Impact of Social Capital on Youth Employability in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Summary

Youth unemployment poses a major threat to the South African society. The relatively young population who were supposed to be part of the working population, find themselves unemployed, either because they lack the skills to match available jobs, or they miss the social capital that is required to match the job. In an economy where job allocation tends to be governed by word-of-mouth information, lacking a productive network poses a challenge to youth, especially those from a disadvantaged background.

There are however programs in place that seek to integrate the youth into the economy by enhancing their employability. The Career Readiness program, which is organized by the organisation Afrika Tikkun, is one of these programs. Besides the skills and knowledge the youth are being provided with, social capital also facilitates the hearing of job information which makes them more employable. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine how social capital has an impact on employability and how the Career Readiness program stimulates youth to use their social capital.

Inspired by the social capital theory of Nan Lin, this study seeks to find answers to how program managers perceive the importance of social capital on employability, how youth think the program brings about change in the use and availability of their social capital and what kind of network develops their employability.

Participants from the 2014 and 2015 cohort have been interviewed and asked for their experiences with the program. Participants describe how the introduction to appropriate work place behaviour and interview skills made them feel more knowledgeable on the world of work. Interestingly, the fact that the program stimulated participants to socialize with peers from different cultural backgrounds, has led to breaking through prevalent stereotypes. Many claim to have made more friends during the program who can help them with accessing new job information. Besides getting motivated by their peers in the program, participants also experienced significant support from their family and closest friends.

Furthermore, this study sheds light on the labour market opportunities in Orange Farm. Getting into employment tends to be a challenge for the youth, for the reason that job allocation is governed by nepotism and favourism. Without the right connections one is not able to find a job easily.

Youth also indicate to lack trust in people they would call acquaintances. Since unemployment is widespread, acquaintances keep information to themselves or are only willing to share it with their close circle of relations. The program offers the participants the opportunity to firstly create a productive network which includes (ex-) participants and Afrika Tikkun staff and secondly to learn how to use the computer for job search purposes.

Participants share information on job and education opportunities with their peers via social media and word-of-mouth channels. Information circulates through the networks and influences the employability of youth who have become better able to look for opportunities that have an affiliation with their career perspectives. Also, the Career Readiness program and Afrika Tikkun as an organisation have become part of the participants' social capital and plays a major role in the job and skill matching process.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

South African youth: the challenge of lacking employment and social capital

Youth unemployment around the world poses a major challenge to today's societies. Youth without jobs are not able to be self-maintaining and consequently delay their adulthood by staying in the parental house, postponing marriage plans or stable romantic relationships and wait with childbearing until they are able to earn their own livings (Knijn, 2012). In South Africa, young people account for 41.2 percent of the population (NYP, 2014). Of South Africa's youth aged 15-34, 36.1 percent is currently looking for work (SA Stats, 2014). However, in comparison to other countries around the world with a less extended definition of youth, approximately 64.8 percent of South Africans between the ages of 15-24 are unemployed (AEO, 2014). This places South Africa among the highest on the youth unemployment ranks.

Having a relatively young population contributes positively to the economy, especially when a country is able to convert this advantage into the so called 'demographic dividend' (Burnett, 2014). This means that the availability of a large young workforce can function as capital which is to be used to invest in technology and education, with the ultimate goal of increasing a nation's economic wealth (NYP, 2015). However, this only works provided that a country possesses a skilled and educated workforce that is able to deploy the kind of human capital the economy needs. The South African youth who do enter post-secondary education frequently choose fields of study which are hardly demanded for by the labour market (Mlatsheni & Rospabé, 2002). This mismatch between skills and available jobs, which constitutes a structural weakness in the South African economy, is an important factor causing the high unemployment rates (Banerjee, 2008).

While the lack of proper human capital accounts for a great share of youth unemployment, there are more causes related to this issue. Next to skill mismatching, job matching in South Africa remains an important obstacle especially black African youth have to face (Schoër et al., 2014). According to Schoër et al (2014), job matching regularly is done via social networking and applying for a job via formal lines, like the newspaper, or direct channels, on the side of the road, only accounts for one third of having success in getting a job. Subsequently, in periods of mass unemployment, employers tend to rely on their social networks when searching for employees, since it reduces the informational problems that come aside with not knowing the applicants (Magruder, 2010). To South African youth who are from impoverished settings, this matching process is a challenge, since the chance is great

that in their surroundings there are many people who have never had a job or at least not in years (Magruder, 2010; SA Stats, 2014). With job allocation being governed by word-of-mouth information, lacking productive networks remains another obstacle to the youth when seeking employment (Burns, Godlonton & Keswell, 2010).

Thus far, research has mainly focussed on a lack of human capital in relation to youth unemployment while making small references to social capital. Although there is a rich literature on how social capital relates to health (Pronyk et al., 2008) and positively influences job status and attainment (Lin, 1999; Lin, Ensel & Vaughn, 1981), little research has been done on how social capital influences the employability of youth from a South African impoverished setting who are being surrounded by unemployment in their daily lives. Importantly, this study seeks to investigate how networks facilitate access to resources the youth need in order to make themselves employable. In addition, by looking at an employability program organised by Afrika Tikkun Services in Orange Farm, one of Johannesburg's townships, this research seeks to explore how youth and program designers perceive the influence of the program on the way youth become employable and use their social capital in the search for a job. Investigating whether social capital is of importance to employability programs is of value, because if it is relevant the program could consider to include more social networking activities into the program's curriculum.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical framework

2.1   Social capital

Thinking of collective or social assets in terms of 'capital' can be traced back to Marx' 'Das Kapital', who describes capital as a tool for investment and production (Lin, Cook & Burt, 2001). Since then, many scholars have identified kinds of capital that in some way function as an investment used in order to gain some expected returns. Portes illustrates the forms of capital by saying: '*Whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships*' (Portes, 1998, p.7). The difference between the kinds of capital is reflected by the idea that human capital (education and skills) and economic capital (financial means) can be personal property, while social capital is only accessible through relationships in the network (Lin, 2005). Therefore, investment in these social relations can be utilized to access resources, such as information on job opportunities or support (Lin, 2001). Hence, any capital is productive in the sense that it makes possible to achieve certain ends that would not be possible in case of its absence (Coleman, 1988).

Social capital's popularity as a concept increased when research findings showed its explanative power to interpret social and economic outcomes (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Adler & Kwon, 2002). An individual's family and closest friends are for example an important asset which can be deployed for material gain or in times of crisis (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The multifaceted nature makes that the concept has been used by various social science disciplines, ranging from sociology to economics (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Patulyn & Svendsen, 2007). However, because the concept has been used for a wide and diverse spectrum of social phenomena, its meaningful contribution to academic discourse gets weakened (Boix & Posner, 1998). The more social capital theory is applied to research cases without researchers thinking thoroughly on the methodological consequences of the operationalization of the concept, the fuzzier the meaning of social capital is getting (Van der Gaag & Snijders, 2005; Huber, 2009; Patulyn & Svendsen, 2007). Therefore, the dominant ways of thought that can be identified when thinking of social capital, and specifically what ideas inform this study, will be examined.

Social capital can be approached on several levels of analysis. Scholars like Coleman and Putnam, identify social capital as an entity which is collectively produced and owned (Van der Gaag & Snijders, 2005), emphasizing the macro level (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In this tradition, social capital gets defined as involving norms, values, and trust which grow out of

reciprocal relationships (Putnam, 2000). Also, Bourdieu emphasizes the macro level by referring to social capital as the sum of resources individuals can access through social relationships in networks, facilitated and provided by the membership one has in the collectivity (Portes, 1998). All these elements present a sense of worth and belonging to individuals within society (Falk, 2010). The focus here lies on social capital as being located in social structures and its contribution to the public good, or social inequality, as outsiders are being excluded from the benefits and resources the network offers to only its members (Portes, 1998; Narayan & Cassidy, 2001).

Other authors emphasize the individual level to social capital. Lin defines social capital as "resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks" (Lin 2005, p.4). Hence, social capital resources exist in the social structure wherein the individual self is positioned (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Through the relations in the network one can use resources that belong to others in order to generate an expected return (Lin, 2005). However, the availability of resources and the use of them are not the same. Lin (2005) distinguishes between *accessed* social capital and *mobilized* social capital. The former signifies the capacity of a network in terms of the amount of resources embedded or available in the network. The latter refers to "the actual use of a particular social tie and its resources (…)" (Lin, 2005, p. 5). Studies usually include only the accessed social capital of people, thus the resources available to individuals, instead of examining how the resource (job information) is used to generate results (employment) (Lin, 2005). This study focusses mainly on the individual social capital theory by Lin and with that the resources available to and actually mobilized by individuals.

2.2   Social capital and employability

In the knowledge based economy, everyone, including the permanent employed, is expected to consider how their potential can add value to the organisation or the service they deliver (Smith, 2010). Programs focussed on developing employability seek to alter the problem of youth unemployment by both enhancing human capital (skills and knowledge) and to secure it (McGrath et al., 2010). The focus is on preparing youth for employment, teaching them how to maintain a job and make them understand that updating skills during the life course is important in todays' economy (McGrath et al., 2010). Marock (2008) distinguishes two dimensions of employability, namely the willingness of an individual to engage in activities to secure attractiveness to the current or future employer and the capacity to invest time, money and

energy in these activities. Subsequently, keeping your employability status up to date, requires personal motivations and necessary resources.

Although the core of these kind of programs lies in the development of human capital, social capital might indirectly influence the learning process in which individuals acquire the knowledge and skills. Built on social connections between people, social capital provides a meaningful learning surrounding. According to Falk (2010, p. 2), such a learning environment "includes that it is connected both to its community and outside sources, that is develops interpersonal trust and self-confidence that provide platform for further action (…)". Therefore, this study seeks to explore how social capital impacts employability and how the program stimulates the use of social capital by its participants.

2.3   Range and quality of networks

Individuals located in a wide ranging and diverse network will be better able to hear of new job information, for it is more likely to bridge several other, with resources embedded, networks (Granovetter, 1983). However, it is not solely about the range or quantity of contacts, the nature of those connections matter as well. In the following, the strength of ties between individuals needed to obtain access to new job information will be discussed.

Weak ties and job information

Granovetter's (1983) influential work 'The strength of weak ties', introduced the idea that having a diverse network has a positive impact on job search outcomes. He shows that networks can be identified as composing of close-tied contacts, like family and friends, and
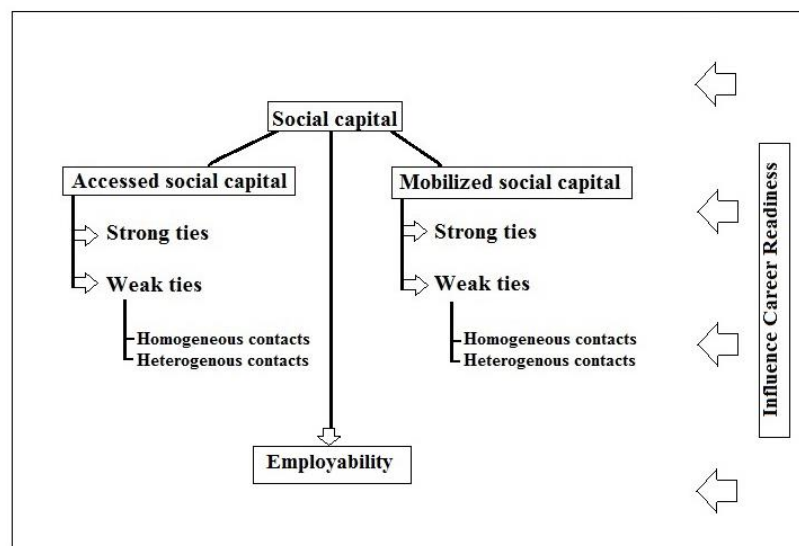

Figure 1 illustrates the social capital theory and functions as guide for the interview and analysis.

weak-tied contacts, who usually are defined as 'acquaintances'. The role of acquaintances can be viewed as 'bridge builders' between two or more networks of individuals who do not know each other, except for the two individuals connecting the networks (Granovetter, 1983). So, the strength of weak ties means that these ties provide access to more social resources which are embedded in other networks.

Moreover, developing and maintaining *heterogeneous* contacts in the social network is especially important to young people, who form a more fragile and excluded group in the labour market (Lindsay, 2010). These weak ties provide individuals with resources such as information which they cannot access through their own social network (Granovetter, 1983). Besides, having vertical networks consisting of a variety of contacts facilitates job information and enhances one's employability (Lindsay, 2010). Members of resource-rich networks have these vertical structure and are therefore better able to move between social strata. Consequently, new information circulates more easily through such networks (Lin, 2000; Lin, Ensel & Vaughn, 1981).

However, being young poses especially a problem when you are also from a disadvantaged community. According to Lin (2000), inequality in social capital pertains because of two principles. Firstly, institutional and historical grown ideas hold that in society some groups have structurally unequal opportunities, especially those people with a lower socioeconomic background, marginalised race or gender. Secondly, members of one group tend to stick to people who look like them, meaning that groups with assumed inferior characteristics cluster in the same network, making the latter less diverse. This phenomena is known in the literature as 'homophily' (Lin, 2000). Consequently, there is less inflow of new information through homogenous contacts. An individual is less able to acquire new information when only investments are made in strong tied relationships that have access to the same information as the individual himself (Haythornthwaite, 1996). Such networks of marginalised people are usually identified as being poor in resources and social capital (Lin, 2000).

This does not mean that individuals from lower socioeconomic status do not have weak ties at all. It is just that these ties merely represent friends' and relatives' acquaintances from the same background (Granovetter, 1983). For these relations to be of value with regard to job opportunities, it is important that weak ties *bridge* social distance. In that way, weak ties can endow the network with non-redundant information and are especially useful for individuals with a lower socioeconomic status, because by that they are more likely to hear of information

that circles in higher socioeconomic status networks (Campbell, Marsden & Hurlbert, 1986). The latter is important because individuals at higher positions are related to more social resources and these are more easily accessible through weak ties (Lin, in Varekamp, Knijn, Van der Gaag & Bos, 2014).

Strong ties and work experience

Youth with work experience are more likely to know people who could recommend them to new employers, which decreases the information imperfection employers face while looking for employees to fill in vacancies. However, those who have never been in employment before, lack these opportunities. Kramarz and Skans, who examined the influence of weak and strong ties on youth labour market entry, argue that "job finding networks as tools for disseminating information between (prospective) workers and firms are likely to be particularly important in cases where information about suitable jobs is scarce and ex ante information about worker quality is noisy" (2014, p. 1165). In their case, strong social ties may be of more importance, since the close nature of their relationship makes it more likely that they will connect 'untested' youth to employers they know (Kramarz & Skans, 2014).

Availability and utility of ties

The literature underpins the utility of both weak and strong ties for individuals. Yet, whether people are more likely to use one above the other, seems to depend on their place in society. According to Lin and Dumin (1986), societal structure is pyramidal, meaning that the top consists of a few individuals while the lower layers house many. Consequently, youth from these lower classes are more likely to have and use strong ties, because "homophilous ties are more likely to be strong and low-status individuals are so numerous that it is easier for them to pick and choose as friends others similar to themselves" (Granovetter, 1983, p. 210). And secondly, youth living in households wherein multiple individuals are unemployed face additional challenges in the labour market (SA Stats, 2014). The unemployed are presumably no productive asset through which one can access new job information.

Chapter 3 - Research Question

Categorized as an employability program, the Career Readiness program mainly focussed on developing the youth's human capital by disseminating knowledge and skills in order to make them ready for the workplace. However, the literature described in the theoretical framework also explains how *social* capital can influence one's employability. The Career Readiness program is expected to contribute indirectly to the enhancement of social capital by expanding the social networks of the youth and making them aware of their usage for work related purposes. These kind of programs inhibit potential for social policy, because the establishment of network connections is more difficult for policy makers to realize than the promotion of employability programs which empower youth to develop these skills themselves (Magruder, 2007). Therefore, this research seeks to contribute to the knowledge on the workings of employability programs by posing the following research question:

What is the impact of social capital on the employability of young people and how does the Career Readiness Program stimulate youth to use their social capital?

In order to investigate the research question accordingly, the following sub-questions are being formulated:

- How do the facilitator and manager of the Career Readiness program perceive the importance of social capital on employability?

- What is the perception of participants on how the program brings about change in the availability and use of their social capital?

- To what extent does a larger and more diverse network provide new job information and how do the youth think this will influence their employability?

Chapter 4 -Methodology

According to Pronyk et al. (2008), studies concerned with youth employability have mainly relied on statistical data and have rarely deployed qualitative observations to add or elaborate on their initial findings. Consequently, a lack of attention to personal and economic circumstances exists in the employability literature. Therefore, qualitative research methods have been used in this research, because these instruments are suitable to elicit individual's experiences, beliefs and value systems (Brink, 1993). These individual experiences are necessary for examining and describing the extent to which social capital is strengthened by the program and how this influences the youth's employability in the particular setting of Orange Farm township.

4.1   Operationalisation

How have the concepts, which have been discussed in the theoretical framework, been translated into the interview questions?

Firstly, *social capital* is being defined as "resources embedded in one's social networks, resources that can be accessed or mobilized through ties in the networks" (Lin 2005, p.4). In order to find out how youth perceive the importance of social capital, especially in relation to their employability, the following questions were asked: Can you describe for me how you thought about the value of your social contacts in terms of using them for job information? Do you think that the people you know, so the kind of social network you have, is important for you to get a job?

Secondly, so*cial resources* are resources embedded in social networks, which can be accessed by a person through his/her relations with others (Lin, 2005). As assumed in the theoretical framework, the social resources that matter when it comes to employability are hearing of job information and social support. Besides the possible inclusion of new elements that might come up during the research, this study mainly focusses on these two resources.

Thirdly*, accessed social capital* refers to the capacity of the network in terms of the total of resources embedded in it. Thus, for an individual this means the extent to which there is a pool of resources potentially available to him or her in the network which he or she would be able to access for receiving job information or support (Lin, 2005). Research question that has been asked is: Do you have social contacts in your network who could help you with

accessing information on job opportunities? And a statement has been used to examine the available capital: I have built a network of friendship with people that can advance my career.

Furthermore*, mobilized social capital* includes the actual use and mobilization of a social relation and his or her resources in the network by the individual for a particular desired action (Lin, 2005). For example deploying one social tie and his knowledge as a resource during job search in order to achieve job opportunities. Questions asked are: Have you ever asked your family/friends for advice or support when looking for a job? Can you recall a situation wherein your family played a role when you were looking for a job?

Lastly*, employability* is a complex concept that, just like social networks, has several meanings. In this study, employability inhibits the motivation and the deployment of necessary resources by an individual for the goal of getting into employment and keeping himself attractive to the employer. Questions asked to find out about the perceptions on their employability status, were i.a.: What do you think you need to get a job? What makes you able to get and keep a job? What elements in the program were helpful in making you feel job ready?

4.2   Profile of the research population

The Career Readiness program is targeted on youth from Orange Farm and surrounding areas with their ages ranging between 18-35 years. This broad definition of youth has been integrated in the policy documents since Afrika Tikkun collaborates with the Department of Social Development, that considers people up to 35 as youth. The age of 18 is the minimum because the youth are only eligible to participate in the program provided they have their matric[1]. Furthermore, the program does not distinguish youth based on their gender or race. However, according to the program developers in the first years since the initiation, predominantly females tended to participate in the Career Readiness program. As time passed and graduates shared their experiences with their friends, the program also attracted attention amongst males. In this way, the program manages to reach both males and females which equals development towards a mixed population. The program does not make any distinctions based on race. However, the historically and geographically grown racial distinctions, also

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[1] A matric is the diploma students receive after passing the final exams in high school. The matric also represents the minimum qualification one needs for progressing into college or university. Only students who have matriculated are eligible to participate in the Career Readiness program, for the mere reason that the absence of a matric will pose an obstacle for Afrika Tikkun Services when it comes to job placement, since this diploma usually is taken as the minimum qualification for entry-level jobs.

known as Apartheid, still find its reflections in today's demography of Orange Farm. Consequently, just as the township's population, the participants of the program were predominately black and so were the participants in this research.

Out of the total of 15 semi-structured interviews that had been conducted, 8 participants were male and 7 were female and their age ranged between 19-26 years. In order to investigate whether the influence of the program on the youth's experiences and behaviour towards their career was affected by time, not only participants of 2015's cohort were asked for an interview, but also graduates from 2014's cohort. Of 2014's participants 8 students were included against 7 participants from 2015.

The youth participating in this research all had aforementioned characteristics and most of them were still affiliated with the organisation in one way or another by the time of collecting data. After graduating from Career Readiness most of them where involved in either IT or Fashion Design programs, which can be characterized as being more specialized in one field of profession. However, also youth who were not in training anymore, but did graduate from Career Readiness, were interviewed.

4.3   Data collection methods

Firstly, a focus group has been held with 19 participants who graduated from the Career Readiness program in 2015, to gain an understanding of the social and cultural context of Orange Farm and their experiences with job search in the area and surroundings.

Secondly, in depth interviews were conducted with the manager of Arekopaneng community centre and the trainer. The manager was able to shed light on reasons why employability programs were thought of being necessary, while the facilitator shed light on group dynamics, performance and program objectives. These interviews were being held to gain an understanding of which impact or change in behaviour was being envisioned by the program designers. Both focus group and interviews with the manager and facilitator were designed with my peer Renske van den Hof, who focussed on the self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence of the program's participants. We combined a selection of questions that concerned our individual research and added some more general questions to add on the background of the program.

Thirdly, the 15 semi-structured interviews with participants of the program were i.a. meant to elicit the extent to which they experienced an impact of social capital on their employability

and how a change in their social capital by the program has been realized. Semi-structured interviews provide a reasonable amount of freedom for both interviewer and interviewee in learning from each other by probing for narratives and experiences instead of yes-or-no answers to fixed questions. Renske and I both designed separate topic lists, which focussed on our individual subjects.

4.4 Gathering the data

As this research contributes to the CSDA's Siyakha Assets project, an evaluation research on youth employability programs in South Africa, access to Arekopaneng community centre in Orange Farm was granted via contact with Afrika Tikkun Services (hereafter called 'ATS'), which presents the overarching department responsible for funding and job matching of their programs. Despite delays in getting involved with the Career Readiness program, the manager and skills development facilitator at the site were engaged with our research purposes.

Reaching enough participants for the interviews turned out to be a challenge. While approaching them personally at first, respondents tend to act slightly weary and non-responsive. Students hadn't seen us before at the centre and weren't aware of the reason of our visit. Besides, students tended to confuse research interviewing with job interviewing and it was not our purpose to raise false hopes. Therefore, the skills development trainer helped with recruiting youth for the interviews, by calling participants, posting messages on social media groups the youth were using and asking around in IT and Fashion Design classes for Career Readiness graduates. Consequently, the research sample was not randomly assigned, but based on the social connectedness of the skills development trainer. However, only participants from the 2014 and 2015 cohort have been interviewed.

4.5 Data analysis

The focus group and in-depth interviews with the participants, manager and facilitator of the Career Readiness program have been transcribed in order to ensure that citations used were not an interpretation of the researcher, but an expression of the respondent. These transcriptions were analysed by using axial coding in NVivo 10. This type of coding has been used to identify relationships between codes and is involved with the process of making sense of big chunks of data by merging them into meaningful categories. Inspired by concepts derived from the theoretical framework, codes have been created. However, during the coding process categories and codes have been deleted, merged and created, which also allows for new ideas, arising from the data, to be integrated in the analysis. The categories that emerged

from this process have been displayed in a code tree and has been used to work towards an understanding and answer of the research question.

4.6   Reliability and validity

When data is derived qualitatively, danger lurks in the subjectivity of the researcher who is the prime interpreter of data. Minimising the bias of the researcher was done by discussing the retrieved information with a peer who was working in the same context, but who had spoken to different participants. A second pair of eyes can elicit inconsistencies and misleading elements quicker than the researcher herself, since the latter is personally involved in the social transfers of information (Brink, 1993).

The response effect of participants who might want to provide socially desirable answers to the interviewer has also been taken into consideration (Bernard, 2006). In this research, the interviewer could be considered an insider because of the common denominator of age. Whilst at the same time present an outsider because of race, nationality and in some cases gender. However, not being native nor a member of the community turned out to be positively determinative for my position in the interview. Answers like 'my family is just a typical black family' were discussed in the interview without the participant seeming to care about my skin colour. Interestingly, I was being assumed to know what a typical black family stands for. So, the participants were generally openhearted during the interviews, which gave prove of a certain sense of trust or equality between both parties.

Furthermore, a validity of responses has been sought for by explaining the goals of the research very clearly to the respondents as well as explicate the activities that will be done with the data (Brink, 1993). Social networks can be interpreted in multiple ways and therefore the researcher explained exactly what she meant with social networks, while leaving room for interpretation from the respondents.

Lastly, another key aspect in research is reliability, or the extent to which instruments produce the same data while measuring the same subject repeatedly (Rossi, 2004). The openness allowed for in depth interviews is prone to weaken the probability of receiving the same answers when questions are being asked repeatedly. The topic list used for the focus group partially overlapped with the one for the in depth interviews to make it comparable and enhance reliability. Both lists elaborated on topics such as employability and influence of social capital explained as social networks and social support on job search outcomes.

4.7   Ethics

Participants deserve loyalty and protection from the researcher in return for their input, since they are voluntarily devoting their time, energy and emotions to the research they may or may not even benefit from in the short run (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For that reason, the participants were asked to read and sign an informed consent, wherein he or she declares to have received information on the nature of and their participation in this research. In the informed consent (see Appendix 5), participants were made aware of the fact that they can withdraw from the interview or research at any moment in time, since concerns and doubts towards participation might present themselves after the interviews have been taken place (Boeije, 2010). Anonymity and confidentiality have been covered for by using substitutive names, since readers should not be able to trace back from which participant the data was retrieved.

Chapter 5 - Results

Since the government has declared Orange Farm to be an approved township, which means the place no longer carries the status of 'informal settlement', the township has gone through some considerable changes, for it is now able to claim public services. Consequently, over the last few years, i.e. a library, policy station and franchise supermarkets have settled down in Orange Farm. Despite this progress, the local labour market seems to fall short in providing adequate and suitable information on job opportunities for those whose skills and dreams reach further than entry level jobs. Skill matching tends to be problematic because of a lack of circulating information and job matching is hampered by favourism and nepotism.

5.1.   Lacking information in Orange Farm

A lack of information about job and educational opportunities proved to be a central obstacle causing the youth to find themselves unemployed. Especially information which can help youth with guiding them in the possibilities that lay before them after they finish matric.

Focus group: *So now the most obstacle that we come across is not having more knowledge or information about whether you qualify for a certain job (...).*

This lack of knowledge not only affects future perspectives on educational careers after matric, but also reflects the unfortunate incapacity of youth to look with a wider scope at the possibilities available to them. A lack of money to pay for transport, educational fees and internet access in order to look for jobs on the web, have been mentioned several times with regard to obstacles that withhold the youth from accessing information on jobs.

Jabulile: *Most people they feel like after matric they're finished with school. Then we'll tell them about varsity, they'll be like no I don't have that kind of money to go to school, because most people they are not aware that now that we are living in a democratic country there are like funds, like getting bursaries. So most of them they don't know much about that, so that's why after matric they just sit at home.*

The difficulty in accessing information on opportunities seems to be dependent on the geographical and social environment in two ways. Favourism and reliance on word-of-mouth information, because of lacking computer access in Orange Farm township, dominates the circulation of information and determines for a significant share the accessibility of it.

Focus group*: Information you gain here from another person, because there are those that cannot get access to the internet and all that.*

Therefore the youth perceive having 'certain' social relations necessary to increase their chances of getting employed. The importance of 'knowing people inside the job' goes to the extent to which it seems that the requirements for a person's employability has gained another definition in the local labour market. Being able to get into employment seems to be no longer dependent on a qualification, but rather on who you are connected to that can help you into a job.

Celiwe*: It is easy for those who know somebody inside, it is easy. When I look like hey this person doesn't even have a matric, but already is working. I have a matric, but I am not working! Just like that.*

The participants label this phenomena 'nepotism', which can be defined as the favourism granted towards family, or to a broader extent 'favourism', which besides family also includes friends.

Sbusiso: *Hm let me see, you know, here in the township, the only thing that works are connections. When you have connections with people inside, and even if you don't have the qualifications you can get in, because you have someone inside there. So that's the thing, if we go to an interview and I know my brother works there, I already know that I passed that thing. I passed the interview.*

I: Even though you have the same qualifications//

R: //yes.

I: // and you already know you got the job?

R: Yeah that's the thing here in the township people do favours. Like you must know someone inside, if you want a job, but if you don't know anyone, you won't get anything.

Furthermore, in the context of Orange Farm, a job seeker has to deal with many unemployed people, which makes that because of this much competition, jobs become scarce.

Thandeka: *But then there is not really much job availability because you have a lot of competition for the job.*

The idea that job allocation is governed by word-of-mouth information and social connections (Burns, Godlonton & Keswell, 2010), has been agreed upon by most of the participants. Eventually a discussion about Orange Farm's real labour market opportunities arose when the participants were being asked what kind of jobs they were actually pursuing. They came to the understanding that it is not per se the lack of jobs in Orange Farm that is challenging, but rather the access to a job and the shortage of *suitable* jobs.

Focus group: *Another point is that, here we might find that you are qualified, but there are no jobs which by you can get hired for that certain qualification which you have.*

The slack labour market of Orange Farm which manifests itself to be in the clutches of favourism and nepotism, seems to be only able to offer jobs which require low qualifications.

Lerato: *What I say, here in Orange Farm there are some jobs, but it is either little shops, Pick n Pay and those shops, so mostly ja I will repeat again, you have to get a job when somebody knows you.*

Jabulile*: No there are no jobs around in here. None. [Laughs]. There are no jobs. The only jobs that we have it is either you work at the mall as a cashier or you get involved in the community building houses.*

However, a few participants, who originated from a neighbouring township, think it is short-sighted to blame the environment of Orange Farm for not providing any job opportunities, while it is also the mentality and mind-set of the unemployed themselves that is a hindrance.

Focus group: *(…)There are actually jobs, it's just that as people became so stereotype to a point where 'You know what? There are no jobs in Orange Farm', but there ARE jobs.*

Focus group: *There are jobs right? in Orange Farm but the problem is that the youth of Orange Farm including everyone that lives in Orange Farm, they don't want to work in Orange Farm. The problem is Orange Farm. They want to work in Sandton, they see themselves in Sandton, in big offices, somewhere in Joburg, fourwheels, they don't want to work in Orange Farm, but there are jobs.*

When asking the youth for their work history and a description of their job search strategies, there existed a difference in the answers of the participants from 2015 and 2014. Out of 8 participants from the 2014 cohort, 6 answered to have had a formal/informal job before, or are currently working. This in comparison to the 7 participants of the 2015 cohort, out of which only 2 explained to have worked or be in employment. Especially participants from the last

cohort only desired a job in order to save money to finance their studies. In contrast, the 2014 participants regularly indicated how they perceived work experience or voluntary work to be a necessary addition to their qualifications when thinking of their employability. The fact that the 2014 cohort has had a year to reflect on the course and life experience might possibly have influenced the difference in answers.

5.2. To what extent does a larger and more diverse network provide new job information and how do the youth think this will influence their employability?

In order to understand how the program brought about change in the behaviour of the youth with regard to the availability and use of social capital, an examination will first be given of the existing social capital of the youth. In the theoretical exploration, Lin (2005) distinguished between accessed capital, which reflects the potential pool of resources embedded in one's network, and mobilized capital, which stands for the resources that have been used in order to achieve certain ends (in this case employability).

5.2.1. Strong ties

<u>Family</u>

The participants are generally from a disadvantaged background, which in this context means that some have to miss a father, usually by absence, or a mother generally by death. The families are stricken by unemployment and many rely on social grants or pensions of older family members. Most participants perceive their social capital not to be sufficient or useful in order to hear of job opportunities that match their skills and hopes. When asking the question whether their family could help them with job information or advice on job opportunities, participants replied that a brother or sister usually provides them with information on learnerships and bursaries. The definition of 'brother' and 'sister' is rather fluid in the context of Orange Farm, since cousins on the mother side of the family are grouped under this label as well. In this case, not only the biological siblings are helping the participants out, but also the extended family provides information and advice. However, these family members usually happen to live in other townships, which decreases the amount of contact between the two parties. The job opportunities that they hear of are usually far away from Orange Farm and consequently not easy to reach due to transport problems.

Relying on their parents help is challenging, since this older generation has lived and worked in a whole different socio-political environment.

Thapelo*: Because the past time was Apartheid and our parents couldn't find this opportunity to learn. So that is why most of them are maybe most of mothers are working as domestic worker, fathers are working in constructions and stuff, because there was no freedom. No freedom, we need to change.*

Participants explain that because of the country's history, their parents lack knowledge and awareness on realistic opportunities and future perspectives for their children. Mbali explains that although parents want the best for their children, they tend to have a big influence on deciding the career path of their child. Consequently, sometimes the child finds out that their skills do not match with the career that has been chosen for them.

Mbali*: Where a person would be able to know okay I didn't get into university because of this and this, we will be able to do this and this. By that time this person is wondering am I still in the right track? If I chose this career. Because sometimes you have been given a career by your parents, a career that you don't feel comfortable in, so if your dad says okay child, because your auntie is a doctor, you also be a doctor. Not understanding that my child is having a lack of knowledge on this and this.*

Although parents might not be the most adequate source of information for the participants, they are very supportive when it comes to education an sich and thus also with the program. They rather see their children follow up on their studies, than searching for a full time job without qualifications.

Motheo: *It was the support and the pressure I got from home. And the thing that is usual at my home, at my place, you have the thing that if you start something you have to complete it, whether you like it in the middle or not.*

In case of mobilized capital, participants make use of the support from their parents, who for example collect money amongst friends and family for their child, when they can't pay transport for a job interview or education related event. Only two participants mentioned borrowing money from friends, which they would give back later on. The family is usually the only party who would vouch for the participants when they need to borrow money. When asking participants to recall a situation wherein their family played a role for them, Thandeka answered:

Thandeka: *Maybe in a situation where I didn't have money for some transport and they had called us for an assessment. So my mom had to borrow some money from a friend so that I could be able to go.*

Friends

When it comes to friends, participants usually have one or two close friends with whom they feel comfortable discussing personal things with and 4-6 other persons they would call friends. Word-of-mouth information on job opportunities usually is obtained through this network of close friends, while social media networks allow youth who are both close or less close tied to each other to share job vacancies.

Thabiso: *So ja he always contact me like hey man you know what, I will tell you when there is a job opportunity or when there are vacancies and then he always lets me know there is a vacancy at that side and so on.*

But, there is a difference between hearing of information and using the information to make it productive. Several participants claimed advice and opportunities passed on by employed friends to be of more value than information from the unemployed. As Kamogelo illustrates:

Kamogelo*: To me like the information I get from people who ARE employed, they know the employment environment so for them to give information I can understand it because they know they are in that position. (…) So I'd take information from the eh well the valuable information is from the employed people.*

Besides the small group of close tied connections, the amount of trust in other relations is low and trust issues are at stake. Participants struggle with friends who are not happy for them when they are trying to achieve something and the friends are not benefiting from it themselves.

Thabiso*: (…) So some of them I tell them you know what guys, right now I am going to look for a job you see. Out of all of them only three will be happy for me, the rest will not be happy, you see this guy is going to look for a job and when he finds a job he this guy will play fair with us will be very far from us. So you see all of them will love you some will not love you.*

Besides, it seems like participants do not have extensive network of people who they would call friends. Reason for this possibly is the bad influence of peer pressure around the neighbourhood. Especially male participants mention that they rather enrol in education or other work related courses, than sit at home with the risk of getting involved in trouble.

Thapelo: *Something like a peer pressure, that is why I was like I never wanted to communicate with many people because they are full of peer pressure (...).*

Eventually, participants say to know people around the neighbourhood, but rely on their closest friends and family for useful job information and support in order to enhance their employability. To say that friends play a significant role in the dissemination of information on opportunities has been proved by the way youth found out about the Career Readiness program. Almost all participants explained to have heard of the program through a friend who had been a participant or wants to be a participant. As Andile puts it after asking him whether he could use his network to find new opportunities:

Andile*: That is always true for me now. I am here because of that. Because of that social network [laughs].*

Furthermore, it is through these close friends most of the participants, who have had a job or who are currently working, heard of job opportunities.

Motheo*: He was like Brah get washed up we are leaving. I said where are we going? He said it is a surprise. We just left. She also went there because she was also currently unemployed. Yeah so we both got employed but we were sent in two different areas.*

Lastly, the support resource which participants access through the ties in their social network also comes from close friends and is valued significantly by them. When pressure is high and motivation to finish projects they started decreases, those friends are the ones that support and motivate participants to persevere. As Sedibe experienced:

Sedibe: *You know at times things might become difficult along the way and you be like YHOO, stress is killing me bruh, I feel like I wanna quit now this is just not for me you understand. When I am at my lowest, he'd pick me up and say 'No bruh, you can't do that' you understand? 'Don't start something that you are not going to finish. Give your all, go there and best of luck', you understand.*

5.2.2. Weak ties

Participants have many people in their network who they would call acquaintances. This extra familial networks generally consists of people they know from their area, (former) schools or social institutions like the church. However, when asking whether they would consider asking these acquaintances for advice or information on job or educational opportunities, the majority of the participants provides a negative response. There were only a few who would ask people they knew who were specialized in the profession they were building their career towards. It turned out that in general the participants experience a lack of trust in the community. The most frequently cited complaints were the provision of false information on job opportunities and locations, not living up with the high hopes they provoked in people and jealousy. The following quotes illustrate the discontent:

Kabelo*: No, they don't. I'd say that some people are greedy man. They rather keep information to themselves rather than sharing with other people. They keep quiet.*

Celiwe*: Some of them they will tell you this and this and some they won't, because you know some people they think okay when I give this person certain information, what if he or she will succeed and I will not? You see it is something like a jealousy. (…).*

Participants explain that most young people are unemployment, hence when new information on job or educational opportunities pops up, people are tempted to share it only with their closest friends and family or keep it to themselves. A note of nuance must be added to this issue of trust. Youth seem to have difficulties with asking others for help or information, especially people they barely know. As in the first days of the Career Readiness program, they stick around the friends they have and are sceptical towards socializing. A change in mind-set has been sought for by the program and will be discussed further in sub chapter 5.4.

In addition, the jealousy issue might also be a consequence of the system of favourism that is dominating the local labour market. People without significant or no qualifications are able to reach certain positions, because of whom they know.

Celiwe*: Some people like if you are heaving like qualifications more than he or she does, they are heavy jealous. So they must not let your CV go through, so they just take it and throw it*

away, before their managers or CEO's see it. Just take it and throw it in the dustbin. This is what I just saw.

At least six participants from both 2014 and 2015 cohort described this CV treatment and said to refrain from handing in CV's during their job search. According to participants, these employees are tempted to block competition of qualified job seekers because of fear of dismissal.

Heterogeneous contacts

As assumed in the theoretical framework, the advantage of weak ties is that these connections usually bridge social distance and networks and therefore have the potential to offer new information to the individual. Participants generally have many family members or friends living in neighbouring townships like Sebokeng, Palm Springs and Evaton, as well as in the Soweto areas. Most of the acquaintances they have in these places are connections they met while visiting their family or friends. When asking how their information differs from what they hear from their Orange Farm network and whether it is helpful, participants' responds are diverse. First of all, the information tends to be geographically bounded and therefore not always representative for the area participants come from. Secondly, in case participants want to work in the service sector, they may have to contemplate moving out of the region, since sectors in the economy tend to be divided per region. As Andile explains:

Andile*: It is it is different. And why am I saying that. Because you'll find in terms of employment by their location. In the Vaal it is dominated by industrial in that way you'll get the boilermakers, engineers and stuff. (…) It is not like Joburg whereby most of the things it is office based eh IT (…). There is more handwork here. So you'll find the info that you give to them they find it's not valuable because they are used to work with their hands.*

In this case, the geographical location of Orange Farm is seen as a disadvantage to the participants.

Social media and weak ties

As assumed in the theoretical framework, word-of-mouth information from acquaintances might not seem to provide the advantages that weak ties can provide. The internet seems the anticipating platform for youth to respond on the lack of useful social capital and they now put their hopes on the internet as source of information. In the Career Readiness program attention has been paid to using the computer for research purposes, like finding job

opportunities. Certain websites of employment agencies were provided to the participants and it was up to them whether they would use it. Although word-of-mouth information sharing did certainly not disappear, the use of Google and social media like WhatsApp significantly increased after the program. Thapelo explains:

Thapelo*: I google first. This is the only perfect way to look for a job. Not to just eh that is why most people are not working, because they just eh they waste money just for transport and go to Joburg and then they don't find a job. Like it was a waste of money. So now with social media you just communicate, like you google, so you can even tell your friends from the social media that okay you have seen the post from somewhere and you explain.*

Participants are motivated to share their information with their colleagues from the course and send posts to others in their network, when they think that person fits the vacancy. Afrika Tikkun provides the participants the opportunity to use the computer room for their job search. In short, social media and the internet seem to fulfil the role of weak tie in the network of the youth when it comes to information that can enhance their employability.

5.3 How do the facilitator and manager of the Career Readiness program perceive the importance of social capital on employability?

In the theoretical framework of chapter 2, employability has been discussed as the ability to be or get employed and can be translated into the efforts a person is willing to make to be or become attractive to an employer. One the hand, the program seeks to enhance the youth's employability by offering them the free opportunity to secure an accredited certificate and hence develop their human capital with the education they receive. They get the chance to visit Expo's, receive knowledge on how to behave and dress properly in the workplace, get acquaintance with business man who started from the bottom and find themselves in the field currently, get skilled in basic computer techniques and go through simulations of a job interviews. In short, they receive the information and skills they need to get ready for entry-level jobs.

Perspective of facilitator and manager

One element in the program discusses the behaviour of employees with regard to a work place characterized by people from different cultures, believes and values. Especially in post-Apartheid South Africa, where racial distinctions in the social and economic spheres are still a challenge, albeit to a lesser extent than in the past. Therefore the program simulates a work

environment wherein the youth get to familiarize with and need to tolerate the cultural diversity that is also present among the participants, with their Zulu, Sutu and other backgrounds. The youth got split up from their friends in the first days of the program and were stimulated to collaborate with their newly assigned colleagues. As a team they needed to learn from and work with each other in order to fulfil assignments given by the facilitator. The reason for this strategy has been exemplified by two quotes from Mr. Zondi:

Mr. Zondi*: The more they know each other, the more confident they are and it makes it easier for them to express whatever it is that they want to say, because now I know if I say this you are not gonna laugh at me, you will correct me if I am wrong, you are not gonna judge me, you get me? So once I know that it's easy for me to express my thoughts, to say look this is what I think what you think, because the main idea (…) is for them to teach each other, but along the way they need to learn how to live with each other, tolerate each other, you get me? That's it.*

Mr. Zondi*: (…) until they understand to say look we are now a team, we need to do this together, the only way I can learn is not only coming from the lecturer, but it has to come again from the person next to me. Then in that way right at the end of the day, you'll see a good product coming out.*

By teaching the students about how to deal with and tolerate cultural diversity, the program stimulates the interconnectedness between participants. So on the other hand, not only the skills and knowledge students have been educated in is determinative for their employability, but also whether the learning environment is conducive for the reception of new ideas and behaviour. In this case, Afrika Tikkun provides information and support for the duration of the program, but stimulates the youth to form a network where they can draw on in the long term.

Mr. Zondi*: That sort of networking system. To say look it is not necessarily about whoever is there now to help me, but it is about whoever is on my side now to help me. Because if you want to play any type of the game, trust me you cannot play with players that are on the bench, you play with people that are in the field and those are the people that you will show off your great talents, you show off your great things. So it was always about THEM learning from each other. It is simple as that.*

Mr. Zondi: *Because you don't know who is coming out with whom in the long run. So they needed that sort of a network.*

Although the facilitator emphasizes the empowerment effect that goes out from the connectedness of participants, one has not to forget that the organisation itself has become part of that same newly created network as well. Afrika Tikkun represents a valuable source of information for the network. Every job-, learnership- or internship opportunity that comes along is being shared by the skills development coordinator with all the WhatsApp groups that have been created by the participants. Besides, the organisation has multiple partnerships with companies who provide these learnership opportunities. When asking the program manager whether an employer is more likely to hire a youngster who has a Career Readiness certificate, she answers:

Ms. Nkosi: *Yes, yes, 150% better! Ja because eh I mean they know eh they will now their way around. They will know how to behave in a workplace. I also had some problems, when you take a learner and they come here they still have this mentality that we are still in school, but if a person has gone through the Career Readiness, if you put that person here the learner who is fresh from school, definitely there is a difference. Because this person has been exposed, the other one is fresh from school, so they will be having this mentality. If they want to stay away from work and not come , they will just stay away from work. So it is also about eh teaching eh I mean getting them to mature a little bit before they can even go to the workplace.*

So the certificate not only reflects the value of certain certified human capital that has been acquired, but also implicitly inhibits a recommendation from an organisation, who has multiple partnerships around the area. This resource is not accessible to everyone in Orange Farm, but only for those who find themselves member in the network.

In short, both facilitator and program manager are concerned with how social capital, in terms of the network that has been created in the program and the support and information individual members can derive from it, impacts the way participants develop their employability status, now and possibly in the future. Eventually, Afrika Tikkun is not the organisation who is going to hire participants. They disseminate knowledge and skills and provide a platform for youth to learn from each other and get connected. After graduating, participants' profiles enter the database and ATS staff will try to match those with open

vacancies. Apart from this assistance, youth are stimulated to rely on their social network and the social media they now have been trained to use for job search.

5.4 What is the perception of participants on how the program brings about change in the availability and use of social capital?

5.4.1. Career Readiness participants

The participants of the program range in age between 19-22, with two holding the age of 24 and 26 years. Consequently, a great share recently matriculated from high school. The reasons for enrolling in the program are diverse, but most reveal why youth are not inclined to look for a job in Orange Farm, or only under certain circumstances.

Firstly, participants want to continue their studies rather than finding a job at this age. At least six participants mentioned that the inability to pay registration fees for college or university by them or their family, made them decide to register for the program.

Focus group: *(male 1): It's financial problems.*

(male 2): Yeah we couldn't afford to go to college or university you know, so this was the first opportunity we heard about and then we used it.

Participants rather develop themselves with the skills and knowledge the Career Readiness program provides them with, than 'ending up home doing nothing'.

Celiwe: *She asked me first if I am interested, because I was at UJ, but I decided I didn't go because of funding. So I thought like sitting at home doing nothing it is better doing something. I told her [skills development trainer] that I am interested.*

Out of 8 male participants, at least three mentioned to decide to participate in the program to escape bad peer influence.

Thabiso: *Because by that time I thought that maybe if I can go there I will stop maybe then going with bad friends you see, so I don't want to end up with those guys like smoking and doing what else, so I said to myself you know what let me just go there.*

Secondly, participants experience that information gets disseminated easily via the program. Usually information they can't get hold of by themselves, but will guide them in their career choice and will benefit them in the future. Besides, the program provides the graduates with a

certified diploma, which counts as a qualification to them.

Focus group: Personally, I actually wanted to know which career I wanted to pursue. Which career path do I fit in? So I thought that okay Career Readiness will be my first step. So I completed career readiness and now I know what to do from now on. Another thing is actually I don't wanna be poor so I told myself I wanna get educated, know what I want to do, then make money. That's it.

Kabelo*: The reason I wanted to do this Career Readiness is because I want to become more knowledgeable you see about everything that is around me. Then I decided let me go and give it a try. Maybe in the future I will benefit, because there are certificates.*

Not only the human capital is being sought for by the participants. They also believe that entering the networking system of Afrika Tikkun will pay off for them eventually, since they will hear of new job or educational opportunities.

Focus group*: They told me that you can also get internships or learnerships.(…) you know what, why not try and get people close to me so that they can get me internships? (…) it is better to have someone you know helping me it is more or less a helping hand. So that's why.*

5.4.2. Support

An interesting finding is that out of 15, there were 8 participants who emphasized the importance of mentorship in their lives. They draw motivation to change their lives and behaviour out of the advice they get on life, career paths and education, but also on how to diminish bad peer influences. Besides a former employer, it were primarily the facilitators from Career Readiness who were being lauded for their motivational speeches and mentorship. When asking him for the first person he would go to for advice or support, Sedibe responds:

Sedibe*: Ehm mister Ntsele [2014's facilitator] was eh actually he was more of an advisor like YHOO I don't know where to start. He is like a role model to me. He is like that kind of person who doesn't have boundaries. Okay there are boundaries, but then there are no borders. You can come to him with anything and then he will advise you "do this do that, this is much more better for you and suitable for you, but THINK about it at the end of the day". So he is more of a person who is approachable you understand what I say? Had I want an*

opinion on something I would come to him, because he is a good advisor. All of those advises that he has given to me, they have all worked for me.

This support and mentorship from the facilitators not only helps them in making different decisions in life, but also contributes to employability in case when participants say they feel motivated to continue their studies. Several students decided to enrol in other programs after graduating from Career Readiness. As Sbusiso illustrates:

Sbusiso*: Because you know, when you are alone, you always tell yourself 'you know what, I am going to do this'. You don't have that eh anyone to push you. Sometimes you need someone to push you. I didn't have anyone to push me, but miss Neale [facilitator] did. She motivated me and that's why I came back here to do IT.*

Seemingly, there was a difference between the way the participants from 2014 spoke about their facilitator, in comparison to those who graduated in 2015. Interviewees explained that because the course in 2014 lasted for six months, the facilitator got to learn the students by heart and over time he got to identify the talents and needs of certain participants. Since the program has been squeezed into 6 weeks, the role of mentorship seemed to have shifted from a relationship between facilitator and participant to students amongst each other. The last group of participants learned a lot from the facilitator in terms of knowledge, but found motivation and support amongst their peers. One of the participants illustrates:

Sbusiso*: I mean I met friends who are motivated and who wanted the same thing that I wanted you know. And me and my friends [peers from the program] have been motivating each other and you know, now we are not like the people we used to be.*

Furthermore, the effects of the facilitator's mentorship not only benefits the participants themselves, but there is also a trickling down effect into family life as youth are reflecting this example by tutoring their younger siblings. Most participants have older siblings who have either dropped out of school before matric or found themselves unemployed at home because of other reasons. The participant usually is the first person in the family who decided to make a turn in life by enrolling into the program. As an example they now function towards their younger siblings who want to follow in their footsteps. When asking Andile about his family, he tells me the following about his siblings:

Andile: *So they all participate in those programs, because they've all seen what the Career Readiness program has done to me, so they also go through a certain program that are in place here.*

Not only Andile, but Thabiso also explains how he concerns himself with the future of his younger family members:

Thabiso: *So now I am basically eh my younger sister she is doing grade 11. I am telling her 'You know what sister? In life you need to know what you want to be. Now, next year you will be doing your matric, it is your last year in school, do you know what you want to be or what you want to study?'. She said eh I don't know. So I said 'you see you should come and sit with me so I can advise you and give you advise about the careers ja'.*

As participants are encouraging friends and family to enrol in the Career Readiness program, mentorship and role modelling are being propagated indirectly and might respond to the lack of role models some participants say they are facing in life.

5.4.3. Change in social capital

The theoretical framework describes social capital as the sum of resources which are embedded in a person's social network. These resources exist in the social network the individual is positioned himself (Adler & Kwon, 2002). By participating in the Career Readiness program, participants have a membership in the network which includes the AT staff, the database and (ex-) participants of the courses being held at the Orange Farm site. As the participant of the focus group before makes clear, hearing of information is a social resource one can retrieve from contacts in the network and consequently can make productive when they use it for their own gain. Most participants therefore explained that when they were making new friendships in the program, they eventually searched for contacts they could benefit from in the future. As Thandeka and Andile illustrate:

I*: Hm. And how can you tell you can benefit from people?*

Thandeka: *You can tell from when you are talking to them that they're positive minded and can motivate you to be a better person in life. (…). Instead of just bring you down like most people do.*

Andile*: Every one that I am currently socialising with is because of the network we started here in the program. Because every single information I will get they will get. They will do their research and I will do mine. And they will come with certain part of information and I will as well and we combine [laughs] and we make a big adventure.*

Participants feel stimulated to socialize more with their peers and to invest in their relationships with others, i.a. by sharing information in their WhatsApp groups they created to keep in touch. To reach this level of connectedness between participants, the program intervened by changing the youth's mind sets towards cultural diversity and the importance of social capital. The youth were forced to collaborate with each other and hence got to know each other's backgrounds and found similar struggles. This mutual recognition got highly appreciated and ultimately laid the basis for the provision of support towards others in the network and instigated the motivation to work hard to reach goals in life. Changing mind sets is necessary according to program manager Nkosi, as she explains:

Ms. Nkosi*: So we are actually trying to help them, you know, turn their mind set. You know it is not about … and also they have this sense of dependency. They like things being done for them.*

After the program, most participants claimed not wanting to gain a job because of the fact that a cousin works at a certain company, but they rather have a job interview and get hired because of the talents and skills they have. As a consequence of this change in mentality, most participants are now valuing their social connections differently and some even experience a change in the composition of their network. Friends who also have plans to study and build on their career are becoming more appreciated, as participants seek to live up to their goals set for the future. At the same time, this means that participants felt like they had outlived relationships with people who still were stuck in the mentality they had left behind.

Andile: *No it is just that they fall out. Because they feel like they don't relate you know with you anymore because of the things that you say, basically about the things in life in general. You know, like just your social life now has changed, because of this program. You have been programmed in a certain way. You know, how I think. The way you used to think negatively. You are now free to make positive decisions. Ja deal with the negative situations around you. They just feel neglected, because they can't socialise with you. Someone can come with something negative, but you always have an alternative. You say 'No, you can always do this, you can always do that'. You know.*

However, there are also participants who took this opportunity to motivate their friends to follow their lead. Both type of participants indicate to have gained new social relationships with people from the program, whom they felt were more like-minded as them.

5.4.4. The program and social capital

The influence of the program on the youth's social capital manifests itself in the addition of these new social relationships to their individual networks. Importantly, these social ties are probably more productive since these youth bridge several networks and are therefore more likely to hear of new information. As Andile illustrates:

I: *Okay and did the program change that? The value of your social contacts?*

Andile*: Yes it did it showed me that the value of having social networks is not about just using it as a friends zone, but using it as a tool to get important information.*

Hence, most participants reflect on how their social network facilitates the circulation of information they need to hear of job opportunities. In combination with the enhanced human capital and the entry into the Afrika Tikkun network, the participants feel more employable. They experience that companies have become more interested in young people who have done courses like Career Readiness.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and conclusion

6.1.   Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether social capital impacts the employability of the participants of Career Readiness and whether the program stimulated the youth to use their social capital. The creation of social connections between youth, the disadvantaged ones in particular, is difficult to establish by ways of governmental policy. Examining what it is about the employability program that stimulates the creation of productive network relations is of importance, since promoting these programs is less of a challenge.

What we have learned from the Career Readiness program is that success starts with the determination of youth to make a change in their lives by deciding to enrol. As facilitator Zondi puts it: you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Changing the mind set of youth from dependency thinking towards believing in your own capabilities in combination with learning to accept cultural diversity, seemed to provide a fruitful basis for youth to get connected to each other.

Besides, the program seeks to create a social learning environment in which youth stimulate and motivate each other to become better in life. This was done by bringing down stereotypical walls between youth with different backgrounds and encouraging them to work with each other in teams. Most participants indicated how this changed mind-set encouraged them to connect with like-minded young people and to seek productive collaboration. As assumed in the theoretical framework, the development of human capital is facilitated by a learning environment that thrives by trust and self-confidence between individuals. This interaction and anticipation between social and human capital in the program makes the development of employability amongst youth possible. Participants feel they can rely on these new social contacts when it comes to developing themselves and finding job opportunities. Social capital, stimulated by the program, therefore did impact the employability of the participants, since this created learning environment, changed mind set and network offers them new job related opportunities.

What kind of social capital is productive seems to be dependent on the context. Weak ties provide useful information when it comes to hearing of job opportunities (Granovetter, 1983). However, in a disadvantaged community like Orange Farm, where people experience a lack of trust in each other, asking acquaintances for information or support doesn't seem productive at all. This is especially due to 'homophily' in the network, which is, according to

Lin (2000), characteristic for low-class, disadvantaged communities. It means that individuals with inferior characteristics, like being unemployed and from a disadvantaged race, cluster in one network and are less able to hear of new job information, because social contacts are less diverse. However, the theory falls short in describing how modern technology eases the process of using acquaintances for productive ends. The internet and social media turned out to be useful advisors to participants. Job information is not solely limited to people who are connected to individuals who represent the source of information, but is also to be found by individuals with access to the internet. Although it does not implicate that internet replaces the fact that being connected to certain helpful individuals gets you in places, internet does facilitate the flow of information which was inaccessible by the participants before the program. For young people with generally homogeneous contacts, the internet provides more opportunities to hear of vacancies, than word-of-mouth channels do in the community of Orange Farm.

When it comes to the use of strong ties, Kramarz and Skans (2014) show that they are more likely to recommend close tied individuals to a new employer. A few participants indicated how their family or friends played a role helping them into employment. Most of the participants however described how Afrika Tikkun, which had become part of their social capital, turned out to be a productive tie when it comes to job seeking. With their programs they are able to diminish the 'noise' that is caused by informational problems between employer and employee. From now on employers know what they can expect from Afrika Tikkun's graduates and might therefore be more likely to provide job opportunities to the participants. The organisation therefore plays a significant role as a social tie when it comes to the employability of the youth.

Support generally is provided by family and close friends, but assistance through extra familial networks, like the program, proves to be a significant element for youth's employability. Especially because of a lack of trust that exists with regard to the community, building up social capital through the program, which is perceived by the youth as productive, gives to think that employability has been impacted. The role of the program in the use and availability of social capital among the participants manifest itself amongst others in the creation of WhatsApp groups which are still in use one year after the program and the addition of social contacts within Afrika Tikkun to their network. Distinguishing how youth say they use their network and how they actually use it, proved to be somewhat a challenge. By asking the question differently multiple moments during the interview, a consistency in

the answers was sought for. As will be described in the following, including multiple moments of inquiry may shed more light on the issue of perceived use and actual use of social capital.

6.2.   Research limitations and ethical reflection

Firstly, multiple moments of inquiry over time with youth participating in the program, might produce more useful insights when it comes to investigating the influence of social capital on the program and also describing a certain impact on the participants behaviour. Currently the researcher had to rely on the memory, experiences and words of interviewees themselves without being able to check with participant observation whether they do what they actually say they do. A program is a process and generally it demands critical self-reflection of a participant to articulate a change in their own behaviour (Bernard, 2006). However, due to time constraints one moment of measurement was feasible.

Secondly, despite of guaranteeing certain rights to participants, the feeling of 'taking' from respondents without 'giving back' often took hold of the researcher. One participant asked me twice what I eventually would do with the data and how it would benefit her. The struggle of giving valuable meaning to reciprocity in these kind of temporary relationships is real. However, believing and seeking to give the respondents a voice in academic discourse is the gift I give in return. By evaluating, describing and posing recommendations I can inspire organisations to read and use the respondents' information and with that, let their voices be heard.

6.3.   Recommendations

Research

During the research there were a couple of subjects that seemed to be prevalent in the community, but were characterized by a lack of (non) academic knowledge on it. I will discuss two of these subjects briefly.

First, besides non-governmental organisations such as Afrika Tikkun, also the church as an institution tends to play a role in the job search behaviour of youth. Several youth mentioned the existence of events organised by churches in Orange Farm and Soweto, where the youth is being advised by the elderly on their career paths and their future perspectives. Social capital, in its multifaceted appearance, demands not only looking at friends, family and acquaintances

as persons only, but also needs a consideration of the influence of cultural or religious institutions on youth and their employability.

Second, the issue of bad peer influence in the township might have an impact on the future perspectives of participants. Although gangsterism and tribalism do not seem to be that much of an urgent issue in the community, it does not mean it is not prevalent and withholds youth from their studies. Several stories indicate that these phenomena's pose obstacles for youth and their choices towards the future. The extent to which participants are affected by it needs more attention.

<u>Daily practice</u>

As has been described in the 'results' section, the mentorship of the program's facilitators and Afrika Tikkun staff turned out to be a highly valued source of support for the participants. However, when asking them for suggestions to improve the program, participants wished for more personal attention. The facilitator could not afford to provide this support to all participants, since there were too many of them in the program. Therefore, I would suggest that this personal touch towards the participants could be facilitated by creating small groups of participants to which the facilitator can pay attention to.

Besides, inviting businessmen from the community also had its effect on the participants. As a role model they explained that achieving success in your career does not come handed to you on a silver platter, but rather on hard work. The recommendation therefore is to consider inviting more role models from the community to speak to the participants about life and career paths.

Finally, as social capital seems to have a significant impact on employability, paying more attention to social networking skills could be considered. Although youth are more familiar with the use of internet for economic purposes already, there is still room for improvement when it comes to social media sites. Using Facebook as a tool for hearing of education is easy nowadays, since individuals could follow information from for example UJ on this site with just one simple click. This facilitates the knowledge on registration dates, which participants seem to experience as a challenge.

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Appendix 1 Focus group interview guide

<u>Introduction</u>

First of all, thank you very much for being here and dedicating your time to help us with our research. The program you have participated in was focussed on teaching you hard and soft skills which you might need for your future job. In the end, being able to find a job is an important part of the program.

In this focus group we would like to hear from you what your experiences are with the program, what you have learned from the training meetings and maybe subjects which were not being discussed but which you'd rather had seen included in the program. We will ask some questions and will discuss these in the group. Please feel free to ask questions as well and remember that it is important to respect each other's opinion. Some might find it difficult to speak in public, so please respect each other and give other people room to speak their minds as well.

In short, we would like to focus on how you have experienced the program. Besides, we would like to know how you think that social networks can contribute to finding a job. Secondly, we will discuss how the program has helped you to think differently about yourself and your behaviour with regard to finding a job that suits you.

Motivation:

1. We know a lot of young people find it challenging to find a job in Orange Farm. Can you describe for us how it is to try and find a job in Orange Farm? What are the main obstacles?
2. What made YOU decide to apply for the Afrika Tikkun program? What was your personal motivation?

Questions about the program:

3. Can you describe what elements of the program were most helpful in making you Job Ready?
4. What subjects or information did you miss during the program, which you rather had seen included?
5. What challenges did you encounter during your participation in the program?
6. What helped you finish the program?

7. How do you see the future now the program has ended?

Social Network

To what extent do you think that social networks will help you to find a job? And should networking skills be stimulated in the program?

Self-esteem

To what extent do you think that being confident about yourself and your own actions will help you find a job? And should confidence be stimulated in the program?

Appendix 2   Interview guide manager

Thank you very much for dedicating some of your time to us and our research. I believe we have told you about the purpose of our research before, but for the sake of clarification please allow me to elaborate on it some more. We are students from the Netherlands and are here for an exchange between our home university and UJ. We are writing our master thesis and our subject is on youth unemployment and employability programs that seeks to contribute to the alleviation of this problem. Kirsten's research is focussed on how social networks contributes to youth acquiring information on job opportunities and consequently job chances. Renske's research is focussed on how your self-esteem (how you view yourself) and confidence in your own capabilities (that is the extent to which you believe that you are capable of achieving what you want), relates to employability. We are both interested in how the Afrika Tikkun Job Readiness programme addresses these components.

1. Can you please tell us something about your role in the program?
2. Can you briefly describe for us the process of the program? Out of which elements it has been built up.
3. How would you describe the profile of the youth that participate in the program?
4. Can you describe the aim of the programme, what is the main outcome?

Self-esteem

5. What way do you think being confident about yourself and your own actions relates to your employability, I mean the ability to find a job?
6. How does the programme address self-esteem and trust in one's own capabilities?
7. After the programme, to what extent do you notice change in the confidence of the participants? And do you also notice change in faith young people have in their own capabilities?

Social networks

8. To what extent do you think that social capital, like social networks and social support, is important for youth to be employable, thus the ability to find a job?
9. Does the program pay attention to the development of social capital?
10. Is there something about the program that makes the youth use their social network more or in different ways than before?

Appendix 3   Interview guide facilitator

Thank you very much for dedicating some of your time to us and our research. I believe we have told you about the purpose of our research before, but for the sake of clarification please allow me to elaborate on it some more. We are students from the Netherlands and are here for an exchange between our home university and UJ. We are writing our master thesis and our subject is on youth unemployment and employability programs that seeks to contribute to the alleviation of this problem. Kirsten's research is focussed on how social networks contributes to youth acquiring information on job opportunities and consequently job chances. Renske's research is focussed on how your self-esteem (how you view yourself) and confidence in your own capabilities (that is the extent to which you believe that you are capable of achieving what you want), relates to employability. We are both interested in how the Afrika Tikkun Job Readiness programme addresses these components.

1. Can you please tell us something about your role in the program?
2. Can you briefly describe for us the process of the program? Out of which elements it has been built up.
3. How would you describe the profile of the youth that participate in the program?
4. Can you describe the aim of the programme, what is the main outcome?

Self-esteem

5. What way do you think being confident about yourself and your own actions relates to your employability, I mean the ability to find a job?
6. How does the programme address self-esteem and trust in one's own capabilities?
7. After the programme, to what extent do you notice change in the confidence of the participants? And do you also notice change in faith young people have in their own capabilities?

Social networks

8. To what extent do you think that social capital, like social networks and social support, is important for youth to be employable, thus the ability to find a job?
9. Do you think youth use the personal contacts they have with others to get information on job opportunities? And how useful do you think these contacts are?
10. Does the program pay attention to the development of social capital?

What is it about the program that makes the youth use their social network more or in different ways than before?

Appendix 4   Interview guide participants

Interview participant Career Readiness program cohort 2014 and 2015

Participant no: _____

Date and time: _____

Personal information

First, I would like to ask you some questions on your personal details. I ask these questions just to get to know you a little bit more.

1. What is your name?   _____
2. What is your sex?   _____
3. What is your age?   _____
4. Where were you born? _____
5. Where do you live currently?   _____
6. Do you have any children?_____

   →If yes, are there people around you who could look after the child if you are looking for a job? Who?

   →Is there somebody looking after the child when you are doing employment related activities?

Now, I would like to explain to you what I mean by social networks in this interview. Everybody has people around them with whom they talk about personal things, with whom they just have fun or who are related to you by blood. I call these relations 'social relationships'. These social relationships exist between persons, for example you can call your friend to hang out tonight.

Next to that you might also have social networks on Facebook, LinkedIn or WhatsApp. These social media can be used to remain in contact with friends, family or people you vaguely know.

In this interview I mainly focus on the social relationships you have with people around you, as how I first explained it.

1. *Can you tell me how you found out about the Career Readiness program which you participated in?*
2. *What motivated you to apply for the program?*
3. *Do you think you made any new friends or new relationships which you think you can use during job search?*
4. *In terms of social relationships you have with other people, how do you think that your social network has changed after the program?*

Employment

1. Are you currently working?

   -If so, is this a formal or informal job?

   -If not, have you ever had a job?

2. How did you hear of that job? (advert, somebody told you, old employer recommended you, waited on the side of the road)

3. Who would be the first person you ask when looking for a job or information on jobs? Why that person?

4. Do you know what you want to become?

5. Do you have social contacts in your network who could help you with accessing information on job opportunities?

   -If yes: Tell me something about that person, where do you know him/her from and why would you consider him/her helpful?

6. What obstacles do you run into when searching for a job? What makes it difficult to find a job?

Employability

7. What do you think you need to get a job? What makes you able to get and keep a job?

- CV, dress code, time management.

- Finances: do you have money for public transportation/car to get at the place of the interview?

- Information: do you have information on job opportunities that match your qualities?

- Support: does your family/friends/acquaintances support you in getting a job? How do they help you?

8. Can you describe for me what actions you undertake when looking for a job?

9. How do you think that you have changed the way you search for jobs now that you have finished the program?

Family

10. Can you tell me something about your family (siblings/parents/other household members)?

- How many of your household members are employed?

- What kind of work do they do?

- Have you ever asked them for advice or support when looking for a job?

- Can you recall a situation wherein your family played a role or helped you when you were looking for a job?

Friends

11. Can you describe for me with whom you mostly hang out and what kind of friends you have?
- With how many of these friends do you feel comfortable discussing personal things?
- Would these friends help you with advice and support when it comes to seeking a job?
- Have you ever actually asked them for advice on jobs? Can you give me an example?

Acquaintances

12. Do you know any people who you could think of in terms of acquaintances. For example, people who you say hi to in the streets, but never have extensive conversations with?
- Would you every consider asking these acquaintances for advice when it comes to seeking a job or information?
13. Do you know people outside Orange Farm? Where do you know them from?

Social networks & program

14. Imagine I ask you to arrange for yourself an interview for a job that will suit you. How would you do this?

   Probe → Who would you ask? Why this person?

15. Would you have done it the same way as before you participated in the Career Readiness?
16. Do you think that the people you know, so the kind of social network you have, is important for you to get a job or the job that you want?
17. Can you describe for me how you thought about the value of your social contacts in terms of using them for job information before you participated in the Career Readiness? To what extent did the program change your thoughts?
18. In what way do you think that after the program you are more likely to use your personal contacts in order to find a job?

Statements

Now I have written down some statements concerning social networks and job opportunities. When I read out these statements, I would like you to point on the answer sheet [appendix 1] to what extent you agree with the statement. And remember, there are no wrong or right answers. I just want to know what your opinion is in these matters.

Ask respondent why they have chosen certain answers and how the program has influenced their answer.

S1: I have built a network of friendships with people that can advance my career.   _____

S2: I can use my networks to find new job opportunities.   _____

Program

19. Can you describe what elements of the program were most helpful in making you job-ready?

20. What subject or skill would you like to learn about some more? How would you describe the amount attention that has been paid to it?

21. What challenges did you encounter during your participation in the program?

22. What helped you finish the program?

23. Do you think that more attention should be paid to social networking skills in the program? How do you see the future now the program has ended? Would you be working/what kind of job?

24. What suggestions could you make for improving the program?

I have no further questions. Is there anything else you would like to share with me or you think I have missed during the interview?

Thank you very much for your time. I hope you will reach the goals you have set out for yourself and that the program really has been a helping hand to you.

Answer sheet statements

Never true for me 1	Occasionally true for me 2	Neutral 3	Often true for me 4	Always true for me 5

Appendix 5   Informed consent

Focus group

In this focus group we would like to hear from you what your experiences are with the program, what you have learned from the training meetings and talk about subjects which were not being discussed but which you'd rather had seen included in the program. We will ask some questions and will discuss these in the group. Please feel free to ask questions as well and remember that it is important to respect each other's opinion. Some might find it difficult to speak in public, so please respect each other and give other people room to speak their minds as well.

Information about the research and your participation

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Participating in this research will in no way affect your relation with Afrika Tikkun Services in any way. If you rather would not do this focus group with us, than please tell us.
- Everything you say to us will be processed anonymously. That means that your name will not be used in my research and that your information will confidentially processed at any time during the research.
- We would like to ask you if you are fine with us recording this interview. We want to do this so that we can listen to you instead of writing everything down. In that case, we will not forget anything important you have told us. This record is also anonymous. Your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report..
- Our research will be published in the Utrecht University database and will be given to Afrika Tikkun, but as we described, this will be done anonymously and your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report.

    If you have any questions before or during the focus group, please feel free to ask us. You can interrupt us at any moment and if you change your mind later on about your participation in this research, you can always approach us to withdraw.
    If you are still happy to participate in the research, we would like to ask you to sign this form for us. This means that we have informed you on the purpose of the research and it assures you that we will process this with care and confidentiality.

    Sign: Date:

Participants

Introduction

Thank you very much for dedicating your time to me. Before we start off, I would like to tell you a bit more about myself and the research I am conducting currently. My name is Kirsten Verhage and I came to South Africa via an exchange program between my home university in the Netherlands and UJ. My field of study is Social Policy and with that I am interested in the way programs or policies can help to combat social problems. You were participating in the Career Readiness program which is organised by Afrika Tikkun. This program seeks to help you develop skills and knowledge you might need for finding a job. My research will mainly focus on how you think that your social network might help you with finding a job. With this interview, I would like to understand more about what you, as a young individual, find important when looking for a job and how you think the program might have helped you or not with this.

Information about the research and your participation

- Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. This means that you are not obliged to be here. Besides, participating in this research will in no way affect your relation with Afrika Tikkun.
- Everything you say to me will be processed anonymously and will only be used for the purpose of this research.
- The interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes of your time.
- If you change your mind later on about your participation in this research, you can always approach me to opt out. There will be no consequences or loss of benefits for you.
- I would like to know if you are fine with me recording this interview. I want to do this so that I can listen to your stories instead of focussing on writing everything down. In that case, I will not forget anything important you have told me.

If you have any questions before or during the interview, please feel free to ask me. I would be happy to answer them. If you are willing to participate in the research, I would like to ask you to sign this form for me.

Sign: Date: