenever they were asked about these drugs it's not their stuff they were just delivering it for another person. We then saw that these people hire small boys for drug delivering not just any boy those that are innocent looking. Then we continued our research and heard who their employers are and they are not residing in our community but they promise these boys to give them money after they finish their packages. We manage to trace location of one of their dealers and asked him questions before he was arrested and we used our way to ask questions which I want disclose here then he told us that even them (Employers) they are employed by some of the Nigerians but they have to go and collect their packages on some of these abandoned buildings.*

Another participant from group one stated that;

*As I have just said previously that the time I was still in that world (criminal) we used to ensure the fact that we go and collect our packages from the dealers and that was done inside of some of abandoned building in town. Then after that each of us will use his methods on selling his merchandise but most of us usually hire small boys to deliver in communities and use teenagers to sell the stuff at schools.*

#### **4.3.3.5 Category: Territory for Gangs to hang around**

Key Informant 3 stated that abandoned buildings are territory for gangs to hang around. Further explained that this is the talk all over the nation we can see they have nothing to offer in dealing with it. Talking about Libode alone this has become a

problem, drug addict utilises abandoned houses to hang around and for then to smoke at. In our communities we have homes where the homes decided to vacate and leaves houses unattended, places like such are the once usually become targets in this case. In my perspective I could say it is not necessary to be a building for them to ambush or hijack to do their wrongdoings also abandoned houses (Key informant number 3).

Key informant number five (5) stated that;

*Usually in my community gangs smoke anywhere they want; they do not have a specific place to do this act. But I noticed that they know that we as elders do not condone this act (smoking drugs), of course there are drugs that the community at large is against so those drugs are the ones that these gangs turn to smoke them at these abandoned homes and unfinished houses.*

In an interview with key informant four (4), the informant indicated that:

*Yes, in my observation I have seen a lot of young boys hang a lot on these abandoned homes here in our community and there are these groups called "Amaphara'phara" these are the people who usually stay the smoking or not smoking they are always there just sitting. Then to answer your question I could just tell you that even there in town on the abandoned buildings I am sure that gangs hang there, for that being sad there are so many gangs the like the these boys called the Big'Nuz.*

Key-informant 7 outlined that;

*In most time since they leave in the township next to town during the day there are lot of boys who usually stay in one of the buildings, you will find them having charts and always asking young boys for two rands or some coins. We know exactly that there is nothing we can do because the police are not anything. There are these boys pushing trolleys in front Spar some of them ran away from home and they have nowhere to stay, they also use these buildings to hang around.*

One of the participants from group one submitted that;

*We use to go for something to eat first then you know after some eating everyone wants to smoke and these buildings were our best spot to hang around because we knew that we were not going to be disturbed. Most of the time we would just chill there, just to chat and enjoy our company up until its late then if we have a target that day everyone goes home and we call it a day but then there those who stay there for the night because they had nowhere to go.*

Another participant from group one further explained that;

*It is true I always pass that building next to village JSS, each and every day you will find boys there even thou I could not say they are gangs buy you can't be at a scary place in the morning and you are an ordinary person.*

Participants from group two (2) concurred with participants from group one that abandoned buildings could be the hot spot for gangs to hang around. They indicated that unfinished houses, abandoned houses and buildings were not attended and in many communities no one took care of these apartments. This attracted the gangs to use them.

#### **4.4 THEME THREE: PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

This theme serves to explore methods that could be used to reduce crime in and off abandoned buildings in Libode. Since the researcher dwelled on the issue of association of these buildings with crime that is happening in town (Libode town), participants indicated some strategies that they thought could be employed in dealing with this phenomenon. The following sections address each preventive measure that could be utilised and explain it in-depth on how it could help in this case. The following are the preventive measures suggested by the participants.

#### **4.4.1 Sub-theme one: Fixing the buildings**

A key informant stated that in order to reduce all these negative elements characterised by these building and their association with crime, the government needed to start investing in fixing them. Key informant 4 added that this happened, then things will be much better. Key number 3 stated that;

*All these crime related things happening in these buildings are because of the condition of their environment. If you could go and take a look at these buildings, they have broken windows, missing doors and messed up roofs. That sends a clear image to perpetrators that they can utilise them no one cares. Even the surrounding environment is not ok the government need to ensure that trees are cut down and weeds are removed so that the building be vivid to everyone. With that being said, removing all trees next these building will help everyone easily see some happening in these buildings and alert the police as soon as possible.*

Key informant one said;

*My view would be that we need to fix these buildings and that passes, there are so many opportunities that will be opened. These buildings are in a good structure and they can help the town a lot in a positive way. So the government needs to find the rightful owns of the buildings and reach a level of understandings on fixing these buildings.*

Key informant number six voiced that:

*An apartment does not depreciate; it only appreciates so if the government did some touch ups on these buildings only good come up. We have people who work here at town who live far from town they all need accommodation and by fixing these buildings it could help on such things. I know that the government can visit their budget and see what to come up if they don't have money to fix these buildings that leaves to say they need to consult some businesses for donation or participation in dealing with this case.*

#### **4.4.2 Sub-theme two: Destroying the buildings**

Not all participants agreed with the above preventive measure. Some participants highlighted the importance of destroying the buildings instead of fixing them. They wanted it to be listed as one of the key preventive measures that could help in reducing crimes associated with these buildings. Key informant number two stated that;

*Yes, as much as I could agree with them (other participants that viewed these buildings must be fixed) on the case of fixing these buildings, it will not be easy do so (fixing the buildings). It will require much time, lots of money, remember within these there is an unfinished building that was supposed to be finished by the government, then tell me is it going to be that easy for them to finish all three now since we are crying? No. I suggest the best solution is to just destroy these buildings.*

During the interview, another participant from group one said;

*We have been saying these buildings are not in good condition right, so why fixing them, we should rather destroy them at once then move forward with life. These buildings endanger lives of so many souls then we need to consider destroying them than fixing them.*

#### **4.4.3 Sub-theme three: Enforce security**

Most participants dwelled more on the issue on enforcing security. Most of these buildings are in scary places, and the government struggles to get hold of the owners of other buildings. The following are some of the security measures suggested by participants.

##### **4.4.3.1 Category one: Street lights installation and CCTVs**

During the one on one interview, key informant five stated that:

*What I want the town to do is to put street lights around town and tower lights next to these buildings. That could actually work because there will be lights at night to view the environment clearly and it could reduce the number of crimes happening at night as well. Most importantly it will be easy for our people to go around town with no fear to be robbed and you can actually see the person who wronged you easily.*

Another participant from group two stated that:

*I think another thing that could help is installation of cameras next to these buildings. That alone can help to capture everything that happens on these buildings and record it. The police now at least will have evidence to show whenever there is a case link with these buildings and will enforce safety around these buildings because when people notice that there are cameras around they will start to consider other than committing crime in these buildings.*

Yet another participant from group two added by saying:

*Not only cameras because you can install a camera but without a light that is useless because what will be captured on camera will be dark or blurry. I would advise cameras and Tower lights, that system should just automatically turn on at around 6 or 7 o'clock lights only, cameras must operate 24 hours.*

This was also supported by participants from group 1, who submitted that lights and cameras were significant in ensuring safety in our town. "We need to come together and ensure that government does employee these measures it may be our last hope" (Group one).

#### **4.4.3.2 Category two: Police forum patrolling around town and on these buildings**

This measure has been tried before but the police have failed to deliver. Allegations from members of focus group one are that some of the police officers involved in the operations were on the pay rolls of some of the kingpins.

During the interview with group one, a participant highlighted that:

*I get all that was said by other colleagues, but that can't let the town collapse because of few people. The police station together with other supporting systems should compile a group of forces that will be patrolling around town. These forces will ensure that there are groups allocated to move around these buildings and ensure safety.*

#### **4.4.4 Sub-theme four: Awareness campaigns**

Children need to be made aware of the dangers of crime and the dangers of abandoned buildings around town. With the help of social development, that will be a success. A participant said;

*If social development can go to our communities talk about these issues, address the matter in a way that our children would prefer staying away from these abandoned buildings. It is not easy for us parents to do it alone because kids of today are stubborn; they want to see things before they stop them. With the campaign or programme it could be easy to involve prisoners or ex-convicts to state their experiences regarding the buildings and empower children to focus on school than crime and hanging around these buildings.*

The participants indicated that awareness among children regarding the dangers of abandoned buildings reduces the risk immensely.

#### **4.5. SUMMARY**

This chapter entailed qualitative data presentation and analysis of the data that was collected with regard to the issue of abandoned buildings as breeding ground for criminal activities in Libode town under Nyandeni local municipality. This chapter provided an overview of the responses of participants and interpretation of findings. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data. The presentation and the analysis of the data were done by means of the generated themes and subthemes to categorize patterns in order to demonstrate the realisation of the aim and the objectives of the study. Thematic analysis was utilized to critically outline the findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the findings of the study drawn from views of different participants presented above. The researcher compares the findings with the literature that was compiled in chapter two of this study, and includes the theories guiding this study as drawn in chapter one. In the discussion the researcher seeks to explore the factors that lead criminals to use abandoned buildings for their criminal activities, the role abandoned buildings play criminal activities occurring in town and the preventive measures that could be utilised to reduce the crime rate in and around abandoned buildings.

#### **5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

One would anticipate more wrongdoings around unbound, wrongfully utilized structures. Then again, it isn't difficult to envision how a surrendered structure, despite the fact that verified, could prompt an expansion in wrongdoing and confusion. Young people or drifters still may be attempt to hang out or rest in the yard; criminals may stash their loot far out behind a wall. Also, a portion of these structures could have been open, utilized wrongfully, and after that verified sooner or later before the investigations directed for this examination (spelman, 1993).

The study was guided by questions, which are: What are the factors that lead criminals to use abandoned buildings as the target spot for criminal activities? What is the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities occurring in town? What are the preventive measures that could be utilised to reduce crime occurring in and around abandoned buildings? Question one leads to the findings discussed below.

The study found lack of attendance to these buildings by the government and the relevant owners to be the main factor that led to criminals utilising abandoned buildings for their criminal activities. Findings also indicated that the government was not ensuring that abandoned buildings are monitore in order to keep control of these buildings, which was the main weakness criminals saw for them to target the buildings in the first place. These findings find support in Stein (2016) who explains that

everything about an abandoned building is negative as abandoned buildings are many times used as easy-access places where drug dealers and abusers do not have to pay rent or be accountable to anyone.

When participants were asked about why criminals actually used abandoned buildings so much, they indicated that it was because abandoned buildings were secure places for criminals to utilise. Findings further revealed that in most cases, criminals even stayed in these buildings permanently.

These findings are in line with what the Routine Activity Theory used in the study states; that in terms of suitable targets, the choice is influenced by the offender's perception of the target's vulnerability, and the more suitable and accessible the target, the more likely that a crime will occur (Felson & Cohen, 1980). The findings indicated that offenders often observed these buildings and saw that there was no monitoring of the buildings by the government, and there were no police officers patrolling around these buildings and town. This was indicated by the study as the main reason criminals used abandoned buildings.

The second question sought to understand the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities occurring in town. Findings from the study revealed that abandoned buildings played a huge role when it comes to wrongdoings; either criminals hid on these buildings or used them to hide their stolen things. The researcher is of the opinion that once the building is neglected, criminals are attracted to it. Findings also indicated that the criminals would monitor buildings for years before commencing criminal activities in the buildings and, even then, they started with minor offences to test how closely monitored the buildings are by the police and the government.

Data analysis established that the condition of the abandoned buildings attracted criminals. Data indicates in some of these abandoned buildings windows are broken, doors are missing and roofs are ripped, which is evidence enough to criminals that they can use such a building. Participants believe that once a building had the above mentioned characteristics that directly alerted criminals that it was available for them to use. These findings are in line with what Apel (2015) submits; that abandoned buildings were used by criminals to hide stolen goods before they are taken to the streets for selling.

The study results also show that abandoned buildings were used by criminals, especially gangs and drug dealers, to hold meetings. These buildings also functioned as store houses for drugs and weapons. Besides, the buildings functioned as selling points for drugs (Stein, 2016). This way, the abandoned buildings became territories for gangs to hang around and trade drugs.

The Routine activity theory explained that the number of motivated criminals in the population also affects crime levels. It is held that offenders are less likely to commit crimes if they can achieve personal goals through legitimate means. This implies that criminal motivations can be reduced if offenders perceive that there are alternatives to crime.

The third research question sought to establish preventive measures that could be utilised to reduce crime occurring in and around abandoned buildings. The findings of the study revealed that in order to reduce all these negative elements characterised by abandoned buildings and their association with crime in town, the government needs to start investing in fixing these abandoned buildings. Broken windows, messed up roofs and missing doors on the buildings show that the buildings were easily accessible to strangers and criminals alike. In support, the literature stated that fixing the abandoned building's windows will eventually head off more serious crimes (Gennaro, 2018).

Also highlighted by the findings of the study was the importance of destroying the buildings instead of fixing them. Some of the participants were not happy with the issue of fixing the buildings as they wanted them gone (destroyed), which they believed would reduce crimes associated with these buildings. That is basically supported by the literature that states that demolishing abandoned buildings, particularly those declared unsafe, removes blight, eliminates the source of crime and disorder conditions, and provides a fresh start for the area (Jon, 2011).

Findings highlighted that there security around abandoned buildings was poor, street lighting non-existent, both of which had the potential of reducing the rate of crime and even drive away criminals from abandoned buildings. In support, the Crime prevention through Environment Design theory states that features of the building environment make places more or less attractive to would be offenders. Such features include poor visibility, unguarded opportunities, and permeable streets that make it easy to escape

detection or apprehension (Tonry, 2015). The study also finds support in Jon's (2011) submission that installing CCTV (Closed-circuit television) on streets around abandoned properties may increase formal surveillance. CCTV permits surveillance of multiple locations from a secure central location, where a permanent record of the activity can be made for investigation and prosecution. Other benefits include improved place management, improved information gathering, reduced fear of crime and a diffusion of benefits. Participants also indicated that supplementing a CCTV program with a publicity campaign and signage may increase the deterrent effect; however, it is difficult to reach the majority of the public to create such a heightened perception of risk. It is of significance to ensure or to strengthen security around these buildings.

### **5.3. SUMMARY**

This chapter gave a summary of the findings and also provided a link between literature from chapter two and findings in chapter four and how theories that were discussed in chapter one helped in data analyses. The research intensely dwelled more on the emphasis put by the findings that the issue of abandoned buildings has to be addressed from the governmental level, which should be the first priority in order to maintain safety and security in town.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter offers recommendations based on the social phenomenon that was investigated in this study. The researcher basically explains the impact of these recommendations to the existing knowledge and how they will help the study area (Libode). At the end, the conclusion is made and this will be drawn from the study findings and the recommendations of the study.

#### **6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **6.2.1. Recommendation:**

At first, the government should make it a point that each property within the town is registered and the owner of the property is known. That way, the government will be able to act whenever there is a feeling that the buildings are neglected. Through this registration all contacts of the property owner will be recorded and when there is anything that needs to be attended to, the government will certainly call the owner. This will help in the case of not getting hold of the property owner.

##### **6.2.2. Recommendation:**

The study recommends that Nyandeni local municipality works hand in with the South Africa police service department, which would make it easy for the police station to go and ask for assistance from the local government because at some times the police run out of resources and local government have to come in with some hands to help improve safety and security within the community. Poor law enforcement and security systems are the ones that increase chaos in town.

### **6.2.3. Recommendation:**

It is recommended that vacant houses and vacant buildings not be used by anyone without government's authority. There should be laws written down or restrictions drafted, which laws will seek to restrict people from using these buildings and if anyone wants the building or property will have to rent it from the government or the owner.

### **6.2.4. Recommendation:**

Around town there are schools and some of the students are residing far from the school. The government should also ensure that these abandoned buildings are renovated and changed into accommodations for students. This would alleviate poverty and improve access to education.

### **6.2.5. Recommendation:**

Whenever there is a crisis in town the government or police station should deploy people who will go around communities and listen to the views of people concerning the matter because it may happen that the solution to the problem can come from the residents. Secondly, the police should employ more people from the communities for patrol forums to allow patrols to be 24 hourly.

### **6.2.6. Recommendation:**

Since the issue of cleaning the town is already on the municipal's budget, local government should employ people to cut down all the trees around abandoned buildings. They should ensure that the condition around these buildings favour health and safety of the people living around them. This has the effect of reducing spots to hide in for the criminals.

### **6.2.7. Recommendation:**

The study recommends that the government initiates some programmes or awareness campaigns that will circulate around schools and communities urging people to stop using drugs and to ensure that street kids are apprehended and taken to homes or shelter so that there would be no intruders in these buildings. These campaigns will emphasise the importance of school and ensure that people stay away from drugs and crime.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

This thesis looked at the issue of abandoned buildings as breeding ground for criminal activities in Libode town under Nyandeni local municipality. Research questions were narrowed towards getting the understanding of how these buildings affected the town negatively, and what were the measures that could be employed to reduce these problems. The study established that abandoned buildings in Libode town became shelter for homeless people and dens for criminals to commit their criminal activities. In most cases, gangs used these buildings to hang around and plot their activities, drug dealers trade their stuff inside these building and criminals hide their things inside these buildings. The findings of the study also identified measure that could be utilised to reduce the crisis. Firstly, these buildings can be fixed and be converted to other important uses like accommodation for students studying around town and also for employees working in town. Secondly, findings also revealed that instead of fixing, the government can destroy the buildings. The rationale behind this is that it has been years since these buildings were abandoned and this implies that the government either has no intention of renovating the buildings or has no resources for such a task. Lastly, findings also revealed that government should ensure the improvement of safety and security in town and around buildings. Study concludes that Nyandeni local municipality should work hand in hand with the South African Police Service department to improve safety around town and around these buildings.

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## **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS**

These questions were generated from the objectives of the study and each question aims at getting information based on each objective.

Objective 1: identifying factors that lead criminals to use abandoned buildings;

#### **Questions**

- Are there any criminal acts you know that happens in these buildings?
- Why do criminals use abandoned buildings for criminal activities in Libode?
- In your observation, are there any children using these buildings or its only just Gangs or criminals?
- What have you done to ensure that the use of abandoned buildings for violence and offences is stopped?

Objective 2: to describe the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities;

#### **Questions**

- From the cases that were reported previously, are there any that are associated with the buildings?
- If yes, how many were they?

Objective 3, to identify preventive measures that can be utilised to reduce crime occurring inside and around abandoned buildings (town).

#### **Questions**

- What do you think should be done to reduce crime occurring in these buildings?
- Is there any measure you and the community have tried and failed or you think can help if the government employed it?

## **QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Objective 1: identifying factors that lead criminals to use abandoned building;

### **Questions**

- What makes offenders use abandoned buildings to commit crime in Libode?
- Is there anyone of you who has ever used these buildings for criminal activities?
- If yes, why did you choose to use abandoned buildings?
- Were you cooperating with your friends or you committed this offence alone?

Objective 2: to describe the role of abandoned buildings in criminal activities;

### **Questions**

- With these criminal activities happening in town, do you think some of them are motivated by these buildings?
- If yes, why do you say so?

Objective 3: to identify preventive measures that can be utilised to reduce crime occurring inside and around abandoned buildings (town).

### **Questions**

- What are the things you think should be done to stop this phenomenon?
- Why do you think they can change the situation of the matter?
- Are there any measures that were used previously and tried but you think they should be revisited?

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOU COOPARATION.**

The researcher noticed that not all of the participants we familiar with the language used in questioning, then the researcher used Xhosa to explain questions.