African Boys and Gangs: Construction of Masculinities within gang cultures in a primary school in Inanda, Durban.

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Declaration of Originality

I, Innocent Dumisani Maphanga, certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree in any university, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text.

Innocent D. Maphanga

19 March 2004

Acknowledgments

Statement of Authenticity

This work has not been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which a group of boys who belong to gangs enact their masculinity. The focus is on African boys' construction of their masculinities within gang cultures at a primary school in Inanda, Durban. The school is an exclusively African co-educational school and predominantly African teaching staff.

Data collection involved qualitative methods that primarily include observation and unstructured interviews. These research tools were used to investigate the interrelatedness between violence, gangs, and masculinities. This study demonstrates that young boys in gangs enact violent masculinities which are bound up with issues of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and context in the making of young gang cultures. The performance of violent gang masculinity produced the exaggerated quality of masculine protest, in which violence is employed as a compensation for perceived weakness. This study reveals that gang of boys are enacting masculinity that is oppositional to school's authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. This research has indicated that modes of masculinities are shaped, constrained or enabled by gang cultures. Gang boys acted out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. They are anti-school authority, anti-social and undisciplined.

The study also demonstrates that there are many socio-economic and political factors that impact negatively on the school such as unemployment, poverty, and violent gang crime. The social, economic and political contexts are therefore crucially important in understanding a multiplicity of masculine identities amongst gang boys at the school under study. Schooling is an important arena where masculinities are enacted in various forms including violent (gang) masculinities.

The overall conclusion stemming from the research project is that attempts to reduce violent gang masculinities in the school need to include a gender strategy that tackles gender inequality. In South Africa this could form part of the Life Skills curriculum. Much greater attention needs to be given, in the life skills curriculum and through the ethos of the school as a whole, to promote gender equality and in particular models of masculine identity not predicated on force and violence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This thesis examines the construction of masculinities amongst gangs in an African primary school in Inanda District, Durban. It investigates the interplay between gangs, masculinities and gender inequalities in the school. The boys in this study ranged between the ages of 12 and 16 years and were in grade seven. The study explores the causes of their anti-social behaviour, which ultimately constitutes a problem for learners (boys and girls) and educators. A particular feature of boys' anti-social behaviour is violence. Boys overwhelmingly do violence and violence is connected with masculine gang culture practices and values (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Suggested here is that gangs are made up exclusively of boys and are male dominated. Yet not all boys do violence. Neither are all boys gang members. It is important to note that although the context increases the boys' vulnerability to gang-related crime, boys do not automatically engage in improper conduct or automatically join gangs.

Violence is an acute social, political and educational problem in South Africa. South Africa ranks amongst the most violent countries in the world. Its schools are frequently the sites of violent crimes ranging from rape to murder. According to Harber (2001) the legacy of apartheid in South Africa has created a violent social context characterized by high levels of unemployment, extremes of wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns and patriarchal values and behaviours.

There are many problems affecting schools. Crime and violence are the most common scourge that plague schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Nhlonipho Primary School (NPS) is no exception. Boys are the perpetrators of a significant proportion of violence and such violence is exacerbated by boys in gangs where violence is considered an appropriate tool.

1.1 Defining a gang

In this section the way in which gangs are conceptualized in this study is highlighted. There is no set definition of what constitutes a gang. There are multiple ways in which a gang can be defined. In the researcher's experience as deputy principal at NPS for the past ten years he is able to intuit some characteristics of gangs. Additionally the literature on gangs and masculinities, which is developed in Chapter two, has been useful in developing a conceptual understanding of gangs.

Gangs are often groups of boys who come together and act in accord to promote anti-social behaviour. There is no agreed upon number that constitutes a gang, however, three is usually the minimum. Boys in gangs use violence and intimidation. They are defiant, rebellious and aggressive. They are drawn together by an interest in anti-social practices. They stick together by developing and maintaining their interests in improper conduct. As a group they adopt improper practices as part of their repertoire and they are easily influenced by unworthy motives. Drug use, violence and theft are considered to be acceptable practices. Engaging in these practices gives boys a sense of credibility and power.

Membership in gangs is also sustained by the particular use of language and dress. The boys in this study use isiZulu differently. They make use of what is often referred to as tsotsi-taal. It is a streetwise language. For example, when gang members greet they say "eita" or "howzit" or "grand" or "sharp". Tsotsi-taal provides gangs with a sense of togetherness. Dress code is also significant in establishing togetherness. Glaser (2000) states that boys in gangs are clever and stylish. A gang may adopt a current dress code or style, but young men who dress like this are not necessarily members of a gang. A gang may, however, select a dress code not only as a form of identification, but also as a way through which a particular kind of masculinity is fashioned and stylised. Clothing and body markings give a sense of collective membership. Another characteristic of gangs is its hierarchal structure. This takes

the form of a leader or co-leaders and lesser gang members. Power structures are clearly in place.

Some of the character traits of gangs include the use of violence, improper conduct, for example, engaging in theft, drug abuse, the use of foul language and anti-social behaviour in general. These experiences and observations have prompted the researcher to identify some of the boys in the school as gang members.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the construction of masculinities and gang culture on African boys attending a primary school in Durban. The intent is to collect data to serve as a yardstick for evaluating the impact of boys' behaviours during classroom and playground activities and to inform the development of new interventions for boys in the school at large. Observations and interviews are chief methods of collecting data aimed at determining the relationship between gangs, masculinities, and gender inequalities at NPS.

The rationale for conducting this research is that schools, communities and educational authorities are not doing enough to deal with gang cultures and are blind to issues of masculinities in South African schools. Not much has been written or documented about gangs in schools. This is because in some institutions gang life is a taken-for-granted phenomenon and considered 'natural' or 'normal' when exhibited by boys. According to Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), some actions that might be deemed negative can also be taken for granted as normal behaviour. This study explores a small group of boys who have been identified as members of gangs and have linkages with outside the school gangs and gangsterism.

Central to this investigation is the question of why the construction of a boy's masculinity is enacted in violent forms. More importantly, how these masculinities are interrelated with

gangs' activities, gender inequalities and violence is considered. For instance, some boys are predominantly members of gangs and their membership is bound to issues of power and violence.

1.3 Background and context

The school comprises only African learners both boys and girls. These learners were historically and still are deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to past racial imbalances. Nhlonipho Primary School is situated in the economically deprived area of Amaoti in Inanda. Inanda was established in the mid-19th century as a rural area for Africans. Later a large number of Indian people also settled there. Forced removals and the implementation of influx control in other parts of Durban increased the population of Inanda during the apartheid era. Violence against Indian residents in 1985 was followed by a period of warlordism and then by various conflicts for control of the area. As Mahlobo (2000: 4) asserts:

> "Amaoti was a rural area, which fell under the Amaqadi Tribal Authority under Inkosi Mzonjani Ngcobo. The chief provided a sanctuary for political refugees in the 1980s. Refugees who were fleeing IFP warlords all converged on Amaoti. Refugees came from as far south as Mzimkhulu and from as far north as Mtunzini. Amaoti was then transformed from a serene rural area to a bustling informal settlement".

Party-political violence, mainly related to disputes between supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha freedom Party (IFP), has plagued the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) since the early 1980s. While the province experienced a miraculous lull in violence during South Africa's first democratic elections in April 1994, violence continues, particularly the Durban Metro region. The transition from the apartheid era to democracy

presented an environment no longer dominated by violence or central power interested in fomenting tensions and conflict between groups. Political violence has subsequently declined in Inanda. According to Mahlobo, "what has emerged at Amaoti are gangs and crime. Unemployment and poverty are prominent characteristics of this informal settlement" (Ibid, p. 4).

The emergence of gangs at Amaoti in the early 1990s is linked to the emigration of AmaMpondo from other areas such as KwaMalukazi and No.5 between Isiphingo and Umlazi and KwaMakhutha, Durban. The intent of AmaMpondo, who were predominantly ANC supporters, was to seek refuge at Amaoti when violence broke out between the ANC and the IFP warlords. The former indigenous dwellers at Amaoti, especially the youth suspected AmaMpondo refugees of IFP membership, which resulted in a fight between the Congo and Lusaka groups. The ascension of violence and gang-related crime can be linked to fights between the Congo and Lusaka gangster groups. The two groups have been in conflict since the early 1990s and have set a precedent for some boys to become gang members. These conditions place the school at an increased risk, hence prone to violent acts of the outside gangs in the community.

The presence of violent cultures including the gang cultures within the broader context of the school impacts on it in negative ways. Gang cultures are reproduced within the school and have resulted in the 'breakdown of learning'. The situation at Nhlonipho Primary School is not very different from other African schools in similar contexts. In African schools the culture of breakdown includes: "...general demotivation and low morale of students and teachers, poor school results, conflict and often violence in and around school, vandalism, criminality, gangsterism, rape, and substance abuse, school facilities in a generally poor state of repairs" (Christie, 1998: 283).

Children living in South African townships or informal settlements, such as Amaoti are schooled in violence. Violent crime is widespread in South Africa and schools in disadvantaged areas suffer from serious problems of gang-related crime (Harber, 2001).

Nhlonipho Primary School, where the researcher is employed as deputy principal, is situated in Amaoti – a densely populated informal settlement near Phoenix, 30km north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal (see map, Appendix I). The school has a staff composition of 30 African educators (10 males and 20 females) and three non-teaching staff (1 male and 2 females) with an enrolment of 1214 learners in 2003.

1.4 The Outline of the Thesis

Chapter One provides an introductory overview and the outline of this study and provides a definition of a gang within the school context. It also describes the rationale, the background and context of the study. Chapter Two provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of boys and gang cultures in South Africa's African schools. The literature pertinent to the study covers issues such as gangs and violence in South African schools as follows: Firstly, a theoretical framework that deals with the conceptualisation of masculinities is presented. Secondly, this literature highlights the importance of race and class in the construction of protest masculinity as well as how different 'macho' versions of masculinities are performed at school. Thirdly, how these masculinities are interconnected with gang activities and schooling is discussed. Lastly, the specific association with gangs, violence and schooling are highlighted. Chapter Three extends the context provided by the literature review. It discusses the research design, describes the methods of data collection used, the rationale for their inclusion and the integration of the research design with the underlying theoretical framework and research questions. The focus is on how gang boys relate to other boys, to girls, to educators and to schooling in general. Research results/findings and analysis are presented in Chapter Four. This chapter also discusses the data analysis procedures used and this is

intended to share with you what the researcher understands about gangs in the school. A reference list and appendices are included in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

Gangs are a gendered phenomenon. Boys are predominantly members of gangs. Boys' membership within gangs is manifest at home, at school and elsewhere in the community. In order to understand the association between boys and gangs, this chapter will draw from masculinity studies. Protest masculinity is a particularly useful concept in understanding young African boys in gangs. This concept will be illustrated by drawing from Connell's (1995) typology of masculinities. In South Africa, the history of gang formation is inextricably linked to the nation's history of colonialism and apartheid. Africans in particular have been subjected to intense structural violence and dispossession. As a result, boys struggle to achieve the patterns of dominant masculinity, due to their class and racial status. In this context, gang membership becomes the means by which disempowered men assert their control over women and other men, and through which they resist a dominant masculinity.

There are four sections to this chapter. The first section discusses the concept of masculinity using Connell's (1987; 1995) typology. Here the term "protest masculinity" is highlighted as a useful concept in describing young boys in gangs. The next section highlights the importance of race and class in the construction of protest masculinity. Race and class play a major role in inscribing masculine identities. They are key dimensions in understanding powerlessness, and explaining why the reaction against social and economic disparities often takes on a violent edge. Protest masculinity is defiant and anti-authority but the defiance occurs against the backdrop of social and economic inequalities. The final sections of this chapter highlight the specific association between masculinity, gangs, violence and schooling.

Amongst boys power is important. In gangs boys frequently use violence to show their dominance and fight in order to maintain their sense of power.

2.1 Conceptualization of masculinity

Masculinity must be understood in terms of its place in gender relations and the way in which unequal power relations are maintained. Masculinity is related to issues of power, including men's power over women, and men's power over other men. Gangs are invested in the formation of particular kinds of masculinities. Drinking, having sex, smoking, and anti-social behaviour in general, for instance, may be perceived as social practices which not only maintain social cohesion and solidarity of the gang, but also are on assertion of male togetherness and power.

This research adopts Connell's (1995) ideas of masculinities. Connell (1995) offers different forms of masculinities by developing what he understands to be hegemonic (dominant) masculinity, subordinated masculinity, complicit masculinity, and protest or oppositional masculinity. This framework allows us to understand the behaviour of boys and how they align themselves to different types of masculinities. Hegemony refers to a cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social relationships (Connell, 1987; 1995). Hegemony, however natural in appearance, is achieved via the social processes of competition, domination and resistance. From within this struggle hegemonic masculinity emerges as the configuration of gender practice which legitimates patriarchy and guarantees the dominant position of men alongside the subordination of women and "subordinated forms of masculinity" (Connell, 1987: 183).

The gendered rejection of homosexuals, for example, instituted through gang attacks on homosexual men (and boys), suggests underlying compensatory search for masculine status among perpetrators. According to Morrell (1998) in South Africa working class, black and

gay men are excluded from or subordinated to hegemonic masculinity. There are many ways in which one could begin to unravel the construction of masculinity in schools. However, the scope of this research is quite specific, that is to investigate the construction of masculinities amongst African gang boys in a primary school.

Masculinity is a socially constructed phenomenon that is inherently resistant to broad generalizations across time and space. Connell believes that hegemonic masculinity embodies a "currently accepted" strategy to what it means to be masculine. This masculinity is hegemonic because there exists a positive correlation between a "masculinated" cultural ideal and institutionalized power. Furthermore, Connell asserts the masculinizing practice of boys' subjects, discipline, and sports tend to produce directly a specific kind of masculinity (1996: 218). The three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity are defined as follows:

(i) *Subordinated masculinity:* This is a form of masculinity which recognizes that there are "specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (1995: 78). Connell positions this relationship primarily in terms of sexuality, stating: "The most important case in contemporary European/American society is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men" (1995:78). While Connell's ideas may be useful in the North, we cannot generalize research findings in other countries assuming that it will be relevant to the South African context. In South Africa for example both black and gay men are subordinated to white hegemonic cultural ideals.

(ii) *Complicit masculinity:* Connell views complicity as including those "masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy" (1995: 79). Men, as a class and regardless of individual difference, collectively hold power over women and some men hold power over other men. Nevertheless, "the patriarchal dividend – the benefits that men accrue,

as a class, in the oppression of women – are thereby not divided equally amongst men, with men who are least empowered attaining very little" (Connell, 1995:148 –149).

(iii) Protest or oppositional masculinity: The term "protest masculinity" describes a form of masculinity that is a characteristic of men in a marginal location of social class, with the masculine claim on power contradicted by economic and social weakness (Connell 1995: 116). Gang culture in this study is identified as a masculine style of masculine protest against the dominant culture of the school. Gang members view the educators, the School Management Team (SMT) and the prefects system as authority symbols or figures against which they can construct their masculine identities for themselves within their gangs. These gang boys challenge the discipline system of the school and are perceived by their peers as tough and confrontational. This disregard and disrespect for the hierarchy of the school wins the admiration of their peers. The masculinity of these gangs is reflected in the frequency of hyper masculine aggressive display (often collective), and violent and minor criminal behaviour.

Connell (1995; 1996) proposes three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity: subordinate, complicit, and marginalized. Sharing Connell's model, Morrell states: "...these were masculinities developed outside corridors of power. Minorities, defined in terms of race, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation, all characteristically understand what being a man means differently from members of the ruling class or elite and from each other too" (Morrell, 2001a: 7). Connell's model permits us to comprehend boys' gang cultures as enacted in the construction of different masculinities within their lived environments. There are many socio-economic factors which impact on a school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. Amaoti is characterised by poor recreational facilities and low levels of economic activity, poor education and high unemployment. Within these contexts it is not surprising that gang cultures and violence are pervasive and are a taken-for-granted phenomenon in the school.

Schools are places where a multiplicity of masculinities are played out (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connolly, 1998; Martino, 1999). There is no one pattern of masculinity that is universal. For instance, in South Africa, some African cultures make heroes of gangs or gangsterism, and regard violence as the ultimate test of masculinity. It is important to note that not all boys and men belong to gangs. In other words, more than one kind of masculinity can be found within a given cultural setting. Some are socially marginalized, for example the masculinities of disempowered African majorities. Masculinity is organized on a macro scale around social power. Boys who are unable to obtain entry to the forms of social power schooling has to offer, then seek alternative means of publicly demonstrating their masculinity, such as through the use of violence or demonstrating sporting prowess (Segal, 1990; Back, 1994). In the next section, relations of race, class and protest masculinity will be explored in an attempt to understand how these are interrelated.

2.2 Race, class and protest masculinity

This section explores the concept in the school under study of what Connell (1995) describes as a kind of 'protest masculinity' (p.109–119) among gang boys who are marginalized in school and are subjected to massive social disadvantage. These boys are economically and socially disadvantaged. Gang membership thus provides an immediate sense of power and control. Race and class play a major role in inscribing masculine identities, ideals and attitudes. As Morrell (2000) asserts, where hegemony is lacking, a 'protest masculinity' may be constructed through defiance of authority, all too familiar in working-class schools. Emerging from this point is a strategy of how boys are expressing rebellious behaviour as a form of masculine protest at being marginalized by the school and the broader social forces. Implicit in the literature is a notion of how African boys can vent their anger and frustration by challenging the school authority figure in gang-violent ways. Gangs of boys are enacting

masculinity that is oppositional to school authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. They are operating from a protest position, which challenges the authority of the school. Its major characteristic is protest against educators as authority figures, girls and other boys.

African gang boys encounter school authority as an alien power and therefore begin to define their masculinity against it. Gangs of African boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity, which exhibits a masculine style of protest against the dominant culture of the school. These boys challenge the day-to-day running of the school by engaging in risky behaviours including truancy, non-completion of tasks and anti-school uniform campaigns. Gang boys act out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. They are **anti-school authority,** **anti-social,** and undisciplined in such a way that they disrespect or disregard their educators and fellow learners alike. They are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, consuming intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with gangs in and/or around the school. Sometimes they act out their toughness by not wearing full school uniform, not doing homework, absenteeism and arriving at school late. Not all boys at NPS subscribe to this form of masculinity. In fact, only a minority group exhibit protest masculinity in ways which disregard, disobey and defy school authority. Other boys who voluntarily subscribe to the school's rules and ethos, find the school authority and its culture appropriate for their schooling. Because gang boys are on the periphery and are constantly being discounted, often stand up and fight or bully others. The anti-social behaviour displayed by these boys appears African schooling bears the marks of apartheid colonialism and capitalism. The pattern of to be a mark of their masculinity.

South education in South Africa reflects strong racial and class bias. In the post-apartheid era, racial imbalances can still be manifested in gender power in which multiple, interweaving power relations are viewed as inherently contested. The learners in African townships are

deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to the past racial imbalances and their legacies. Research has shown that many factors – including gender, race, class, ethicity, sexuality and locality – work to produce different educational outcomes for different students (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Connell 2000).

Africans have experiennced poor housing conditions, limited and racially-biased access to education and training, limited employment opportunities, high levels of crime and violence, and a general breakdown of social systems and communities. In this context, youth see gangs as a means of attaining wealth (Healy, 2000). In the study, factors or character traits including routine involvement in anti-social behaviour, dealing and taking drugs, gang-related crime, risk taking, language (tsotsi-taal) and dress code distinguish gang members from other boys in the school. These boys construct their masculinity by joining gangs partly because they are marginalized from mainstream education. Arguably, the education system that is unequal and favours white schools has left the majority of youth unskilled. Consequently, African youth is grossly unemployed, poorly educated, bored and frustrated; boys particularly learn to use illegal and abusive methods to become powerful. Central to the strategies these boys undertake is what Connell calls oppositional or protest masculinity. The school, through its authoritative power of educators over learners and its hierarchies, always wants to put down this kind of masculinity.

2.3 Masculinity, gangs and schooling in South Africa

Becker (2000), Glaser (1990; 1992; 1998a; 1998b), Mokwena (1991), Parks (1995), Pinnock (1982; 1998) are some of the well-known researchers on youth gangs who have researched on the schooling of the gang boys in Southern Africa.

Both Pinnock (1982) and Glaser (1990) argue that gangs are a form of resistance to the hegemony of the dominant classes. They suggest that gangs rise out of a politically hostile

environment and they are in some senses a response to political domination. Furthermore, they suggest that although gangs are peripheral to the political contest, they have serious implications in the struggle for hegemony. Glaser argues that the tsotsi subculture of the 1950s should be interpreted against the background of the structural marginalisation and impoverishment of black working-class youths on the Reef during that period. In South Africa, the tsotsi subculture, through its value system, style and ritual, aggressively denied hegemonic consensus. The tsotsi values, such as a brazen rejection of law and the glorification of violence, criminality and hedonism were defined in direct antagonism to the consensus value system (Glaser, 1990). According to Glaser (1992: 47), the term, 'tsotsi' described a style of narrow-bottomed trousers which became particularly popular amongst the black urban youth during the 1940s. Tsotsis emerged from the American 'zoot-suits' as well as from the South Sotho word 'ho botsotsa', which means to sharpen – referring to the narrow-bottom pants that the tsotsis like. For the purpose of this thesis, 'tsotsi' refers to boys who are gang members either inside or outside the school site. Their activities include theft, gambling, and substance abuse. Generally, they are undisciplined and assume a posture that is anti-authority within the school and elsewhere. Accounts of tsotsi masculinity in both the Cape Flats and Soweto illuminate that "tsotsis were structurally subordinate in terms of race, class and generation" (Glaser, 1992: 62).

In Glaser's (1998) work on gangs, he analyzes the construction of masculinity and preoccupation with territory in the youth subcultures, pointing out the interdependency of what he refers to as "personal loyalty" between gang members, and the necessity of defending turf. In the gang subcultures he describes, male bonding over the defence of turf is associated with the rape of women, but gang rape victims in the 1950s did not come from the perpetrators' home neighbourhood, since gang rape was viewed as yet another incursion into the territory of the other (p. 724–725). Glaser showed how notions of territoriality were

central to the understanding of masculinity amongst urban youth in the 1960s and how such notions infused the social organisation of gangs and prompted violent rivalry between these gangs (see Morrell. 2001a: xii).

Pinnock (1998) draws on two main factors when explaining the existence of gangs in the Western Cape. Firstly, he refers to forced removals, which began in the 1940s and culminated in the Group Areas Act of 1950, resulting in the creation of the racially segregated area of the Cape Flats. Secondly, as extended families began to disintegrate, the street brotherhood formed a substitute community. The involvement of many youth in gangs therefore lies in socio-political factors: poverty, poor education, broken families and massive urban relocations of people of colour under the Apartheid regime. Mokwena's (1991) work on the "Jackrollers" in Soweto in the late 1980s is a well-known study, which attempts to explain youth gangsterism amongst a specific grouping that were known for abducting and raping young women. They were also known to be involved in car theft and bank robbery. This research suggests that youth gangs in Soweto exist because of family instability, the education crisis, economic deprivation, political turmoil and the destruction of a civic culture. The research indicates that the jackrolling gangs are survivalist, violent and macho. Their survivalist approach is related to "huge material problems" which result in several means of "getting by" (Mokwena 1991:6), which may or may not be criminal.

The sexual violence against women that jackrollers engaged in is understood in terms of "attempts by young males to reassert their power through a distorted masculine sexuality" (op cit: 12). Mokwena argues that this reassertion of power occurs because South African racism served to impose an inferiority complex on blacks, which was often experienced as emasculation by males. Part of this inferiority was linked to unemployment which was on the increase at the time of the formation of the jackrollers. Mokwena's argument is important in

highlighting the gendered relationships and understanding of gang formation and practice. Similarly, unemployment rate has been escalating in the last decade at Amaoti.

Glaser (1998) points out that youth gangs were likely to emerge in any urban environment which included a substantial number of poor city-bred youth with limited employment possibilities and deprived of housing, schooling and recreation facilities (p.720). These conditions had serious implications for young African boys resulting in them seeking employment in the taxi industry, such as washing taxis or collecting taxi fares. The African boys' socio-economic status not only harms or robs them of their schooling opportunities, but also exposes boys to gang members. Nevertheless, if we can learn more about what influences adolescent to join gangs we can decrease violence, juvenile crime, and the risk of harm to boys involved in gangs.

2.4 Gangs, violence and schooling in South Africa

Xaba (1997) and Morrell (1998) both argue that in townships violence has become such an accepted part of student masculinity that it explains most high [and primary] school student involvement in violent crime. In particular, gang membership is a way for boys to gain esteem and power among peers while also finding a sense of belonging and acceptance (Segal, 1999). The construction of masculinities in multidimensional forms, such as gang activities which are sanctioned by community or society, has a bearing on why boys perform their masculinity in these ways and how it advances gender inequalities and violence.

According to the Human Rights Watch (2001) schools are supposed to be safe havens where education and learning can flourish. However, schools in South Africa have become sites of violence. I share Morrell's (1998) view that violence is not only imported into schools, it is hatched there too. Schools are essentially authoritarian institutions with power firmly in the hands of educators, with little learner participation. Schools are also profoundly

patriarchal with female learners at the bottom of hierarchy. This problem engenders authoritarian attitudes, stereotyping of all kinds including racism, and encourages boys to feel superior to girls. It is noteworthy in this context that African schools are often patriarchal and female students experience sexual harassment by male teachers, boys, and gangs when walking to and from school (Griggs, 1997; Harber, 1998). Patriarchal ideologies instil in the minds of many males that females are their territory for sexual abuse. A Durban-based study (Griggs, 1997) showed that the situation of schools in disadvantaged areas often leads to the presence of gangs within the school grounds. This causes direct violence (assaults, rapes and even murder), disrupts schooling, and attracts school children to gangs and becomes surrogate criminals.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature reviewed has highlighted the specific association between masculinity, gangs, violence and schooling. In an attempt to establish the causes of boys' involvement in gangs, this chapter has drawn from masculinity studies. The question of masculinity is raised as one of the causes of why boys enact their masculinities through violence. It cannot only be agreed by simple reference to external structural determinants such as poverty, low socio-economic status and high levels of unemployment amongst Africans, and with men's (and boys') investment in constructions of masculinity. However, we cannot dismiss the fact that poverty, low socio-economic status and high levels of unemployment correlate with the increase of gang formation, particularly in African townships/informal settlements.

The literature suggests that masculinity is implicated in gender inequalities and that notions of masculinity are changing to suggest new ways of being a 'real man or boy' for school gangs and boys. "Acting tough" by being rebellious against their educators' authority is a way of retaliation and earns them honour and prestige among their companions. African

boys trapped in such conditions may construct protest/oppositional masculinity in defiance of educators' negative attitude towards them. These and many other enactments of masculinities may have serious implications on boys' schooling. This not only presents confrontational situations between educators and learners, but also erodes the culture of teaching and learning at school.

There is a clear connection between violence, gangs and masculinities. Increasing attention is being focused on gangs and their contribution to South Africa's violence-ridden society. The literature reviewed has presented Connell's four typologies of masculinities: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and protest/oppositional as a lens through which different masculine identities are shaped, negotiated and constructed within the school site. For example, boys may create a sense of togetherness which Mac an Ghaill (1994: 56) describe as "sticking together". Here sticking together is accomplished through boys' involvement with gangs. To achieve a sense of belonging African boys use gang membership to gain access to power and prestige which a gang provides. Gangs are validated to the phenomenon of belonging to the peer group. In this regard, some boys conform or comply and join a gang in order to be accepted as 'real boys' and later as 'real men'.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The research project was undertaken at Nhlonipho Primary School in Amaoti, an informal settlement in the Inanda District near Phoenix, north of Durban. The key issues of investigation in this research project revolve around the questions: How are masculinities played out within gangs of boys at Nhlonipho Primary School? How do gang members perform their masculinities? How are these masculinities shaped, constrained or enabled by gang cultures within the school? How do issues of race and class impact on the making of young gang cultures? To answer these questions, I collected data by observing and interviewing a group of ten African boys. The boys were interviewed individually in an endeavour to elicit information about the performance of masculinity in gangs. The target group for this study were grade seven boys ranging between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

This research was conducted using qualitative methods that primarily include observations and unstructured interviews. The researcher carried out observation and interviews with African boys who are members of gangs. The main focus was on the construction of their masculinities, examining specifically violent forms of masculinity over a period of eight months.

3.1 Research site

The research project was conducted in an historically disadvantaged informal settlement primary school in Inanda. It is an exclusively African co-educational school. Apartheid education was such that quality education could not be obtained because the school was

under-resourced. The school lacks basic essential requirements such as toilets, chairs, tables, and fencing. It serves an historically disadvantaged community where there are high levels of unemployment, poverty, violence and substance abuse. The school has been operating in 'zinc pozzi huts' (see photographs, Appendix II). These 'zinc pozzi huts' are temporary structures made of corrugated iron sheets that the school has used as both administration offices and classrooms since 1993.

Lack of housing, linked to unemployment and worsening poverty in South Africa, has left some people with no option but to erect houses on vacant sites. Inanda District is no exception. Amaoti, which is part of Inanda is a peri-urban community that until the 1970s – in local people's memory – retained many idyllic rural features. The people of Amaoti coexisted peacefully with Indian sugar-cane-growers who represented the majority of landlords in Inanda. The entire area of Inanda has a history of political and community violence, which continues to shape perceptions of safety. After the new South African democratic nation was established in 1994, promises were made by the new government to create infrastructure in the Inanda area including the building of a primary school to replace the current temporary structures. Since its inception in January 1993, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has made but not kept several promises to erect proper resources such as a school hall, classrooms, administration offices, a staff room, and toilets.

This school was chosen because it was convenient for the researcher to conduct this study. The observation schedule and the interview processes fitted his teaching schedule. As deputy principal in the school under study he enjoys pre-existing relationships with staff, and was thus able to gain easy access to the respondents. However, the fact that he was a known observer/researcher and a permanent member of the School Management Team (SMT) meant that respondents were apprehensive about providing sensitive details to the interviewer.

The researcher has been a teacher at the school under study since 1994, nine years of which have been as deputy principal. He is extremely aware that behavioural problems pertaining to boys, in particular, are a cause of great distress for many educators. He has uninterrupted access to the school site and the learners, and the freedom of school life in general. During the study he was able to move around during playground and classroom activities to observe how the patterns of protest/oppositional masculinity within a school gang culture are constructed. One of his responsibilities as SMT member is the social welfare of learners. He has developed the love, skills and traits necessary in this field, and has been entrusted with the counselling and pastoral care of the learners. He has encountered many problems including disrespect for educators and other learners, disruptive behaviours and competitive aggression. In the broader context, he has noticed that educators have little or no understanding of the issues around masculinities and are blind to how boys at the school under study hurt themselves and others in the performance of particular kinds of masculinities. The findings of this research project will therefore directly benefit the school. It is hoped that educators will gain some insight into the problems and solutions that are addressed in the study; thus offering them new strategies for dealing with the problems and issues brought forward.

The researcher chose not to conduct interviews in his office. He felt that learners in general (especially boys) perceived his office as an authoritative arena where the school's Code of Conduct is reinforced and maintained. Thus, an unfavourable atmosphere would be created inhibiting or limiting boys' freedom and flexibility during interview discussions. The key respondents were informed of meeting times although observation of learners took place unannounced during playground activities as well as in the classroom.

3.2 The sample size and sampling procedure

The researcher chose a purposive sampling in which a sample of ten African boys was selected as the core group from whom information was gathered for this research project. "In

purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 103). Given the sensitivity of issues to be investigated, the ten boys were chosen to solicit "rich" data. Thus, this research project employed a small sample in an attempt to provide rich, descriptive data about the contexts, activities, and beliefs of gang cultures. In addition, a non-random sample was used to allow the researcher to obtain manageable data from a small target group of boys and "this is frequently the case for some ethnographic research" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 102). Thus, the targeted group of boys was selected from grade seven classes only. It was hoped the sample would enrich and deepen the researcher's understanding of why boys perform their masculinities in violent forms. The ten boys sampled were key informants in understanding the construction of masculinities within gang cultures in the school context. Cohen, et al. (2000) assert that in a qualitative style of research it is most likely that the sample size will be small. Through conversations with fellow educators the researcher was able to identify boys who are gang members at NPS. The school's disciplinary record book also showed repetitive behavioural problems amongst these boys. This information was valuable to the researcher in the selection of the ten key informants for this study. A brief biography of the ten boys interviewed and a list of gangs that operate inside and outside the school is provided below.

Biography of the Ten Boys (Respondents) Interviewed

Joe: is aged 15 years and is associated with the *Amajimbosi* gang. He was found in possession of marijuana which he sells and smokes. He lives with both his parents. His parents are unemployed, but sell brooms in the neighbourhood to earn a living.

S'gi: is a 16-year-old boy who was once arrested on charges of assault against a 15-year-old girl. He is an orphan but lives with his grandmother. S'gi, who is repeating the

seventh grade has three siblings (one brother and two sisters). They all survive on their grandmother's state pension. He belongs to a gang called *Izintandane.*

Bershy: is 16 years old and is a repeater in the grade seven class. He lives with his father, aunt, three uncles and his younger brother (who is in grade four at the school under study). His father is an alcoholic and is unemployed. His aunt collects a state grant for the boys but she abuses the grant money for her personal needs. He is the *Izintandane* gang member.

Solo: is a 14-year-old boy who was once with the outside gang called 'Congo'. He lives with his mother and two brothers. The older brother dropped out of school in grade ten and he now works as a taxi conductor at a local taxi association. Solo's younger brother is enrolled in the grade two class at NPS. His mother survives on casual jobs she gets from the Indian households, which supplements the sick pension she receives from TAFTA. Solo's father is still alive but is separated from his mother. He seldom visits his children and does not pay maintenance. At NPS, Solo is associated with a gang known as *The Bafanas.*

Darkie: is 15 years old, drinks alcohol and smokes dagga. He lives with his mother, a sister and a brother. His mother is an alcoholic and is unemployed. His older brother is a school drop out who also smokes dagga and drinks alcohol. Darkie belongs to a gang called *Amajimbosi.*

Jomo: is a 16-year-old boy and is associated with the *Izintandane* gang. He drinks alcohol, especially on school trips. He lives with both parents and his younger brother. His mother is unemployed whilst his father is employed as a plumber at the Durban

Municipality Water Department. His parents have been summoned to school for Jomo's truancy and other behaviour problems and they are very supportive of their son's schooling.

Bhele: is 14 years old and is a member of *The Bafanas* gang. He is notorious for swearing at other boys and girls. He is involved in writing insults in the form of graffiti. He lives with his father and stepmother. His father is employed as plumber and is very supportive of his schooling.

Ganda: is a 13 year-old boy. He lives with his mother who is unemployed. He was once found in possession of a gun at the school. The *Amajimbosi* gang provides a sense of belonging for Ganda.

Saddam: is 16 years old and is the *Amajimbosi* gang member. He dropped out of school in the middle of 2003, i.e. before the completion of this study. He smokes tobacco and dagga, and drinks alcohol. He lives with his mother and stepfather (both also drink alcohol) and three sisters.

S'gaxa: is a 12-year-old boy who lives with his mother and two brothers. His mother is employed but lowly paid. She is very supportive of S'gaxa's schooling. His father passed away about two years ago. He is associated with *The Bafanas* gang.

Note: Pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of the respondents. The researcher has identified gangs that operated both inside and outside the school site and their lists are provided as follows:

Gangs inside the school	Gangs outside the school
Amajimbosi	Congo
The Bafanas	Lusaka
Izintandane	

The ten boys in the sample live in economic and social distress. Some have access to electricity whilst others do not, depending on their economic circumstances at home. Most parents/guardians can hardly afford R90 school fees per annum. Approximately 60% of all learners at NPS are identified late in the year for failing to pay school fees. In 1996 corporal punishment was outlawed and the school instituted a policy on alternatives to corporal punishment. In this context, learners became unruly, disobedient and lost respect for educators at the school and elsewhere.

3.3 The respondents

This study focuses on grade seven boys ranging between the ages of 12 and 16 years. The researcher chose grade seven boys because gang cultures are more evident in grade seven – based on the boys' physicality, size, and age in the school. Furthermore, adolescence is an interesting period for teenage boys whose masculinity is put under immense pressure. Schooling is an important arena of power where masculinities are enacted in various forms including violent masculinities. Bhana (2002), Morrell (2001), Connell (1995), and Mac an Ghaill (1998) corroborate this claim and show that masculinities and femininities are enacted through dynamic processes of contestation, refusal and appropriation. The boys' ages range from 12 to 16 due to various factors including truancy, failing classes, relocation from rural areas, gangs' activities and late admission to school. These factors explain why some of these boys started school late.

According to Glaser (1990) a 'tsotsi' is a criminal gang member. For the purpose of this thesis, 'tsotsi' refers to boys who are involved in gang activities either inside or outside (i.e.

informers linked to outside gangs) the school site. These activities include theft, gambling, and substance abuse, and can lead to learners dropping out of school. Generally, they disrespect and disregard their school authorities by assuming a posture that is anti-authority within the school and elsewhere.

Through conversations with educators, especially 2002 grade six educators in the school, the researcher was able to identify boys who are suspected to be involved in gang activities or have links with the gangs in the local community. It was intended that the small sample would be reflective of the larger body of learners, thereby affording the researcher an opportunity to elicit more in-depth information from the group. By reducing the larger population to a group of ten, it is the researcher's belief that privileged and rich data would be accessible. Because of time constraints, dealing with the smaller sample allowed the researcher to access relevant information which was likely to provide greater understanding of a concept of research interest. The focus group discussions during interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy in reporting data gathered. Care was taken to note the sensitivity and confidentiality of the content of the interviews in this study. Once the sampling procedure was completed (i.e. identifying the respondents), letters requesting permission to interview boys were sent out to parents/guardians in order to get their approval and thereby meet ethical requirements (see letter sample, Appendix III). Research respondents were given consent forms to be signed by their parents/guardians. Because of the good relationship with parents/guardians of the school, gaining access to the sample did not constitute a problem. Most parents/guardians (i.e. 10 out 15) granted the researcher a permission to conduct interviews with the boys.

All respondents are currently enrolled in the school under study (except for Saddam who dropped out of school in the middle of 2003) and were selected as the key informants of this research project. The selected group were the key informants or the target group for the

interviews conducted in isiZulu by the researcher. The boys were comfortable using isiZulu as a communicative tool for this is their mother-tongue or first language. The use of isiZulu ensured maximum communication levels between the researcher and the informants during the interview discussions. They were tape-recorded, translated and transcribed into English. Data collected was then analysed using standard qualitative techniques. These techniques include identifying the key issues, themes and patterns associated with the research questions. In qualitative research the process of data collection and data analysis go hand-in-hand. As data was being collected the researcher attempted to identify themes and patterns that would assist further data collection, and sort the information into categories to get ideas for presentation. The researcher carried out observation and interviews with the respondents. The objectives of the study were to develop in-depth understandings, from the perspectives of gang boys.

The researcher also gave detailed information as to the nature of the study so that the respondents could explain the research process to their parents. The respondents were informed that they were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw from the study provided they gave sound reason(s) for so doing. Each boy was treated with respect and concern for his well-being. The name of school and that of the respondents were kept anonymous. All information was treated confidentially.

3.4 Research design and methodology

This research adopted an ethnographic stance that tends to be more fluid, in depth and longitudinal than other varieties of research. This section describes how ethnographic methods were used in order to understand the life experiences of African boys within gang cultures. The specific design considered in this thesis was ethnographic, which tends to be more descriptive, generative, inductive, constructive, and subjective than other varieties of research (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). For the researcher it was a question of finding the

most appropriate way to get good data during the months prior to the interviews. He chose to be an observer in the classroom, to see the learners in their 'normal' classroom settings, and to see them as learners rather than as research respondents.

Interviews, observations, conversations, and the analysis of school disciplinary documents were used to collect and analyse data, in order to understand and explain the construction of masculinities within gang culture at school. This section will describe the approach which the researcher used to collect the data that will be analysed later.

3.4.1 Observation

The secondary method for this research project was that of observation. Observation of the gang boys within the school context added useful insight and data to the study. "Observation methods are powerful tools for gaining insight into situations" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 315). There are two types of observation: participant and non-participant. In the former the researcher participates in the activity being researched whereas in the latter the researcher is a non-participant observer. The researcher chose to be a non-participant observer because he could not participate as a gang member. He considered this option in order to protect his position as deputy principal in the school under study. Thus, the success of this method of data gathering depended heavily on the researcher's ability to determine ongoing behaviour as it occurred. Observing the interactions amongst boys and between boys and girls offered the researcher the best advantage to assess what was really going on in the classroom and during playground activities.

Data captured during observation of boys' experiences or behaviours were complemented by unstructured interviews which focused on the construction of masculinities of boys within gang cultures at school. The researcher noted or recorded the interactions of the boys both in the classroom and on the playground. The observation of character traits of gangs and interact

in masculinity began when the researcher started taking University courses on the subject matter in February 2002. This observation lasted throughout the research project; however, during the months of March and April 2003, a focused and purposeful observation took place in the school under study.

During this study the researcher as an observer jotted down notes on incidents pertinent to the research. Note-taking occurred immediately after observations had taken place. Note-taking was thus a way of documenting the research. In an attempt to compile a report of accounts, making of field notes complemented observation processes of respondents in this study.

3.4.2 Interviews

The researcher also chose unstructured interviews as a tool of collecting data. Informants were interviewed a number of times, using information from previous informants to elicit clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. This process was intended to reveal common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study. The advantage of an interview is that it involves a one-on-one verbal interaction between the researcher and a respondent. An interview enables the researcher to ask respondent(s) to clarify unclear answers and a follow up can be made on interesting answers. Kvale (1996: 1) describes the purpose of an interview:

> "In an interview conversation, the researcher listens to what people themselves tell about their lived world, hears them express their views and opinions in their own words, learns about their views on their work situation and family life, their dreams and hopes. The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations".

This falls in line with the purpose of this study – to learn and understand more about the boys' experiences and membership of a particular kind of masculinity. The unstructured, open-ended interviews were primarily undertaken during the months of May and June 2003 between 13:30 and 14:30, from Monday to Thursday. In addition, conversations with educators and learners took place throughout the research project. Data captured was jotted down and later in the evenings was organized into a report. Sometimes information collected from the target group was tape-recorded in order to be transcribed later using ethnographic techniques.

3.5 Limitations of the study

Although the researcher was employed as deputy principal in the school chosen as the research site, this proved to have numerous advantages and shortcomings as well. A number of limitations impinged on the study but steps were taken where possible to minimize their effects. In this study, the first three key informants who were likely gang members dropped-out of school at the beginning of the research processes in May 2003. However, attempts were made to find replacements for them and these proved to be successful.

Time available for the study was the most severe constraint. This not only meant that the time span in which the thesis could be completed was limited, but the balancing of the demands of the research with his work commitments meant that he was unable to devote sufficient time to the study. However, he did observe approximately 80 per cent of all the sessions of research processes during the months of March and April 2003.

In an attempt to let boys speak of their world, individual interviews were conducted with the grade seven teenage boys, some of whom had been in gangs or were still involved in gang activities in the community and had actually committed crime at some stage in their lives.

Their regular absenteeism from school is manifest in their poor academic achievement in the classroom.

The researcher's imposing size and the position of authority he holds in the school may have intimidated the boys, but this problem was minimised by being friendly with the key informants. To achieve this, he communicated with the boys in the tsotsi-taal, which made them feel very comfortable and sometimes, and to some extent, they forgot about the research processes.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter extended the context provided by the literature review. The major areas of investigation in this research project, which revolve around key questions, were provided. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to present a research design and methodology, highlighting the effects of violent masculinities within gang cultures at NPS. Describing the methods of data collection, the focus has been on how boys relate to each other, to girls, to educators and to the curriculum. Also presented is the rationale for the inclusion of participant observation, interviews and conversations as techniques used to capture data for this thesis. Integrating research design with the underlying theoretical framework and research questions proved to be worthwhile. Lastly, the limitations of this study were identified and how these were minimised and overcome by the researcher to achieve both validity and reliability was discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4. Introduction

This chapter presents major findings and statement of results, which this research project captured. Data obtained from observations and interviews will be analysed. The study investigated the ways in which boys who are gang members construct their masculinity. The results have been divided or arranged into various themes. Firstly, boys' constructions of their masculinities within gang cultures at the school were explored. Secondly, the interrelatedness between violence, gangs and masculinities in the classroom and playground arenas was examined. Thirdly, the question of how violent (gang) masculinity is bound up in issues of race/ethnicity and class impact on the making of young gang cultures was also explored.

4.1 Hegemonic masculinity and gangs

This section considers the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and gangs. The school is characterised not only by dominance, but also its authoritative power directed towards learners, particularly boys who display anti-social behaviour. Boys in gangs who demonstrate improper anti-hegemonic conduct are particularly prone to punishment and mistreatment from educators. Such boys band together against hegemonic forms of masculinity and against educator's authority. These boys are characterised by aggressive territoriality and assertiveness. As *Ganda, a gang boy told the researcher:

> "We [gang members] hate anyone who is close or gets closer to educators.
> **'Bayasidayisa'** (They [learners] 're sell outs)".

Gang members thus construct boys who voluntarily comply with the school's rules and ethos as "sell outs". Getting closer to the educators for these boys invites trouble from gangs. In

another encounter, S'gi states how he dislikes boys who form part of the school prefect system. S'gi perceives prefects as 'sell outs' who keeps an eye or are 'watchdogs' for the school authorities that are meant to disclose gangs' activities within the school:

> "You 're being watched wherever you go because these watchdogs or sell outs are found everywhere. If seen doing the wrong thing, they 'll definitely tell educators. You can't keep secret. This can spell out trouble".

The boys who are in gangs develop hatred and dislike for the boys who are associated with the school's authoritative power and begin to define their masculinity against them. Gang boys perceive boys who are school prefects as a threat to their secret activities. Prefects and other boys who co-operate with educators, in gang boys' view display hegemony which is the dominant culture of the school. At NPS gang culture is marginalized and gang members constantly challenge the hegemonic discourses of the dominant, and it aids understanding the social and cultural meaning of these marginalized groups. Educators, prefects, and other learners negate violent, aggressive, and unruly behaviour performed by gang members. The gang boys thus enact protest masculinity to rebel against educators, prefects, and other learners.

4.2 Violence, masculinities and schooling at NPS

The 'Amajimbosi' (referring to the notorious boys in the gang, namely: Joe, Darkie, Ganda and Saddam) is the most anti-school sub-culture at NPS. They are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with the gangs that are outside the school. Amajimbosi acts out their toughness by truanting, not wearing uniform, not doing homework, absenteeism and arriving at school late. The boys of Amajimbosi use the school as a key site for marijuana (dagga) trafficking. The Amajimbosi

use their low-income status as the cause to earn their living through illegal activities, such as drug dealing (mainly dagga), stealing, and housebreaking.

Joe, aged 15, came late to school with a fresh smell of dagga. When asked about the abuse of dagga, he cited his friends as being influential in his decision to smoke dagga. He was searched and found to be in possession of dagga.

In the interview with Joe, when asked about the marijuana possession he confessed that:

> "Bra Mzi in the neighbourhood asked me 'push the stuff' (sell) ... and this will earn me a pocket money or pay school fees. He told me that police [officers] won't arrest me. I'm still young ... they [gangs] persuaded me to smoke dagga so that I could fight the cold and slightly rainy weather..."

Boys in gangs are vulnerable to anti-social behaviour. In dealing and smoking dagga, Joe is caught between the structural conditions which make dealing attractive, but also peer influence and his agency in the actual smoking of dagga.

Join them or fight against them

Bershy's entry into a gang through threats and intimidation is just one example of the methods gangs use to recruit. Often membership is involuntary. Gangs intimidate boys in school hallways, or to and from school, offering them a harsh choice. Gangs are, in effect, strategically constructing and reconstructing a discourse that provides gang members with two essential elements for group identity: a terrifying threat and a heroic masculinity. This is validated in the interview with Bershy:

> "I was carrying my schoolbag home and then going onto the streets. Hanging out was exciting, fun. It was basically drinking and fighting, but I was in school, getting good marks".

"It's either you join them [gang] or you are against them, they usually ask you for your lunch or pocket money and sometimes they'll demand that you do their homework with intimidation".

Isitabani: fight to death

The association with femininity for gang members not only perceived as demeaning and degrading, but also alienates them from the acceptable patterns or forms of masculinity. Boys who are perceived as homosexuals (gays) are punished and ridiculed. Masculine mockery, including name-calling, jokes and teasing, positions and re-positions each other in hierarchies of power and status. In protest of being equated with femininity, gang boys often resort to violence and are prepared to fight to death. Violence is key:

"If anyone called me "isitabani", they wouldn't be speaking to me alone. They must know I have "The Bafanas" who'll teach him a lesson ..."Amadloz' akhe ayob'emfulathele" (His ancestors would have turned their back on him). Never, I can fight to death instead".

Interview with Solo, June 2003.

Some boys act out their masculinity in accordance with gang members if they are perceived to be effeminate. By engaging in this form of protest masculinity (gang activity) they are attempting to escape a perceived subordinated or marginalized masculinity (homosexuality).

"Under my mother's skirts"

At NPS the problem of school gangs is compelling, and takes aggressive forms. *S'gi*, who is 16 years old, was once arrested on charges of assault against a 15-year-old girl. He assaulted this girl for insulting remarks about the relationship with his mother:

Researcher : Where were you for the past three days?

S'gi   : Eish ... Sir I was ... (silence) arrested by police [officers]

Researcher : Why?

S'gi   : I hit this girl … (as if she sees her) for calling me "under my mother's skirts" [a mother fucker] as she was attacking me … then I hit her first … I warned her that "ngizokufaka unyawo" (I 'll kick you) if you continue like this, but she did not listen.

Researcher: Do you think you did the right thing?

S'gi   : I beat her because I am the man [boy]. She must understand that I am the man [boy]. I am the boss.

Interview excerpt, S'gi.

"Under my mother's skirts" is constructed as an insult to the violent (gang) masculinity. S'gi's masculinity has the exaggerated quality of masculine protest in which violence is employed as a compensation for perceived weakness. Connell (1995) views this protest masculinity as a social, rather than individual, practice. The insult questions a boy's status and the association with mother is seen as derogatory and belittling. In the classroom, corridors as well as playground arenas gang boys reject being assimilated to femininity and resort to violence as a means to gain power, prestige and a sense of superiority. In this context, gang membership becomes a means through which S'gi enacts violence and aggression directed towards other learners, in particular the girls, in order to establish a respected male identity within the less empowered form of protest masculinity. The incidents of hitting or fighting others are not always noticed but this kind of misconduct is often framed within the logic of blaming the boys without an understanding of the context of violent masculinities.

Bullying Brat

Bullying or fighting was an important means of testing, changing or confirming protest masculinity amongst gang boys. As Bershy claimed in an interview:

"I have mates, "impintshi" [a gang] behind me if a fight occurs on my way to and from school in the neighbourhood … I can defend myself and … no one messes with me and get away unpunished".

It seemed important for Bershy that he had a gang behind him for defence, support and protection. Gangs of boys at NPS function to defend and provide collective support for an aggressive masculinity. The expression of an aggressive masculinity was integral to the gang boys' identity. Unequal gender power relations influence how these gang boys think and solve problems. Using bullying, threats and violence is a key to maintaining patterns that have come to be associated with gangs. Young boys in gangs work in ways that protect their "turf" and this must be taken into account in understanding the persistence of gang cultures at the school. Connell's (1995) use of protest masculinity permits us not only to recognize, but also to comprehend boy's gang cultures as enacted in the construction of different masculinities within the lived environments. Gang membership provides gang boys with bravery to reject and challenge anyone moving into their territory through violence. Solo, a boy aged 14 recounts how warfare broke out between his gang (The Bafanas) of a predominantly isiZulu-speaking and the isiXhosa-speaking gang called "Izintandane". In protest of what The Bafanas regards as their turf (KZN), this gang resorted to violence. He stated that a lot of ethnically motivated fighting or bullying occurred at his school. The fight went on:

> "between "The Bafanas" (Solo's group) and the other group of "Izintandane". One day everyone was on their way home and one of the "The Bafanas" gang boys pulled out an "isiphula" (a dangerous home-made knife) and there ended up being warfare from then on".

Clearly, the quest for dominance and recognition is part of gang culture. Violence between the gangs is actually a fight for recognition, prestige, and power.

Another instance of violent masculinity is articulated by 16-year-old Bershy:

> **Researcher:** Why did you fight (bully) him?
> **Bershy** : Sir, he is insulting by calling me "leli-Mpondo" ...and even if I report him they [educators] won't do anything about it.
> **Researcher:** Aha, and then?

> **Bershy**   : I knew other boys will laugh at me (shaking his head) and think that I 'm
> coward – like 'mama's boy…

The control of space and the symbolism of territoriality play important roles in the securing of [turf] and to masculine potency (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Amaoti is regarded as predominantly isiZulu-speaking group territory in which non-isiZulu-speaking groups are discounted. It is in this context that bullying may erupt into violent acts and their causations can be traced in incidents around issues of ethnic-related insults, such as, "leNzule" (isiZulu-speaking person), "lomXhosa" (isiXhosa-speaking person', "Ikwerekwere" (xenophobic insult for Africans who are non-South Africans). A gang loyalty can also be achieved in terms of an ethnic grouping or class.

Most explanations given for why the boys became involved in gang cultures, related to circumstances of their poverty as the motive. For example, Darkie, aged 15 years, explains:

> "They [gangs] come from poor families in the ghetto… I can't afford school fees. So I decided to hang out with them …we break into houses [in the neighbourhood] and steal from people especially with tuckshops. Now, I don't like doing that anymore, but I want to make a living and enjoy gang life".
>
> Interview with Darkie, June 2003.

Darkie confirms poverty as a motive for hanging out with gangs but he "want(s) to make a living and enjoy gang life" explains why the reaction against social and economic disparities often takes on a violent edge. The underlying factor is also boys' investment in constructions of masculinity.

Ulova and Ibhari Boys

Ulova is a violent Africanised urban style, a thuggish male gang member who risks being at wrong end of school's authority. On the other hand, Ibhari is associated with a rural foolish

boy. In protest of being equated with Ibhari boys, Ulova's dress sense and wearing the right forms of clothes provided gang boys with a sense of power and prestige:

> **Joe:** "We get so much pressure to wear the right brand name clothes – grey pants like 'dickies' and 'collies'. People who can't, they are isolated, they are criticised for not being like '*Ulova*' (clever and stylish boy), but '*Ibhari*' (a foolish and non-violent boy)".

Being "clever" and stylish reflect, "young ghettoised males [who] had a real chance of acquiring prestige" (Glaser, 2000: 71) through gangs. Whilst violence and anti-social behaviour in general were key to the construction of protest masculinity, dress codes were also important. Ulova masculinity was asserted through a dress code for gangs in order to gain peer approval. The categorization of other boys as "Ibhari" promotes the idea in which these boys are perceived as something completely opposite, alien, and inferior. Ibhari, is associated with rural life, which is rejected in gangs' urban life and dress style. Nevertheless, Ibhari's life-style is compatible with the school's ethos. Ibhari boys are liked and favoured by most educators because they are always up-to-date with their schoolwork. Ibhari boys' compatibility with school life alienates them from Ulova boys. Ulova is protest masculinity. Ulova boys dislike Ibhari boys because they do not engage in violent gang cultures and they are potential targets of violent acts such as bullying, fighting and other forms of persecution. In South Africa discourses of masculinity which invoke violence of or the ability to enjoy ...[gang life] to demonstrate being a "real men [or boy]" are common place (Morrell, 2000). The dominant discourses within the context of unequal social relations at NPS put pressure on boys to adopt brand name clothing. Within NPS and within the context of gangs, dress code becomes an instance through which masculinity is practiced.

4.3 Relationship with educators

The gang members believed that they were perceived through the confines of stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices as "osikhotheni" (school drop-out gangs) and gang-bangers, and they were not being valued as individuals. For example, Saddam when interrogated about stealing money from his class-teacher's purse in deputy principal's office; he initially cited his poor family background and living with the stepfather as the strongest influence on his decision to steal. In fact, this was not the only reason. Saddam had developed hatred against his teacher for repeated name-calling incidents as "usikhotheni" (refers to a school drop out boy). Earlier in this chapter, educator's complicit masculinity in sustaining and reproducing protest masculinity was highlighted.

> **Researcher:** What were some of the things that you did at school?
>
> **Saddam** : Swear at some educators, don't do my classwork or homework ...and make a noise in class.
>
> **Darkie** : Come late to school. Just never go to school ... nobody cares at all.
>
> **Solo** : Don't wear school uniform... I like to be in style, say wear 'real gear' (meaning name-branded clothes). Sometimes bunk classes...just to draw educators' attention.
>
> **Researcher:** What made you do all these things?
>
> **Saddam** : Whenever we start speaking they [educators] say, 'quiet who told you to speak?' [everyone laughing]

The silencing and verbal abuse of boys such as Saddam increased their exclusion. In this context boys turned to each for support and formed a tight-knit, exclusive peer group, which provided them with an alternative cultural identity (Mokwena, 1991: 15–16). In fact school is often seen as a hostile environment and educators are complicit in making schools hostile to young boys like Saddam. While it is not clear why Saddam dropped out of school, the fact that he did does confirm the incompatibility of school life.

Bhele, aged 14 years old, said in his interview:

"They [educators] think that most of us [informal settlement boys] are in gangs, and try to put us down by calling us 'osikhotheni' or 'umngengana' (gang)".

The humiliation and ridicule of these boys at being called "osikhotheni" or "umngengana" by some educators at NPS is a daily occurrence. Although the educators are simply speaking the truth, their utterances marginalize and exclude gang members from the majority of boys in the school.

All the key informants, when asked about the learning areas (LAs) or subjects they disliked, unanimously pointed to Technology, which Miss Z offers, as the LA in grade seven classes. When probed with questions regarding their antagonism to this particular educator, all the participants said: "Uyaphoxa... uluhlaza", meaning she is humiliating, degrading and rude. Things turned nasty one Monday when she found the table and chalkboard in her classroom engraved with graffiti, which reads as follows: "Miss Z, fuck you! Lento embi" (you ugly thing/bitch). Gang boys created a sense of togetherness that Mac an Ghaill (1994: 56) describe as "sticking together". Here sticking together is accomplished through violent swearing and insult, which evoked gross vulgarity and extreme provocation. The hidden meaning of this expression refers to one's mother private parts. The use of such hauntingly aggressive terms and expressions – invariably carrying with them threats of gendered violence – often led to fistfights, stabbings, and sometimes shootings and can be understood in terms of turf protection, male bonding and interdependency among gang members. It is important to note that teachers are thus complicit in the perpetuation of protest masculinity.

Violence and gang boys

Violent associated with gangs' culture not only harms the victims but it also exposes gang members to risk of injury, imprisonment, and death. The complexity of boys' gang culture is

further exacerbated in boys' construction of masculinities. For instance, a 'protest masculinity' can be constructed through defiance of authority – a strategy these boys use to express their rebellious behaviour of being marginalized by the school. The pervasiveness of violent gang masculinities were illustrated in the interview with Ganda, a 13-year-old boy. He recounted an incident in which swearing, threatening, intimidating and stabbing among gang boys was an everyday experience. The threatening words: "Ngizokugwaza" (I'll stab you) and "Ngizokusakaza ngenhlamvu" (I'll shoot you) resonate boys' everyday life experiences where extreme violence is taken up as an appropriate means to exercise power.

> "You can stab someone with a knife or a screwdriver. Sometimes you shoot a person with a gun. It's like you're having fun and your friends are thrilled about it. The next thing you score points and be like a hero".
>
> Interview with S'gaxa, May 2003.

> "If you need money or something, you don't have to ask your mom or dad for it. You just rob the stupid or younger boys and girls in the classroom. '**Bazothula du**' (emphasis) – meaning they'll shut up. If they dare report to a teacher, they'll be asking for trouble from amajitha (a gang) after school".
>
> Interview with Bhele, May 2003.

Breaking rules and regulations of the school is just one example of the strategies gangs use to challenge the authority figures and the day-to-day running of the school.

4.4 Relations with other boys

In order to demonstrate how gang boys relate with other boys in the school, the researcher will draw from an account by Zama, who was bullied on his way home from school. Zama does not belong to a gang. He was very worried, withdrawn and frightened when he could not afford to pay the so-called 'protection fee' that the bullies were demanding from him. Zama

was coerced to steal money from his father's tuck shop in order to pay a 'protection fee'. The perpetrators were a gang of about five boys under the leadership of 16-year-old Saddam, who had tried to 'tighten screws' by placing a knife on Zama's chest for failing to pay the gang's demanded amount on time. Noticeable, is how Saddam uses the gang structure to exert some form of power on a powerless boy as a way of proving his masculinity.

Drawing from the field notes, a gang inside the school known as 'Amajimbosi' had threatened to kill a boy from another gang in the school called 'The Bafanas' as one of their members wanted his girlfriend. They threatened to kill Bhele as he travelled home from school. Bhele therefore brought a loaded gun from home and kept the gun in his schoolbag to protect himself. Luckily a member of the staff who saw Bhele behaving strangely, searched his schoolbag and seized a gun. The practice of direct intimidation and violence is mostly explained by Glaser's (1990) contribution in which he states that gangs are an embodiment of na viciously violent street youth culture. It is here where violence finds acceptance as a normal way of life and is imported into the school where young boys enact streetwise patterns of gang behaviour. Within this machismo culture, violence is a means of self-assertion and often the only known conflict resolution mechanism.

4.5 Race and gang activities

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two revealed that gang activities take the outward form of a type of rebellion or protest against social values, and partly attract marginalized boys for this reason. Boys' age and class in particular play a major role in inscribing masculine patterns. The learners at NPS are deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to the past racial imbalances and its legacies.

The following excerpt shows how issues of race, class and geographic location impact on the making of young gang cultures:

> "Eish! Sir, we don't steal from our neighbourhood. We only go to Phoenix, break into Indians' houses and steal there…"
>
> Ghanda, Interview, June 2003.

In this context, I agree with Healy (2000) who sees gangs as a means of attaining wealth. Breaking into Indians' houses in order steal is a taken-for-granted means of survival among a gang of boys. There are many socio-economic factors which impact on the school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. The alienation of African boys provided the context in which alternate social mechanisms such as gangs could develop.

> "If I have money, then I see myself as a boss (gang). Wherever I go, I can't starve 'cause I can buy whatever I want. My friends would stick around me … if you have money you are in control".
>
> Interview with Saddam, May 2003.

The community from which these boys come faces socio-economic marginalisation and high levels of crime and violence. To understand why some gang boys are involved in anti-social behaviours, we need to acknowledge not only the complex motivations and situational factors which cause them, but also their relations with the construction of masculinity. Boys' oppositional practice stems from a different cause: the rejection by gang boys of the school's social values and their accompanying disciplinary system. Sixteen-year-old Jomo expressed his view regarding monetary benefits:

> "You don't just get involved just for the sake of getting involved … It's either for money or fame … and obviously if you have money you have the whole world, you can do whatever you like – say nice things".

As an African boy, Jomo clearly articulates the way in which membership to gangs is linked to power (and economic power). Highlighted here is how gender is performed in the context

of race, class, ethnicity and locality feature prominently in the enactment of gang masculinities for these boys.

> **Darkie:** "I only attend school because my parents force me to. I understand from the day I was born, I was not meant to be educated. Other people [schoolmates] regard me as a fool. There is a group that provides me with all the love, care, comfort, appraisal and acceptance I need as a man [boy]".

Darkie recounts how he decided to join a gang called Amajimbosi because his parents could not provide him with love, care, comfort, appraisal and acceptance he needs as a boy. In his opinion, the gang's care amounted to appropriate alternative care.

In this chapter I have provided findings and statement of results of the research project. These findings focused on how violent (gang) masculinities were taken up (constructed) by African boys within gang cultures at one primary school at Amaoti in Inanda, Durban. Chapter Five presents discussion and conclusion of major findings thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5. Introduction

This study has investigated the ways in which a group of ten boys who are members of gangs construct their masculinity. The focus was on African boys' construction of their masculinities within gang cultures at Nhlonipho Primary School (NPS) in Inanda, Durban. The age of the boys who constituted the research group ranged between 12 and 16 years. Qualitative methods including observation and unstructured interviews were used as tools in an attempt to demonstrate the interrelatedness between violence, gangs, and masculinities in the school environment. Boys are predominantly perpetrators of violence and violence is male dominated. Thus violence, which is connected with masculine identities ultimately, characterizes the gang members. Furthermore, this research project has uncovered how protest masculinity is constructed and bound up with issues of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and context in the making of youth gang cultures. This research has also demonstrated that there are many factors which impact negatively on the school such as poverty, family violence, gang cultures and gangsterism.

5.1 Discussion

The discussion in this chapter consolidates major issues and addresses critical questions referred to previously in Chapter Three. The high levels of unemployment, extremes in wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns, and patriarchal values and behaviours in South Africa have inevitably affected children and young people and contribute to the existence of gang cultures in and out of the school system. Some boys construct their

masculinity by joining gangs because they are marginalized from the school through its hierarchical values and the authoritative power of educators over learners.

This study reveals that gangs of boys are enacting masculinity that is oppositional to school authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. They are operating from a protest position, which challenges the dominant masculinity of the school. Its major characteristic is protest against educators as authority figures, girls and other boys. Working class and African boys encounter school authority as an alien power and therefore begin to define their masculinity against it. The gangs of African boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity, which exhibit a masculine style of protest against the dominant culture of the school. At NPS, the school authorities and school prefect system marginalize gang culture. The study has highlighted that the dominant culture of the school provided a fertile context for the eruption of violent gang masculinities. The prefect system that operates to maintain discipline in the school is perceived as a symbol of authority. Prefects and other learners who contest violent, aggressive, and unruly behaviour by gang members display hegemony, the dominant culture of the school. The gang boys thus band together and act out protest masculinity to rebel against them. These boys are characterised by aggressive territoriality and assertiveness which the school, through its culture and ethos, perpetuates. This thesis has indicated how a minority group of boys align themselves against the school's authority to form a collective organized group of gangs.

Gang boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity against institutionalised marginalisation. The researcher's observation shows that gang masculinity is established against other masculinities within the school context. Gang boys challenge the day-to-day running of the school by engaging in risky behaviour including truancy, non-completion of tasks, and anti-school uniform campaigns. Gang boys act out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. Additionally, they are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, consuming

intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with gangs outside the school. Sometimes, they act out their toughness by not doing homework, absenteeism, and arriving at school late. In this instance, an intervention programme that can assist African boys particularly in their development is suggested. It will require the guidance and support of educators, parents, and the community at large for these gang boys to realise their full potential.

As evidenced in the research, there are many socio-economic factors which impact negatively on the school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. At NPS, an informal settlement school at Amaoti, economic conditions are low and are not very different from other African schools in similar circumstances in South Africa. Learners at the school could barely afford basic school needs, such as school uniform, stationery, and school fees of R90 per annum. According to Pinnock (1998), this area is characterised by poor facilities, low levels of economic activity, poor education, and high unemployment. The low income status of boys often forces them to earn their living through illegal activities, such as drug dealing/taking (mainly dagga), stealing, and housebreaking.

However, it can be argued that socio-economic status is not the only causal factor for these boys to join gangs – other factors persist alongside. These boys engage in gang-related activities not only for monetary benefits, but also for prestige and power. The boys in this study are economically and socially disadvantaged. Gang membership provides an immediate sense of power and control.

This research project has demonstrated the relationship between violence, masculinities and schooling. It uncovered the ways in which violent forms of masculinities are enacted, shaped or constrained and lived through gang cultures. These forms of masculinities are often marginalized and constructed as deviant boys by educators. In the first place, the school's context is important in the enactment of violent masculinities. Gang boys align themselves to

oppositional patterns of aggression as the mechanism to maintain a sense of status and through such enactments, gain material dividends (Bhana, 2002). Ulova masculinity is a form of protest masculinity, which targets educators, other boys and girls. Boys labelled as 'Ibhari' by 'Ulova boys', in their view, display hegemonic patterns of masculinity in the school, for example, are targets for abuse because they do not engage in anti-social behaviour and their compatibility with the school and educators casts suspicion on Ulova masculinity. Thus timid boys, educators and other learners, marginalize Ulova masculinity because of the claim that Ulova boys are clever and stylish. Ulova masculinity rejects other gender identities and is rebellious.

The notion of belonging to a masculinised friendship group within gang cultures is enacted through dress code and admiration of male power. In this instance, boys have a strong desire to assert their power in which 'Ulova' masculinity is constructed. Ulova is a violent Africanised urban style, a thuggish male gang who risk being at the wrong end of the school's authority. The violence that is directed against the subordinated masculine identities, such as ibhari and isitabani, is part of the process that reproduces violence in general and sustains aggressive and violent gang masculinity and violence against girls and women (Bhana, 2002).

Challenging the relationships between masculinity and violent gang masculinity can begin anywhere within a school, for example, within the curriculum, through pedagogical reforms or structural changes. It is important to note that such challenges do occur. For too long the relationships between masculinities and violent gang masculinity have been ignored in many schools in South Africa.

Schools need to foster a wider range of positive masculine behaviours and roles than are currently available. This research has documented powerfully the extent, nature, and multiple forms of violence and the negative effects of such violence on schooling.

Nowhere in South Africa is the prevalence of negative gang culture more noticeable than in schools in informal settlements, such as Nhlonipho Primary School. Many South African children were born, reared, matured, married, and died in violent situations. Some have become so immune to violent actions that they see violence as an acceptable form of expression and as a way of channelling their emotions. Schools located in disadvantaged areas, where the culture of violence reigns, are plagued with negative masculinities often associated with violence, crime, gangs, drugs, and other related problems. Much more work is needed to deal with this problem – in schools with both learners and educators – and to create a sense of better economic possibilities for children.

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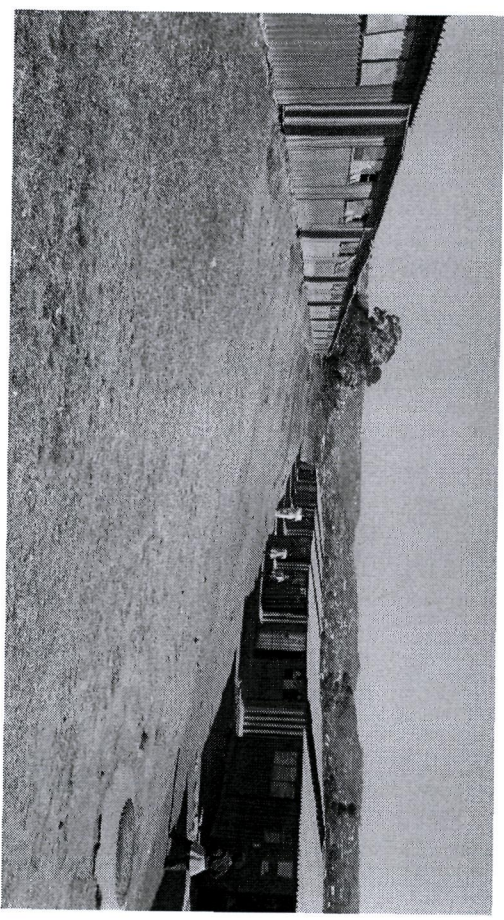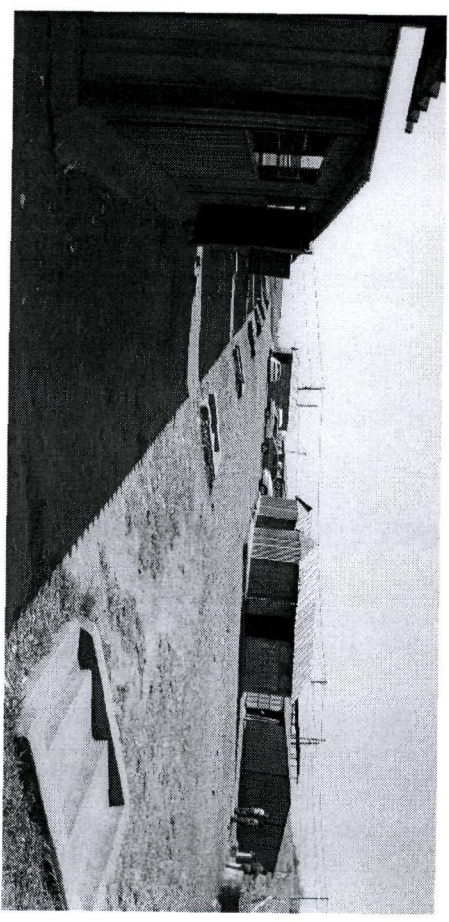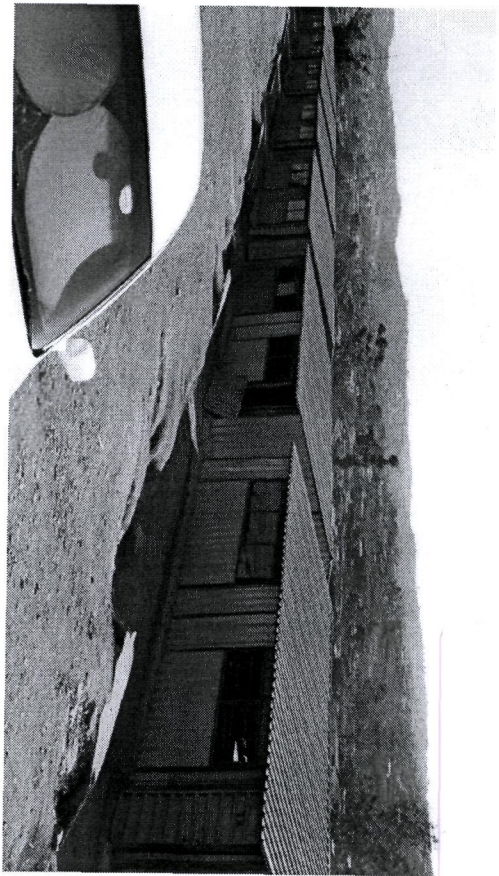
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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

AMAOTI

APPENDIX II

NHLONIPHO PRIMARY SCHOOL (Temporary Structures)

APPENDIX III

Letter Requesting Permission

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am at present doing Masters in Education (i.e. part-time studies) with the school of Education at University of Natal (Durban). I am undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis on Gender Studies. I would be most grateful if you could assist in this research project by giving permission for your son to participate. This research project explores African boys and gangs: Construction of masculinities within gang cultures at the school. This is aimed at finding solutions to boys' behavioral problems, which impact negatively on their scholastic performance and achievement as well'

I propose to make observations and interviews for the next six months with a group of ten boys (aged 12 – 16 years). In addition, I intend to make tape-recorded interviews with these boys. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and confidentiality. All the participants will be given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Your son is entirely free to discontinue participation at any time or decline to answer particular questions.

Parent's/Guardian's Consent Form
I ....the parent/guardian of ....
who is doing grade seven, hereby agree/disagree to give permission for my son(s) to participate.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely
I. D. Maphanga (Deputy Principal)

African Boys and Gangs: Construction of Masculinities within gang cultures in a primary school in Inanda, Durban.

By

Innocent Dumisani Maphanga

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree requirements of Masters in Education in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

Supervisor: Dr Deevia Bhana
March 2004

University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban).

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Declaration of Originality

I, Innocent Dumisani Maphanga, certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree in any university, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person where due reference is not made in the text.

Innocent D. Maphanga

19 March 2004

Acknowledgments

Statement of Authenticity

This work has not been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: ....

Date: 19 March 2004

Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which a group of boys who belong to gangs enact their masculinity. The focus is on African boys' construction of their masculinities within gang cultures at a primary school in Inanda, Durban. The school is an exclusively African co-educational school and predominantly African teaching staff.

Data collection involved qualitative methods that primarily include observation and unstructured interviews. These research tools were used to investigate the interrelatedness between violence, gangs, and masculinities. This study demonstrates that young boys in gangs enact violent masculinities which are bound up with issues of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and context in the making of young gang cultures. The performance of violent gang masculinity produced the exaggerated quality of masculine protest, in which violence is employed as a compensation for perceived weakness. This study reveals that gang of boys are enacting masculinity that is oppositional to school's authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. This research has indicated that modes of masculinities are shaped, constrained or enabled by gang cultures. Gang boys acted out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. They are anti-school authority, anti-social and undisciplined.

The study also demonstrates that there are many socio-economic and political factors that impact negatively on the school such as unemployment, poverty, and violent gang crime. The social, economic and political contexts are therefore crucially important in understanding a multiplicity of masculine identities amongst gang boys at the school under study. Schooling is an important arena where masculinities are enacted in various forms including violent (gang) masculinities.

The overall conclusion stemming from the research project is that attempts to reduce violent gang masculinities in the school need to include a gender strategy that tackles gender inequality. In South Africa this could form part of the Life Skills curriculum. Much greater attention needs to be given, in the life skills curriculum and through the ethos of the school as a whole, to promote gender equality and in particular models of masculine identity not predicated on force and violence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This thesis examines the construction of masculinities amongst gangs in an African primary school in Inanda District, Durban. It investigates the interplay between gangs, masculinities and gender inequalities in the school. The boys in this study ranged between the ages of 12 and 16 years and were in grade seven. The study explores the causes of their anti-social behaviour, which ultimately constitutes a problem for learners (boys and girls) and educators. A particular feature of boys' anti-social behaviour is violence. Boys overwhelmingly do violence and violence is connected with masculine gang culture practices and values (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). Suggested here is that gangs are made up exclusively of boys and are male dominated. Yet not all boys do violence. Neither are all boys gang members. It is important to note that although the context increases the boys' vulnerability to gang-related crime, boys do not automatically engage in improper conduct or automatically join gangs.

Violence is an acute social, political and educational problem in South Africa. South Africa ranks amongst the most violent countries in the world. Its schools are frequently the sites of violent crimes ranging from rape to murder. According to Harber (2001) the legacy of apartheid in South Africa has created a violent social context characterized by high levels of unemployment, extremes of wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns and patriarchal values and behaviours.

There are many problems affecting schools. Crime and violence are the most common scourge that plague schools in KwaZulu-Natal and Nhlonipho Primary School (NPS) is no exception. Boys are the perpetrators of a significant proportion of violence and such violence is exacerbated by boys in gangs where violence is considered an appropriate tool.

1.1 Defining a gang

In this section the way in which gangs are conceptualized in this study is highlighted. There is

no set definition of what constitutes a gang. There are multiple ways in which a gang can be

defined. In the researcher's experience as deputy principal at NPS for the past ten years he is

able to intuit some characteristics of gangs. Additionally the literature on gangs and

masculinities, which is developed in Chapter two, has been useful in developing a conceptual

understanding of gangs.

Gangs are often groups of boys who come together and act in accord to promote anti-social

behaviour. There is no agreed upon number that constitutes a gang, however, three is usually

the minimum. Boys in gangs use violence and intimidation. They are defiant, rebellious and

aggressive. They are drawn together by an interest in anti-social practices. They stick together

by developing and maintaining their interests in improper conduct. As a group they adopt

improper practices as part of their repertoire and they are easily influenced by unworthy

motives. Drug use, violence and theft are considered to be acceptable practices. Engaging in

these practices gives boys a sense of credibility and power.

Membership in gangs is also sustained by the particular use of language and dress. The

boys in this study use isiZulu differently. They make use of what is often referred to as tsotsi-

taal. It is a streetwise language. For example, when gang members greet they say "eita" or

"howzit" or "grand" or "sharp". Tsotsi-taal provides gangs with a sense of togetherness.

Dress code is also significant in establishing togetherness. Glaser (2000) states that boys in

gangs are clever and stylish. A gang may adopt a current dress code or style, but young men

who dress like this are not necessarily members of a gang. A gang may, however, select a

dress code not only as a form of identification, but also as a way through which a particular

kind of masculinity is fashioned and stylised. Clothing and body markings give a sense of

collective membership. Another characteristic of gangs is its hierarchal structure. This takes

the form of a leader or co-leaders and lesser gang members. Power structures are clearly in place.

Some of the character traits of gangs include the use of violence, improper conduct, for example, engaging in theft, drug abuse, the use of foul language and anti-social behaviour in general. These experiences and observations have prompted the researcher to identify some of the boys in the school as gang members.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the construction of masculinities and gang culture on African boys attending a primary school in Durban. The intent is to collect data to serve as a yardstick for evaluating the impact of boys' behaviours during classroom and playground activities and to inform the development of new interventions for boys in the school at large. Observations and interviews are chief methods of collecting data aimed at determining the relationship between gangs, masculinities, and gender inequalities at NPS.

The rationale for conducting this research is that schools, communities and educational authorities are not doing enough to deal with gang cultures and are blind to issues of masculinities in South African schools. Not much has been written or documented about gangs in schools. This is because in some institutions gang life is a taken-for-granted phenomenon and considered 'natural' or 'normal' when exhibited by boys. According to Gilbert and Gilbert (1998), some actions that might be deemed negative can also be taken for granted as normal behaviour. This study explores a small group of boys who have been identified as members of gangs and have linkages with outside the school gangs and gangsterism.

Central to this investigation is the question of why the construction of a boy's masculinity is enacted in violent forms. More importantly, how these masculinities are interrelated with

gangs' activities, gender inequalities and violence is considered. For instance, some boys are predominantly members of gangs and their membership is bound to issues of power and violence.

1.3 Background and context

The school comprises only African learners both boys and girls. These learners were historically and still are deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to past racial imbalances. Nhlonipho Primary School is situated in the economically deprived area of Amaoti in Inanda. Inanda was established in the mid-19th century as a rural area for Africans. Later a large number of Indian people also settled there. Forced removals and the implementation of influx control in other parts of Durban increased the population of Inanda during the apartheid era. Violence against Indian residents in 1985 was followed by a period of warlordism and then by various conflicts for control of the area. As Mahlobo (2000: 4) asserts:

> "Amaoti was a rural area, which fell under the Amaqadi Tribal Authority under Inkosi Mzonjani Ngcobo. The chief provided a sanctuary for political refugees in the 1980s. Refugees who were fleeing IFP warlords all converged on Amaoti. Refugees came from as far south as Mzimkhulu and from as far north as Mtunzini. Amaoti was then transformed from a serene rural area to a bustling informal settlement".

Party-political violence, mainly related to disputes between supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha freedom Party (IFP), has plagued the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) since the early 1980s. While the province experienced a miraculous lull in violence during South Africa's first democratic elections in April 1994, violence continues, particularly the Durban Metro region. The transition from the apartheid era to democracy

presented an environment no longer dominated by violence or central power interested in fomenting tensions and conflict between groups. Political violence has subsequently declined in Inanda. According to Mahlobo, "what has emerged at Amaoti are gangs and crime. Unemployment and poverty are prominent characteristics of this informal settlement" (Ibid, p. 4).

The emergence of gangs at Amaoti in the early 1990s is linked to the emigration of AmaMpondo from other areas such as KwaMalukazi and No.5 between Isiphingo and Umlazi and KwaMakhutha, Durban. The intent of AmaMpondo, who were predominantly ANC supporters, was to seek refuge at Amaoti when violence broke out between the ANC and the IFP warlords. The former indigenous dwellers at Amaoti, especially the youth suspected AmaMpondo refugees of IFP membership, which resulted in a fight between the Congo and Lusaka groups. The ascension of violence and gang-related crime can be linked to fights between the Congo and Lusaka gangster groups. The two groups have been in conflict since the early 1990s and have set a precedent for some boys to become gang members. These conditions place the school at an increased risk, hence prone to violent acts of the outside gangs in the community.

The presence of violent cultures including the gang cultures within the broader context of the school impacts on it in negative ways. Gang cultures are reproduced within the school and have resulted in the 'breakdown of learning'. The situation at Nhlonipho Primary School is not very different from other African schools in similar contexts. In African schools the culture of breakdown includes: "...general demotivation and low morale of students and teachers, poor school results, conflict and often violence in and around school, vandalism, criminality, gangsterism, rape, and substance abuse, school facilities in a generally poor state of repairs" (Christie, 1998: 283).

Children living in South African townships or informal settlements, such as Amaoti are schooled in violence. Violent crime is widespread in South Africa and schools in disadvantaged areas suffer from serious problems of gang-related crime (Harber, 2001).

Nhlonipho Primary School, where the researcher is employed as deputy principal, is situated in Amaoti − a densely populated informal settlement near Phoenix, 30km north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal (see map, Appendix I). The school has a staff composition of 30 African educators (10 males and 20 females) and three non-teaching staff (1 male and 2 females) with an enrolment of 1214 learners in 2003.

1.4 The Outline of the Thesis

Chapter One provides an introductory overview and the outline of this study and provides a definition of a gang within the school context. It also describes the rationale, the background and context of the study. Chapter Two provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of boys and gang cultures in South Africa's African schools. The literature pertinent to the study covers issues such as gangs and violence in South African schools as follows: Firstly, a theoretical framework that deals with the conceptualisation of masculinities is presented. Secondly, this literature highlights the importance of race and class in the construction of protest masculinity as well as how different 'macho' versions of masculinities are performed at school. Thirdly, how these masculinities are interconnected with gang activities and schooling is discussed. Lastly, the specific association with gangs, violence and schooling are highlighted. Chapter Three extends the context provided by the literature review. It discusses the research design, describes the methods of data collection used, the rationale for their inclusion and the integration of the research design with the underlying theoretical framework and research questions. The focus is on how gang boys relate to other boys, to girls, to educators and to schooling in general. Research results/findings and analysis are presented in Chapter Four. This chapter also discusses the data analysis procedures used and this is

intended to share with you what the researcher understands about gangs in the school. A reference list and appendices are included in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

Gangs are a gendered phenomenon. Boys are predominantly members of gangs. Boys' membership within gangs is manifest at home, at school and elsewhere in the community. In order to understand the association between boys and gangs, this chapter will draw from masculinity studies. Protest masculinity is a particularly useful concept in understanding young African boys in gangs. This concept will be illustrated by drawing from Connell's (1995) typology of masculinities. In South Africa, the history of gang formation is inextricably linked to the nation's history of colonialism and apartheid. Africans in particular have been subjected to intense structural violence and dispossession. As a result, boys struggle to achieve the patterns of dominant masculinity, due to their class and racial status. In this context, gang membership becomes the means by which disempowered men assert their control over women and other men, and through which they resist a dominant masculinity.

There are four sections to this chapter. The first section discusses the concept of masculinity using Connell's (1987; 1995) typology. Here the term "protest masculinity" is highlighted as a useful concept in describing young boys in gangs. The next section highlights the importance of race and class in the construction of protest masculinity. Race and class play a major role in inscribing masculine identities. They are key dimensions in understanding powerlessness, and explaining why the reaction against social and economic disparities often takes on a violent edge. Protest masculinity is defiant and anti-authority but the defiance occurs against the backdrop of social and economic inequalities. The final sections of this chapter highlight the specific association between masculinity, gangs, violence and schooling.

Amongst boys power is important. In gangs boys frequently use violence to show their dominance and fight in order to maintain their sense of power.

2.1 Conceptualization of masculinity

Masculinity must be understood in terms of its place in gender relations and the way in which unequal power relations are maintained. Masculinity is related to issues of power, including men's power over women, and men's power over other men. Gangs are invested in the formation of particular kinds of masculinities. Drinking, having sex, smoking, and anti-social behaviour in general, for instance, may be perceived as social practices which not only maintain social cohesion and solidarity of the gang, but also are on assertion of male togetherness and power.

This research adopts Connell's (1995) ideas of masculinities. Connell (1995) offers different forms of masculinities by developing what he understands to be hegemonic (dominant) masculinity, subordinated masculinity, complicit masculinity, and protest or oppositional masculinity. This framework allows us to understand the behaviour of boys and how they align themselves to different types of masculinities. Hegemony refers to a cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social relationships (Connell, 1987; 1995). Hegemony, however natural in appearance, is achieved via the social processes of competition, domination and resistance. From within this struggle hegemonic masculinity emerges as the configuration of gender practice which legitimates patriarchy and guarantees the dominant position of men alongside the subordination of women and "subordinated forms of masculinity" (Connell, 1987: 183).

The gendered rejection of homosexuals, for example, instituted through gang attacks on homosexual men (and boys), suggests underlying compensatory search for masculine status among perpetrators. According to Morrell (1998) in South Africa working class, black and

gay men are excluded from or subordinated to hegemonic masculinity. There are many ways in which one could begin to unravel the construction of masculinity in schools. However, the scope of this research is quite specific, that is to investigate the construction of masculinities amongst African gang boys in a primary school.

Masculinity is a socially constructed phenomenon that is inherently resistant to broad generalizations across time and space. Connell believes that hegemonic masculinity embodies a "currently accepted" strategy to what it means to be masculine. This masculinity is hegemonic because there exists a positive correlation between a "masculinated" cultural ideal and institutionalized power. Furthermore, Connell asserts the masculinizing practice of boys' subjects, discipline, and sports tend to produce directly a specific kind of masculinity (1996: 218). The three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity are defined as follows:

(i) *Subordinated masculinity:* This is a form of masculinity which recognizes that there are "specific gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men" (1995: 78). Connell positions this relationship primarily in terms of sexuality, stating: "The most important case in contemporary European/American society is the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men" (1995:78). While Connell's ideas may be useful in the North, we cannot generalize research findings in other countries assuming that it will be relevant to the South African context. In South Africa for example both black and gay men are subordinated to white hegemonic cultural ideals.

(ii) *Complicit masculinity:* Connell views complicity as including those "masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy" (1995: 79). Men, as a class and regardless of individual difference, collectively hold power over women and some men hold power over other men. Nevertheless, "the patriarchal dividend – the benefits that men accrue,

as a class, in the oppression of women – are thereby not divided equally amongst men, with men who are least empowered attaining very little" (Connell, 1995:148 –149).

(iii) Protest or oppositional masculinity: The term "protest masculinity" describes a form of masculinity that is a characteristic of men in a marginal location of social class, with the masculine claim on power contradicted by economic and social weakness (Connell 1995: 116). Gang culture in this study is identified as a masculine style of masculine protest against the dominant culture of the school. Gang members view the educators, the School Management Team (SMT) and the prefects system as authority symbols or figures against which they can construct their masculine identities for themselves within their gangs. These gang boys challenge the discipline system of the school and are perceived by their peers as tough and confrontational. This disregard and disrespect for the hierarchy of the school wins the admiration of their peers. The masculinity of these gangs is reflected in the frequency of hyper masculine aggressive display (often collective), and violent and minor criminal behaviour.

Connell (1995; 1996) proposes three non-hegemonic categories of masculinity: subordinate, complicit, and marginalized. Sharing Connell's model, Morrell states: "...these were masculinities developed outside corridors of power. Minorities, defined in terms of race, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation, all characteristically understand what being a man means differently from members of the ruling class or elite and from each other too" (Morrell, 2001a: 7). Connell's model permits us to comprehend boys' gang cultures as enacted in the construction of different masculinities within their lived environments. There are many socio-economic factors which impact on a school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. Amaoti is characterised by poor recreational facilities and low levels of economic activity, poor education and high unemployment. Within these contexts it is not surprising that gang cultures and violence are pervasive and are a taken-for-granted phenomenon in the school.

Schools are places where a multiplicity of masculinities are played out (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connolly, 1998; Martino, 1999). There is no one pattern of masculinity that is universal. For instance, in South Africa, some African cultures make heroes of gangs or gangsterism, and regard violence as the ultimate test of masculinity. It is important to note that not all boys and men belong to gangs. In other words, more than one kind of masculinity can be found within a given cultural setting. Some are socially marginalized, for example the masculinities of disempowered African majorities. Masculinity is organized on a macro scale around social power. Boys who are unable to obtain entry to the forms of social power schooling has to offer, then seek alternative means of publicly demonstrating their masculinity, such as through the use of violence or demonstrating sporting prowess (Segal, 1990; Back, 1994). In the next section, relations of race, class and protest masculinity will be explored in an attempt to understand how these are interrelated.

2.2 Race, class and protest masculinity

This section explores the concept in the school under study of what Connell (1995) describes as a kind of 'protest masculinity' (p.109–119) among gang boys who are marginalized in school and are subjected to massive social disadvantage. These boys are economically and socially disadvantaged. Gang membership thus provides an immediate sense of power and control. Race and class play a major role in inscribing masculine identities, ideals and attitudes. As Morrell (2000) asserts, where hegemony is lacking, a 'protest masculinity' may be constructed through defiance of authority, all too familiar in working-class schools. Emerging from this point is a strategy of how boys are expressing rebellious behaviour as a form of masculine protest at being marginalized by the school and the broader social forces. Implicit in the literature is a notion of how African boys can vent their anger and frustration by challenging the school authority figure in gang-violent ways. Gangs of boys are enacting

masculinity that is oppositional to school authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. They are operating from a protest position, which challenges the authority of the school. Its major characteristic is protest against educators as authority figures, girls and other boys.

African gang boys encounter school authority as an alien power and therefore begin to define their masculinity against it. Gangs of African boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity, which exhibits a masculine style of protest against the dominant culture of the school. These boys challenge the day-to-day running of the school by engaging in risky behaviours including truancy, non-completion of tasks and anti-school uniform campaigns. Gang boys act out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. They are **anti-school** authority, **anti-social,** and undisciplined in such a way that they disrespect or disregard their educators and fellow learners alike. They are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, consuming intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with gangs in and/or around the school. Sometimes they act out their toughness by not wearing full school uniform, not doing homework, absenteeism and arriving at school late. Not all boys at NPS subscribe to this form of masculinity. In fact, only a minority group exhibit protest masculinity in ways which disregard, disobey and defy school authority. Other boys who voluntarily subscribe to the school's rules and ethos, find the school authority and its culture appropriate for their schooling. Because gang boys are on the periphery and are constantly being discounted, often stand up and fight or bully others. The anti-social behaviour displayed by these boys appears African schooling bears the marks of apartheid colonialism and capitalism. The pattern of to be a mark of their masculinity.

South education in South Africa reflects strong racial and class bias. In the post-apartheid era, racial imbalances can still be manifested in gender power in which multiple, interweaving power relations are viewed as inherently contested. The learners in African townships are

deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to the past racial imbalances and their legacies. Research has shown that many factors – including gender, race, class, ethicity, sexuality and locality – work to produce different educational outcomes for different students (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Connell 2000).

Africans have experiennced poor housing conditions, limited and racially-biased access to education and training, limited employment opportunities, high levels of crime and violence, and a general breakdown of social systems and communities. In this context, youth see gangs as a means of attaining wealth (Healy, 2000). In the study, factors or character traits including routine involvement in anti-social behaviour, dealing and taking drugs, gang-related crime, risk taking, language (tsotsi-taal) and dress code distinguish gang members from other boys in the school. These boys construct their masculinity by joining gangs partly because they are marginalized from mainstream education. Arguably, the education system that is unequal and favours white schools has left the majority of youth unskilled. Consequently, African youth is grossly unemployed, poorly educated, bored and frustrated; boys particularly learn to use illegal and abusive methods to become powerful. Central to the strategies these boys undertake is what Connell calls oppositional or protest masculinity. The school, through its authoritative power of educators over learners and its hierarchies, always wants to put down this kind of masculinity.

2.3 Masculinity, gangs and schooling in South Africa

Becker (2000), Glaser (1990; 1992; 1998a; 1998b), Mokwena (1991), Parks (1995), Pinnock (1982; 1998) are some of the well-known researchers on youth gangs who have researched on the schooling of the gang boys in Southern Africa.

Both Pinnock (1982) and Glaser (1990) argue that gangs are a form of resistance to the hegemony of the dominant classes. They suggest that gangs rise out of a politically hostile

environment and they are in some senses a response to political domination. Furthermore, they suggest that although gangs are peripheral to the political contest, they have serious implications in the struggle for hegemony. Glaser argues that the tsotsi subculture of the 1950s should be interpreted against the background of the structural marginalisation and impoverishment of black working-class youths on the Reef during that period. In South Africa, the tsotsi subculture, through its value system, style and ritual, aggressively denied hegemonic consensus. The tsotsi values, such as a brazen rejection of law and the glorification of violence, criminality and hedonism were defined in direct antagonism to the consensus value system (Glaser, 1990). According to Glaser (1992: 47), the term, 'tsotsi' described a style of narrow-bottomed trousers which became particularly popular amongst the black urban youth during the 1940s. Tsotsis emerged from the American 'zoot-suits' as well as from the South Sotho word 'ho botsotsa', which means to sharpen – referring to the narrow-bottom pants that the tsotsis like. For the purpose of this thesis, 'tsotsi' refers to boys who are gang members either inside or outside the school site. Their activities include theft, gambling, and substance abuse. Generally, they are undisciplined and assume a posture that is anti-authority within the school and elsewhere. Accounts of tsotsi masculinity in both the Cape Flats and Soweto illuminate that "tsotsis were structurally subordinate in terms of race, class and generation" (Glaser, 1992: 62).

In Glaser's (1998) work on gangs, he analyzes the construction of masculinity and preoccupation with territory in the youth subcultures, pointing out the interdependency of what he refers to as "personal loyalty" between gang members, and the necessity of defending turf. In the gang subcultures he describes, male bonding over the defence of turf is associated with the rape of women, but gang rape victims in the 1950s did not come from the perpetrators' home neighbourhood, since gang rape was viewed as yet another incursion into the territory of the other (p. 724–725). Glaser showed how notions of territoriality were

central to the understanding of masculinity amongst urban youth in the 1960s and how such notions infused the social organisation of gangs and prompted violent rivalry between these gangs (see Morrell. 2001a: xii).

Pinnock (1998) draws on two main factors when explaining the existence of gangs in the Western Cape. Firstly, he refers to forced removals, which began in the 1940s and culminated in the Group Areas Act of 1950, resulting in the creation of the racially segregated area of the Cape Flats. Secondly, as extended families began to disintegrate, the street brotherhood formed a substitute community. The involvement of many youth in gangs therefore lies in socio-political factors: poverty, poor education, broken families and massive urban relocations of people of colour under the Apartheid regime. Mokwena's (1991) work on the "Jackrollers" in Soweto in the late 1980s is a well-known study, which attempts to explain youth gangsterism amongst a specific grouping that were known for abducting and raping young women. They were also known to be involved in car theft and bank robbery. This research suggests that youth gangs in Soweto exist because of family instability, the education crisis, economic deprivation, political turmoil and the destruction of a civic culture. The research indicates that the jackrolling gangs are survivalist, violent and macho. Their survivalist approach is related to "huge material problems" which result in several means of "getting by" (Mokwena 1991:6), which may or may not be criminal.

The sexual violence against women that jackrollers engaged in is understood in terms of "attempts by young males to reassert their power through a distorted masculine sexuality" (op cit: 12). Mokwena argues that this reassertion of power occurs because South African racism served to impose an inferiority complex on blacks, which was often experienced as emasculation by males. Part of this inferiority was linked to unemployment which was on the increase at the time of the formation of the jackrollers. Mokwena's argument is important in

highlighting the gendered relationships and understanding of gang formation and practice. Similarly, unemployment rate has been escalating in the last decade at Amaoti.

Glaser (1998) points out that youth gangs were likely to emerge in any urban environment which included a substantial number of poor city-bred youth with limited employment possibilities and deprived of housing, schooling and recreation facilities (p.720). These conditions had serious implications for young African boys resulting in them seeking employment in the taxi industry, such as washing taxis or collecting taxi fares. The African boys' socio-economic status not only harms or robs them of their schooling opportunities, but also exposes boys to gang members. Nevertheless, if we can learn more about what influences adolescent to join gangs we can decrease violence, juvenile crime, and the risk of harm to boys involved in gangs.

2.4 Gangs, violence and schooling in South Africa

Xaba (1997) and Morrell (1998) both argue that in townships violence has become such an accepted part of student masculinity that it explains most high [and primary] school student involvement in violent crime. In particular, gang membership is a way for boys to gain esteem and power among peers while also finding a sense of belonging and acceptance (Segal, 1999). The construction of masculinities in multidimensional forms, such as gang activities which are sanctioned by community or society, has a bearing on why boys perform their masculinity in these ways and how it advances gender inequalities and violence.

According to the Human Rights Watch (2001) schools are supposed to be safe havens where education and learning can flourish. However, schools in South Africa have become sites of violence. I share Morrell's (1998) view that violence is not only imported into schools, it is hatched there too. Schools are essentially authoritarian institutions with power firmly in the hands of educators, with little learner participation. Schools are also profoundly

patriarchal with female learners at the bottom of hierarchy. This problem engenders authoritarian attitudes, stereotyping of all kinds including racism, and encourages boys to feel superior to girls. It is noteworthy in this context that African schools are often patriarchal and female students experience sexual harassment by male teachers, boys, and gangs when walking to and from school (Griggs, 1997; Harber, 1998). Patriarchal ideologies instil in the minds of many males that females are their territory for sexual abuse. A Durban-based study (Griggs, 1997) showed that the situation of schools in disadvantaged areas often leads to the presence of gangs within the school grounds. This causes direct violence (assaults, rapes and even murder), disrupts schooling, and attracts school children to gangs and becomes surrogate criminals.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature reviewed has highlighted the specific association between masculinity, gangs, violence and schooling. In an attempt to establish the causes of boys' involvement in gangs, this chapter has drawn from masculinity studies. The question of masculinity is raised as one of the causes of why boys enact their masculinities through violence. It cannot only be agreed by simple reference to external structural determinants such as poverty, low socio-economic status and high levels of unemployment amongst Africans, and with men's (and boys') investment in constructions of masculinity. However, we cannot dismiss the fact that poverty, low socio-economic status and high levels of unemployment correlate with the increase of gang formation, particularly in African townships/informal settlements.

The literature suggests that masculinity is implicated in gender inequalities and that notions of masculinity are changing to suggest new ways of being a 'real man or boy' for school gangs and boys. "Acting tough" by being rebellious against their educators' authority is a way of retaliation and earns them honour and prestige among their companions. African

boys trapped in such conditions may construct protest/oppositional masculinity in defiance of educators' negative attitude towards them. These and many other enactments of masculinities may have serious implications on boys' schooling. This not only presents confrontational situations between educators and learners, but also erodes the culture of teaching and learning at school.

There is a clear connection between violence, gangs and masculinities. Increasing attention is being focused on gangs and their contribution to South Africa's violence-ridden society. The literature reviewed has presented Connell's four typologies of masculinities: hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and protest/oppositional as a lens through which different masculine identities are shaped, negotiated and constructed within the school site. For example, boys may create a sense of togetherness which Mac an Ghaill (1994: 56) describe as "sticking together". Here sticking together is accomplished through boys' involvement with gangs. To achieve a sense of belonging African boys use gang membership to gain access to power and prestige which a gang provides. Gangs are validated to the phenomenon of belonging to the peer group. In this regard, some boys conform or comply and join a gang in order to be accepted as 'real boys' and later as 'real men'.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The research project was undertaken at Nhlonipho Primary School in Amaoti, an informal settlement in the Inanda District near Phoenix, north of Durban. The key issues of investigation in this research project revolve around the questions: How are masculinities played out within gangs of boys at Nhlonipho Primary School? How do gang members perform their masculinities? How are these masculinities shaped, constrained or enabled by gang cultures within the school? How do issues of race and class impact on the making of young gang cultures? To answer these questions, I collected data by observing and interviewing a group of ten African boys. The boys were interviewed individually in an endeavour to elicit information about the performance of masculinity in gangs. The target group for this study were grade seven boys ranging between the ages of 12 and 16 years.

This research was conducted using qualitative methods that primarily include observations and unstructured interviews. The researcher carried out observation and interviews with African boys who are members of gangs. The main focus was on the construction of their masculinities, examining specifically violent forms of masculinity over a period of eight months.

3.1 Research site

The research project was conducted in an historically disadvantaged informal settlement primary school in Inanda. It is an exclusively African co-educational school. Apartheid education was such that quality education could not be obtained because the school was

under-resourced. The school lacks basic essential requirements such as toilets, chairs, tables, and fencing. It serves an historically disadvantaged community where there are high levels of unemployment, poverty, violence and substance abuse. The school has been operating in 'zinc pozzi huts' (see photographs, Appendix II). These 'zinc pozzi huts' are temporary structures made of corrugated iron sheets that the school has used as both administration offices and classrooms since 1993.

Lack of housing, linked to unemployment and worsening poverty in South Africa, has left some people with no option but to erect houses on vacant sites. Inanda District is no exception. Amaoti, which is part of Inanda is a peri-urban community that until the 1970s – in local people's memory – retained many idyllic rural features. The people of Amaoti coexisted peacefully with Indian sugar-cane-growers who represented the majority of landlords in Inanda. The entire area of Inanda has a history of political and community violence, which continues to shape perceptions of safety. After the new South African democratic nation was established in 1994, promises were made by the new government to create infrastructure in the Inanda area including the building of a primary school to replace the current temporary structures. Since its inception in January 1993, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has made but not kept several promises to erect proper resources such as a school hall, classrooms, administration offices, a staff room, and toilets.

This school was chosen because it was convenient for the researcher to conduct this study. The observation schedule and the interview processes fitted his teaching schedule. As deputy principal in the school under study he enjoys pre-existing relationships with staff, and was thus able to gain easy access to the respondents. However, the fact that he was a known observer/researcher and a permanent member of the School Management Team (SMT) meant that respondents were apprehensive about providing sensitive details to the interviewer.

The researcher has been a teacher at the school under study since 1994, nine years of which have been as deputy principal. He is extremely aware that behavioural problems pertaining to boys, in particular, are a cause of great distress for many educators. He has uninterrupted access to the school site and the learners, and the freedom of school life in general. During the study he was able to move around during playground and classroom activities to observe how the patterns of protest/oppositional masculinity within a school gang culture are constructed. One of his responsibilities as SMT member is the social welfare of learners. He has developed the love, skills and traits necessary in this field, and has been entrusted with the counselling and pastoral care of the learners. He has encountered many problems including disrespect for educators and other learners, disruptive behaviours and competitive aggression. In the broader context, he has noticed that educators have little or no understanding of the issues around masculinities and are blind to how boys at the school under study hurt themselves and others in the performance of particular kinds of masculinities. The findings of this research project will therefore directly benefit the school. It is hoped that educators will gain some insight into the problems and solutions that are addressed in the study; thus offering them new strategies for dealing with the problems and issues brought forward.

The researcher chose not to conduct interviews in his office. He felt that learners in general (especially boys) perceived his office as an authoritative arena where the school's Code of Conduct is reinforced and maintained. Thus, an unfavourable atmosphere would be created inhibiting or limiting boys' freedom and flexibility during interview discussions. The key respondents were informed of meeting times although observation of learners took place unannounced during playground activities as well as in the classroom.

3.2 The sample size and sampling procedure

The researcher chose a purposive sampling in which a sample of ten African boys was selected as the core group from whom information was gathered for this research project. "In

purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 103). Given the sensitivity of issues to be investigated, the ten boys were chosen to solicit "rich" data. Thus, this research project employed a small sample in an attempt to provide rich, descriptive data about the contexts, activities, and beliefs of gang cultures. In addition, a non-random sample was used to allow the researcher to obtain manageable data from a small target group of boys and "this is frequently the case for some ethnographic research" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 102). Thus, the targeted group of boys was selected from grade seven classes only. It was hoped the sample would enrich and deepen the researcher's understanding of why boys perform their masculinities in violent forms. The ten boys sampled were key informants in understanding the construction of masculinities within gang cultures in the school context. Cohen, et al. (2000) assert that in a qualitative style of research it is most likely that the sample size will be small. Through conversations with fellow educators the researcher was able to identify boys who are gang members at NPS. The school's disciplinary record book also showed repetitive behavioural problems amongst these boys. This information was valuable to the researcher in the selection of the ten key informants for this study. A brief biography of the ten boys interviewed and a list of gangs that operate inside and outside the school is provided below.

Biography of the Ten Boys (Respondents) Interviewed

Joe: is aged 15 years and is associated with the *Amajimbosi* gang. He was found in possession of marijuana which he sells and smokes. He lives with both his parents. His parents are unemployed, but sell brooms in the neighbourhood to earn a living.

S'gi: is a 16-year-old boy who was once arrested on charges of assault against a 15-year-old girl. He is an orphan but lives with his grandmother. S'gi, who is repeating the

seventh grade has three siblings (one brother and two sisters). They all survive on their grandmother's state pension. He belongs to a gang called *Izintandane*.

Bershy: is 16 years old and is a repeater in the grade seven class. He lives with his father, aunt, three uncles and his younger brother (who is in grade four at the school under study). His father is an alcoholic and is unemployed. His aunt collects a state grant for the boys but she abuses the grant money for her personal needs. He is the *Izintandane* gang member.

Solo: is a 14-year-old boy who was once with the outside gang called 'Congo'. He lives with his mother and two brothers. The older brother dropped out of school in grade ten and he now works as a taxi conductor at a local taxi association. Solo's younger brother is enrolled in the grade two class at NPS. His mother survives on casual jobs she gets from the Indian households, which supplements the sick pension she receives from TAFTA. Solo's father is still alive but is separated from his mother. He seldom visits his children and does not pay maintenance. At NPS, Solo is associated with a gang known as *The Bafanas.*

*Darkie***:** is 15 years old, drinks alcohol and smokes dagga. He lives with his mother, a sister and a brother. His mother is an alcoholic and is unemployed. His older brother is a school drop out who also smokes dagga and drinks alcohol. Darkie belongs to a gang called *Amajimbosi.*

Jomo: is a 16-year-old boy and is associated with the *Izintandane* gang. He drinks alcohol, especially on school trips. He lives with both parents and his younger brother. His mother is unemployed whilst his father is employed as a plumber at the Durban

Municipality Water Department. His parents have been summoned to school for Jomo's truancy and other behaviour problems and they are very supportive of their son's schooling.

Bhele: is 14 years old and is a member of *The Bafanas* gang. He is notorious for swearing at other boys and girls. He is involved in writing insults in the form of graffiti. He lives with his father and stepmother. His father is employed as plumber and is very supportive of his schooling.

Ganda: is a 13 year-old boy. He lives with his mother who is unemployed. He was once found in possession of a gun at the school. The *Amajimbosi* gang provides a sense of belonging for Ganda.

Saddam: is 16 years old and is the *Amajimbosi* gang member. He dropped out of school in the middle of 2003, i.e. before the completion of this study. He smokes tobacco and dagga, and drinks alcohol. He lives with his mother and stepfather (both also drink alcohol) and three sisters.

S'gaxa: is a 12-year-old boy who lives with his mother and two brothers. His mother is employed but lowly paid. She is very supportive of S'gaxa's schooling. His father passed away about two years ago. He is associated with *The Bafanas* gang.

Note: Pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of the respondents. The researcher has identified gangs that operated both inside and outside the school site and their lists are provided as follows:

Gangs inside the school	Gangs outside the school
Amajimbosi	Congo
The Bafanas	Lusaka
Izintandane	

The ten boys in the sample live in economic and social distress. Some have access to electricity whilst others do not, depending on their economic circumstances at home. Most parents/guardians can hardly afford R90 school fees per annum. Approximately 60% of all learners at NPS are identified late in the year for failing to pay school fees. In 1996 corporal punishment was outlawed and the school instituted a policy on alternatives to corporal punishment. In this context, learners became unruly, disobedient and lost respect for educators at the school and elsewhere.

3.3 The respondents

This study focuses on grade seven boys ranging between the ages of 12 and 16 years. The researcher chose grade seven boys because gang cultures are more evident in grade seven – based on the boys' physicality, size, and age in the school. Furthermore, adolescence is an interesting period for teenage boys whose masculinity is put under immense pressure. Schooling is an important arena of power where masculinities are enacted in various forms including violent masculinities. Bhana (2002), Morrell (2001), Connell (1995), and Mac an Ghaill (1998) corroborate this claim and show that masculinities and femininities are enacted through dynamic processes of contestation, refusal and appropriation. The boys' ages range from 12 to 16 due to various factors including truancy, failing classes, relocation from rural areas, gangs' activities and late admission to school. These factors explain why some of these boys started school late.

According to Glaser (1990) a 'tsotsi' is a criminal gang member. For the purpose of this thesis, 'tsotsi' refers to boys who are involved in gang activities either inside or outside (i.e.

informers linked to outside gangs) the school site. These activities include theft, gambling, and substance abuse, and can lead to learners dropping out of school. Generally, they disrespect and disregard their school authorities by assuming a posture that is anti-authority within the school and elsewhere.

Through conversations with educators, especially 2002 grade six educators in the school, the researcher was able to identify boys who are suspected to be involved in gang activities or have links with the gangs in the local community. It was intended that the small sample would be reflective of the larger body of learners, thereby affording the researcher an opportunity to elicit more in-depth information from the group. By reducing the larger population to a group of ten, it is the researcher's belief that privileged and rich data would be accessible. Because of time constraints, dealing with the smaller sample allowed the researcher to access relevant information which was likely to provide greater understanding of a concept of research interest. The focus group discussions during interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy in reporting data gathered. Care was taken to note the sensitivity and confidentiality of the content of the interviews in this study. Once the sampling procedure was completed (i.e. identifying the respondents), letters requesting permission to interview boys were sent out to parents/guardians in order to get their approval and thereby meet ethical requirements (see letter sample, Appendix III). Research respondents were given consent forms to be signed by their parents/guardians. Because of the good relationship with parents/guardians of the school, gaining access to the sample did not constitute a problem. Most parents/guardians (i.e. 10 out 15) granted the researcher a permission to conduct interviews with the boys.

All respondents are currently enrolled in the school under study (except for Saddam who dropped out of school in the middle of 2003) and were selected as the key informants of this research project. The selected group were the key informants or the target group for the

interviews conducted in isiZulu by the researcher. The boys were comfortable using isiZulu as a communicative tool for this is their mother-tongue or first language. The use of isiZulu ensured maximum communication levels between the researcher and the informants during the interview discussions. They were tape-recorded, translated and transcribed into English. Data collected was then analysed using standard qualitative techniques. These techniques include identifying the key issues, themes and patterns associated with the research questions. In qualitative research the process of data collection and data analysis go hand-in-hand. As data was being collected the researcher attempted to identify themes and patterns that would assist further data collection, and sort the information into categories to get ideas for presentation. The researcher carried out observation and interviews with the respondents. The objectives of the study were to develop in-depth understandings, from the perspectives of gang boys.

The researcher also gave detailed information as to the nature of the study so that the respondents could explain the research process to their parents. The respondents were informed that they were under no obligation to participate and could withdraw from the study provided they gave sound reason(s) for so doing. Each boy was treated with respect and concern for his well-being. The name of school and that of the respondents were kept anonymous. All information was treated confidentially.

3.4 Research design and methodology

This research adopted an ethnographic stance that tends to be more fluid, in depth and longitudinal than other varieties of research. This section describes how ethnographic methods were used in order to understand the life experiences of African boys within gang cultures. The specific design considered in this thesis was ethnographic, which tends to be more descriptive, generative, inductive, constructive, and subjective than other varieties of research (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). For the researcher it was a question of finding the

most appropriate way to get good data during the months prior to the interviews. He chose to be an observer in the classroom, to see the learners in their 'normal' classroom settings, and to see them as learners rather than as research respondents.

Interviews, observations, conversations, and the analysis of school disciplinary documents were used to collect and analyse data, in order to understand and explain the construction of masculinities within gang culture at school. This section will describe the approach which the researcher used to collect the data that will be analysed later.

3.4.1 Observation

The secondary method for this research project was that of observation. Observation of the gang boys within the school context added useful insight and data to the study. "Observation methods are powerful tools for gaining insight into situations" (Cohen, et al., 2000: 315). There are two types of observation: participant and non-participant. In the former the researcher participates in the activity being researched whereas in the latter the researcher is a non-participant observer. The researcher chose to be a non-participant observer because he could not participate as a gang member. He considered this option in order to protect his position as deputy principal in the school under study. Thus, the success of this method of data gathering depended heavily on the researcher's ability to determine ongoing behaviour as it occurred. Observing the interactions amongst boys and between boys and girls offered the researcher the best advantage to assess what was really going on in the classroom and during playground activities.

Data captured during observation of boys' experiences or behaviours were complemented by unstructured interviews which focused on the construction of masculinities of boys within gang cultures at school. The researcher noted or recorded the interactions of the boys both in the classroom and on the playground. The observation of character traits of gangs and interact

in masculinity began when the researcher started taking University courses on the subject matter in February 2002. This observation lasted throughout the research project; however, during the months of March and April 2003, a focused and purposeful observation took place in the school under study.

During this study the researcher as an observer jotted down notes on incidents pertinent to the research. Note-taking occurred immediately after observations had taken place. Note-taking was thus a way of documenting the research. In an attempt to compile a report of accounts, making of field notes complemented observation processes of respondents in this study.

3.4.2 Interviews

The researcher also chose unstructured interviews as a tool of collecting data. Informants were interviewed a number of times, using information from previous informants to elicit clarification and deeper responses upon re-interview. This process was intended to reveal common cultural understandings related to the phenomena under study. The advantage of an interview is that it involves a one-on-one verbal interaction between the researcher and a respondent. An interview enables the researcher to ask respondent(s) to clarify unclear answers and a follow up can be made on interesting answers. Kvale (1996: 1) describes the purpose of an interview:

> "In an interview conversation, the researcher listens to what people themselves tell about their lived world, hears them express their views and opinions in their own words, learns about their views on their work situation and family life, their dreams and hopes. The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations".

This falls in line with the purpose of this study – to learn and understand more about the boys' experiences and membership of a particular kind of masculinity. The unstructured, open-ended interviews were primarily undertaken during the months of May and June 2003 between 13:30 and 14:30, from Monday to Thursday. In addition, conversations with educators and learners took place throughout the research project. Data captured was jotted down and later in the evenings was organized into a report. Sometimes information collected from the target group was tape-recorded in order to be transcribed later using ethnographic techniques.

3.5 Limitations of the study

Although the researcher was employed as deputy principal in the school chosen as the research site, this proved to have numerous advantages and shortcomings as well. A number of limitations impinged on the study but steps were taken where possible to minimize their effects. In this study, the first three key informants who were likely gang members dropped-out of school at the beginning of the research processes in May 2003. However, attempts were made to find replacements for them and these proved to be successful.

Time available for the study was the most severe constraint. This not only meant that the time span in which the thesis could be completed was limited, but the balancing of the demands of the research with his work commitments meant that he was unable to devote sufficient time to the study. However, he did observe approximately 80 per cent of all the sessions of research processes during the months of March and April 2003.

In an attempt to let boys speak of their world, individual interviews were conducted with the grade seven teenage boys, some of whom had been in gangs or were still involved in gang activities in the community and had actually committed crime at some stage in their lives.

Their regular absenteeism from school is manifest in their poor academic achievement in the classroom.

The researcher's imposing size and the position of authority he holds in the school may have intimidated the boys, but this problem was minimised by being friendly with the key informants. To achieve this, he communicated with the boys in the tsotsi-taal, which made them feel very comfortable and sometimes, and to some extent, they forgot about the research processes.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter extended the context provided by the literature review. The major areas of investigation in this research project, which revolve around key questions, were provided. Furthermore, it allowed the researcher to present a research design and methodology, highlighting the effects of violent masculinities within gang cultures at NPS. Describing the methods of data collection, the focus has been on how boys relate to each other, to girls, to educators and to the curriculum. Also presented is the rationale for the inclusion of participant observation, interviews and conversations as techniques used to capture data for this thesis. Integrating research design with the underlying theoretical framework and research questions proved to be worthwhile. Lastly, the limitations of this study were identified and how these were minimised and overcome by the researcher to achieve both validity and reliability was discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4. Introduction

This chapter presents major findings and statement of results, which this research project captured. Data obtained from observations and interviews will be analysed. The study investigated the ways in which boys who are gang members construct their masculinity. The results have been divided or arranged into various themes. Firstly, boys' constructions of their masculinities within gang cultures at the school were explored. Secondly, the interrelatedness between violence, gangs and masculinities in the classroom and playground arenas was examined. Thirdly, the question of how violent (gang) masculinity is bound up in issues of race/ethnicity and class impact on the making of young gang cultures was also explored.

4.1 Hegemonic masculinity and gangs

This section considers the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and gangs. The school is characterised not only by dominance, but also its authoritative power directed towards learners, particularly boys who display anti-social behaviour. Boys in gangs who demonstrate improper anti-hegemonic conduct are particularly prone to punishment and mistreatment from educators. Such boys band together against hegemonic forms of masculinity and against educator's authority. These boys are characterised by aggressive territoriality and assertiveness. As *Ganda, a gang boy told the researcher:

> "We [gang members] hate anyone who is close or gets closer to educators.
> **'Bayasidayisa'** (They [learners] 're sell outs)".

Gang members thus construct boys who voluntarily comply with the school's rules and ethos as "sell outs". Getting closer to the educators for these boys invites trouble from gangs. In

another encounter, S'gi states how he dislikes boys who form part of the school prefect system. S'gi perceives prefects as 'sell outs' who keeps an eye or are 'watchdogs' for the school authorities that are meant to disclose gangs' activities within the school:

"You 're being watched wherever you go because these watchdogs or sell outs are found everywhere. If seen doing the wrong thing, they 'll definitely tell educators. You can't keep secret. This can spell out trouble".

The boys who are in gangs develop hatred and dislike for the boys who are associated with the school's authoritative power and begin to define their masculinity against them. Gang boys perceive boys who are school prefects as a threat to their secret activities. Prefects and other boys who co-operate with educators, in gang boys' view display hegemony which is the dominant culture of the school. At NPS gang culture is marginalized and gang members constantly challenge the hegemonic discourses of the dominant, and it aids understanding the social and cultural meaning of these marginalized groups. Educators, prefects, and other learners negate violent, aggressive, and unruly behaviour performed by gang members. The gang boys thus enact protest masculinity to rebel against educators, prefects, and other learners.

4.2 Violence, masculinities and schooling at NPS

The 'Amajimbosi' (referring to the notorious boys in the gang, namely: Joe, Darkie, Ganda and Saddam) is the most anti-school sub-culture at NPS. They are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with the gangs that are outside the school. Amajimbosi acts out their toughness by truanting, not wearing uniform, not doing homework, absenteeism and arriving at school late. The boys of Amajimbosi use the school as a key site for marijuana (dagga) trafficking. The Amajimbosi

use their low-income status as the cause to earn their living through illegal activities, such as drug dealing (mainly dagga), stealing, and housebreaking.

Joe, aged 15, came late to school with a fresh smell of dagga. When asked about the abuse of dagga, he cited his friends as being influential in his decision to smoke dagga. He was searched and found to be in possession of dagga.

In the interview with Joe, when asked about the marijuana possession he confessed that:

> "Bra Mzi in the neighbourhood asked me 'push the stuff' (sell) ... and this will earn me a pocket money or pay school fees. He told me that police [officers] won't arrest me. I'm still young ... they [gangs] persuaded me to smoke dagga so that I could fight the cold and slightly rainy weather..."

Boys in gangs are vulnerable to anti-social behaviour. In dealing and smoking dagga, Joe is caught between the structural conditions which make dealing attractive, but also peer influence and his agency in the actual smoking of dagga.

Join them or fight against them

Bershy's entry into a gang through threats and intimidation is just one example of the methods gangs use to recruit. Often membership is involuntary. Gangs intimidate boys in school hallways, or to and from school, offering them a harsh choice. Gangs are, in effect, strategically constructing and reconstructing a discourse that provides gang members with two essential elements for group identity: a terrifying threat and a heroic masculinity. This is validated in the interview with Bershy:

> "I was carrying my schoolbag home and then going onto the streets. Hanging out was exciting, fun. It was basically drinking and fighting, but I was in school, getting good marks".

"It's either you join them [gang] or you are against them, they usually ask you for your lunch or pocket money and sometimes they'll demand that you do their homework with intimidation".

Isitabani: fight to death

The association with femininity for gang members not only perceived as demeaning and degrading, but also alienates them from the acceptable patterns or forms of masculinity. Boys who are perceived as homosexuals (gays) are punished and ridiculed. Masculine mockery, including name-calling, jokes and teasing, positions and re-positions each other in hierarchies of power and status. In protest of being equated with femininity, gang boys often resort to violence and are prepared to fight to death. Violence is key:

"If anyone called me "isitabani", they wouldn't be speaking to me alone. They must know I have "The Bafanas" who'll teach him a lesson ..."Amadloz' akhe ayob'emfulathele" (His ancestors would have turned their back on him). Never, I can fight to death instead".

Interview with Solo, June 2003.

Some boys act out their masculinity in accordance with gang members if they are perceived to be effeminate. By engaging in this form of protest masculinity (gang activity) they are attempting to escape a perceived subordinated or marginalized masculinity (homosexuality).

"Under my mother's skirts"

At NPS the problem of school gangs is compelling, and takes aggressive forms. *S'gi*, who is 16 years old, was once arrested on charges of assault against a 15-year-old girl. He assaulted this girl for insulting remarks about the relationship with his mother:

Researcher : Where were you for the past three days?
S'gi   : Eish ... Sir I was ... (silence) arrested by police [officers]
Researcher : Why?

S'gi : I hit this girl ... (as if she sees her) for calling me "under my mother's skirts" [a mother fucker] as she was attacking me ... then I hit her first ... I warned her that "ngizokufaka unyawo" (I 'll kick you) if you continue like this, but she did not listen.

Researcher: Do you think you did the right thing?

S'gi : I beat her because I am the man [boy]. She must understand that I am the man [boy]. I am the boss.

Interview excerpt, S'gi.

"Under my mother's skirts" is constructed as an insult to the violent (gang) masculinity. S'gi's masculinity has the exaggerated quality of masculine protest in which violence is employed as a compensation for perceived weakness. Connell (1995) views this protest masculinity as a social, rather than individual, practice. The insult questions a boy's status and the association with mother is seen as derogatory and belittling. In the classroom, corridors as well as playground arenas gang boys reject being assimilated to femininity and resort to violence as a means to gain power, prestige and a sense of superiority. In this context, gang membership becomes a means through which S'gi enacts violence and aggression directed towards other learners, in particular the girls, in order to establish a respected male identity within the less empowered form of protest masculinity. The incidents of hitting or fighting others are not always noticed but this kind of misconduct is often framed within the logic of blaming the boys without an understanding of the context of violent masculinities.

Bullying Brat

Bullying or fighting was an important means of testing, changing or confirming protest masculinity amongst gang boys. As Bershy claimed in an interview:

"I have mates, "impintshi" [a gang] behind me if a fight occurs on my way to and from school in the neighbourhood ... I can defend myself and ... no one messes with me and get away unpunished".

It seemed important for Bershy that he had a gang behind him for defence, support and protection. Gangs of boys at NPS function to defend and provide collective support for an aggressive masculinity. The expression of an aggressive masculinity was integral to the gang boys' identity. Unequal gender power relations influence how these gang boys think and solve problems. Using bullying, threats and violence is a key to maintaining patterns that have come to be associated with gangs. Young boys in gangs work in ways that protect their "turf" and this must be taken into account in understanding the persistence of gang cultures at the school. Connell's (1995) use of protest masculinity permits us not only to recognize, but also to comprehend boy's gang cultures as enacted in the construction of different masculinities within the lived environments. Gang membership provides gang boys with bravery to reject and challenge anyone moving into their territory through violence. Solo, a boy aged 14 recounts how warfare broke out between his gang (The Bafanas) of a predominantly isiZulu-speaking and the isiXhosa-speaking gang called "Izintandane". In protest of what The Bafanas regards as their turf (KZN), this gang resorted to violence. He stated that a lot of ethnically motivated fighting or bullying occurred at his school. The fight went on:

> "between "The Bafanas" (Solo's group) and the other group of "Izintandane". One day everyone was on their way home and one of the "The Bafanas" gang boys pulled out an "isiphula" (a dangerous home-made knife) and there ended up being warfare from then on".

Clearly, the quest for dominance and recognition is part of gang culture. Violence between the gangs is actually a fight for recognition, prestige, and power.

Another instance of violent masculinity is articulated by 16-year-old Bershy:

> **Researcher:** Why did you fight (bully) him?
> **Bershy**   : Sir, he is insulting by calling me "leli-Mpondo" ...and even if I report him they [educators] won't do anything about it.
> **Researcher:** Aha, and then?

Bershy : I knew other boys will laugh at me (shaking his head) and think that I 'm coward – like 'mama's boy…

The control of space and the symbolism of territoriality play important roles in the securing of [turf] and to masculine potency (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Amaoti is regarded as predominantly isiZulu-speaking group territory in which non-isiZulu-speaking groups are discounted. It is in this context that bullying may erupt into violent acts and their causations can be traced in incidents around issues of ethnic-related insults, such as, "leNzule" (isiZulu-speaking person), "lomXhosa" (isiXhosa-speaking person', "Ikwerekwere" (xenophobic insult for Africans who are non-South Africans). A gang loyalty can also be achieved in terms of an ethnic grouping or class.

Most explanations given for why the boys became involved in gang cultures, related to circumstances of their poverty as the motive. For example, Darkie, aged 15 years, explains:

> "They [gangs] come from poor families in the ghetto… I can't afford school fees. So I decided to hang out with them …we break into houses [in the neighbourhood] and steal from people especially with tuckshops. Now, I don't like doing that anymore, but I want to make a living and enjoy gang life".
>
> Interview with Darkie, June 2003.

Darkie confirms poverty as a motive for hanging out with gangs but he "want(s) to make a living and enjoy gang life" explains why the reaction against social and economic disparities often takes on a violent edge. The underlying factor is also boys' investment in constructions of masculinity.

Ulova and Ibhari Boys

Ulova is a violent Africanised urban style, a thuggish male gang member who risks being at wrong end of school's authority. On the other hand, Ibhari is associated with a rural foolish

boy. In protest of being equated with Ibhari boys, Ulova's dress sense and wearing the right

forms of clothes provided gang boys with a sense of power and prestige:

> **Joe:** "We get so much pressure to wear the right brand name clothes – grey pants like 'dickies' and 'collies'. People who can't, they are isolated, they are criticised for not being like '*Ulova*' (clever and stylish boy), but '*Ibhari*' (a foolish and non-violent boy)".

Being "clever" and stylish reflect, "young ghettoised males [who] had a real chance of

acquiring prestige" (Glaser, 2000: 71) through gangs. Whilst violence and anti-social

behaviour in general were key to the construction of protest masculinity, dress codes were

also important. Ulova masculinity was asserted through a dress code for gangs in order to gain

peer approval. The categorization of other boys as "Ibhari" promotes the idea in which these

boys are perceived as something completely opposite, alien, and inferior. Ibhari, is associated

with rural life, which is rejected in gangs' urban life and dress style. Nevertheless, Ibhari's

life-style is compatible with the school's ethos. Ibhari boys are liked and favoured by most

educators because they are always up-to-date with their schoolwork. Ibhari boys'

compatibility with school life alienates them from Ulova boys. Ulova is protest masculinity.

Ulova boys dislike Ibhari boys because they do not engage in violent gang cultures and they

are potential targets of violent acts such as bullying, fighting and other forms of persecution.

In South Africa discourses of masculinity which invoke violence of or the ability to enjoy

...[gang life] to demonstrate being a "real men [or boy]" are common place (Morrell, 2000).

The dominant discourses within the context of unequal social relations at NPS put pressure on

boys to adopt brand name clothing. Within NPS and within the context of gangs, dress code

becomes an instance through which masculinity is practiced.

4.3 Relationship with educators

The gang members believed that they were perceived through the confines of stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices as "osikhotheni" (school drop-out gangs) and gang-bangers, and they were not being valued as individuals. For example, Saddam when interrogated about stealing money from his class-teacher's purse in deputy principal's office; he initially cited his poor family background and living with the stepfather as the strongest influence on his decision to steal. In fact, this was not the only reason. Saddam had developed hatred against his teacher for repeated name-calling incidents as "usikhotheni" (refers to a school drop out boy). Earlier in this chapter, educator's complicit masculinity in sustaining and reproducing protest masculinity was highlighted.

Researcher: What were some of the things that you did at school?

Saddam : Swear at some educators, don't do my classwork or homework …and make a noise in class.

Darkie : Come late to school. Just never go to school … nobody cares at all.

Solo : Don't wear school uniform… I like to be in style, say wear 'real gear' (meaning name-branded clothes). Sometimes bunk classes…just to draw educators' attention.

Researcher: What made you do all these things?

Saddam : Whenever we start speaking they [educators] say, 'quiet who told you to speak?' [everyone laughing]

The silencing and verbal abuse of boys such as Saddam increased their exclusion. In this context boys turned to each for support and formed a tight-knit, exclusive peer group, which provided them with an alternative cultural identity (Mokwena, 1991: 15–16). In fact school is often seen as a hostile environment and educators are complicit in making schools hostile to young boys like Saddam. While it is not clear why Saddam dropped out of school, the fact that he did does confirm the incompatibility of school life.

Bhele, aged 14 years old, said in his interview:

"They [educators] think that most of us [informal settlement boys] are in gangs, and try to put us down by calling us 'osikhotheni' or 'umngengana' (gang)".

The humiliation and ridicule of these boys at being called "osikhotheni" or "umngengana" by some educators at NPS is a daily occurrence. Although the educators are simply speaking the truth, their utterances marginalize and exclude gang members from the majority of boys in the school.

All the key informants, when asked about the learning areas (LAs) or subjects they disliked, unanimously pointed to Technology, which Miss Z offers, as the LA in grade seven classes. When probed with questions regarding their antagonism to this particular educator, all the participants said: "Uyaphoxa... uluhlaza", meaning she is humiliating, degrading and rude. Things turned nasty one Monday when she found the table and chalkboard in her classroom engraved with graffiti, which reads as follows: "Miss Z, fuck you! Lento embi" (you ugly thing/bitch). Gang boys created a sense of togetherness that Mac an Ghaill (1994: 56) describe as "sticking together". Here sticking together is accomplished through violent swearing and insult, which evoked gross vulgarity and extreme provocation. The hidden meaning of this expression refers to one's mother private parts. The use of such hauntingly aggressive terms and expressions – invariably carrying with them threats of gendered violence – often led to fistfights, stabbings, and sometimes shootings and can be understood in terms of turf protection, male bonding and interdependency among gang members. It is important to note that teachers are thus complicit in the perpetuation of protest masculinity.

Violence and gang boys

Violent associated with gangs' culture not only harms the victims but it also exposes gang members to risk of injury, imprisonment, and death. The complexity of boys' gang culture is

further exacerbated in boys' construction of masculinities. For instance, a 'protest masculinity' can be constructed through defiance of authority – a strategy these boys use to express their rebellious behaviour of being marginalized by the school. The pervasiveness of violent gang masculinities were illustrated in the interview with Ganda, a 13-year-old boy. He recounted an incident in which swearing, threatening, intimidating and stabbing among gang boys was an everyday experience. The threatening words: "Ngizokugwaza" (I'll stab you) and "Ngizokusakaza ngenhlamvu" (I'll shoot you) resonate boys' everyday life experiences where extreme violence is taken up as an appropriate means to exercise power.

> "You can stab someone with a knife or a screwdriver. Sometimes you shoot a person with a gun. It's like you're having fun and your friends are thrilled about it. The next thing you score points and be like a hero".
>
> Interview with S'gaxa, May 2003.

> "If you need money or something, you don't have to ask your mom or dad for it. You just rob the stupid or younger boys and girls in the classroom. '**Bazothula du**' (emphasis) – meaning they'll shut up. If they dare report to a teacher, they'll be asking for trouble from amajitha (a gang) after school".
>
> Interview with Bhele, May 2003.

Breaking rules and regulations of the school is just one example of the strategies gangs use to challenge the authority figures and the day-to-day running of the school.

4.4 Relations with other boys

In order to demonstrate how gang boys relate with other boys in the school, the researcher will draw from an account by Zama, who was bullied on his way home from school. Zama does not belong to a gang. He was very worried, withdrawn and frightened when he could not afford to pay the so-called 'protection fee' that the bullies were demanding from him. Zama

was coerced to steal money from his father's tuck shop in order to pay a 'protection fee'. The perpetrators were a gang of about five boys under the leadership of 16-year-old Saddam, who had tried to 'tighten screws' by placing a knife on Zama's chest for failing to pay the gang's demanded amount on time. Noticeable, is how Saddam uses the gang structure to exert some form of power on a powerless boy as a way of proving his masculinity.

Drawing from the field notes, a gang inside the school known as 'Amajimbosi' had threatened to kill a boy from another gang in the school called 'The Bafanas' as one of their members wanted his girlfriend. They threatened to kill Bhele as he travelled home from school. Bhele therefore brought a loaded gun from home and kept the gun in his schoolbag to protect himself. Luckily a member of the staff who saw Bhele behaving strangely, searched his schoolbag and seized a gun. The practice of direct intimidation and violence is mostly explained by Glaser's (1990) contribution in which he states that gangs are an embodiment of na viciously violent street youth culture. It is here where violence finds acceptance as a normal way of life and is imported into the school where young boys enact streetwise patterns of gang behaviour. Within this machismo culture, violence is a means of self-assertion and often the only known conflict resolution mechanism.

4.5 Race and gang activities

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two revealed that gang activities take the outward form of a type of rebellion or protest against social values, and partly attract marginalized boys for this reason. Boys' age and class in particular play a major role in inscribing masculine patterns. The learners at NPS are deprived of opportunities to develop to their full potential due to the past racial imbalances and its legacies.

The following excerpt shows how issues of race, class and geographic location impact on the making of young gang cultures:

> "Eish! Sir, we don't steal from our neighbourhood. We only go to Phoenix, break into
> Indians' houses and steal there…"
>
> Ghanda, Interview, June 2003.

In this context, I agree with Healy (2000) who sees gangs as a means of attaining wealth. Breaking into Indians' houses in order steal is a taken-for-granted means of survival among a gang of boys. There are many socio-economic factors which impact on the school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. The alienation of African boys provided the context in which alternate social mechanisms such as gangs could develop.

> "If I have money, then I see myself as a boss (gang). Wherever I go, I can't starve 'cause
> I can buy whatever I want. My friends would stick around me … if you have money you
> are in control".
>
> Interview with Saddam, May 2003.

The community from which these boys come faces socio-economic marginalisation and high levels of crime and violence. To understand why some gang boys are involved in anti-social behaviours, we need to acknowledge not only the complex motivations and situational factors which cause them, but also their relations with the construction of masculinity. Boys' oppositional practice stems from a different cause: the rejection by gang boys of the school's social values and their accompanying disciplinary system. Sixteen-year-old Jomo expressed his view regarding monetary benefits:

> "You don't just get involved just for the sake of getting involved … It's either for money
> or fame … and obviously if you have money you have the whole world, you can do
> whatever you like – say nice things".

As an African boy, Jomo clearly articulates the way in which membership to gangs is linked to power (and economic power). Highlighted here is how gender is performed in the context

of race, class, ethnicity and locality feature prominently in the enactment of gang masculinities for these boys.

> **Darkie:** "I only attend school because my parents force me to. I understand from the day I was born, I was not meant to be educated. Other people [schoolmates] regard me as a fool. There is a group that provides me with all the love, care, comfort, appraisal and acceptance I need as a man [boy]".

Darkie recounts how he decided to join a gang called Amajimbosi because his parents could not provide him with love, care, comfort, appraisal and acceptance he needs as a boy. In his opinion, the gang's care amounted to appropriate alternative care.

In this chapter I have provided findings and statement of results of the research project. These findings focused on how violent (gang) masculinities were taken up (constructed) by African boys within gang cultures at one primary school at Amaoti in Inanda, Durban. Chapter Five presents discussion and conclusion of major findings thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5. Introduction

This study has investigated the ways in which a group of ten boys who are members of gangs construct their masculinity. The focus was on African boys' construction of their masculinities within gang cultures at Nhlonipho Primary School (NPS) in Inanda, Durban. The age of the boys who constituted the research group ranged between 12 and 16 years. Qualitative methods including observation and unstructured interviews were used as tools in an attempt to demonstrate the interrelatedness between violence, gangs, and masculinities in the school environment. Boys are predominantly perpetrators of violence and violence is male dominated. Thus violence, which is connected with masculine identities ultimately, characterizes the gang members. Furthermore, this research project has uncovered how protest masculinity is constructed and bound up with issues of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and context in the making of youth gang cultures. This research has also demonstrated that there are many factors which impact negatively on the school such as poverty, family violence, gang cultures and gangsterism.

5.1 Discussion

The discussion in this chapter consolidates major issues and addresses critical questions referred to previously in Chapter Three. The high levels of unemployment, extremes in wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns, and patriarchal values and behaviours in South Africa have inevitably affected children and young people and contribute to the existence of gang cultures in and out of the school system. Some boys construct their

masculinity by joining gangs because they are marginalized from the school through its hierarchical values and the authoritative power of educators over learners.

This study reveals that gangs of boys are enacting masculinity that is oppositional to school authority by contravening school rules and regulations in multiple ways. They are operating from a protest position, which challenges the dominant masculinity of the school. Its major characteristic is protest against educators as authority figures, girls and other boys. Working class and African boys encounter school authority as an alien power and therefore begin to define their masculinity against it. The gangs of African boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity, which exhibit a masculine style of protest against the dominant culture of the school. At NPS, the school authorities and school prefect system marginalize gang culture. The study has highlighted that the dominant culture of the school provided a fertile context for the eruption of violent gang masculinities. The prefect system that operates to maintain discipline in the school is perceived as a symbol of authority. Prefects and other learners who contest violent, aggressive, and unruly behaviour by gang members display hegemony, the dominant culture of the school. The gang boys thus band together and act out protest masculinity to rebel against them. These boys are characterised by aggressive territoriality and assertiveness which the school, through its culture and ethos, perpetuates. This thesis has indicated how a minority group of boys align themselves against the school's authority to form a collective organized group of gangs.

Gang boys are seen to deploy forms of protest masculinity against institutionalised marginalisation. The researcher's observation shows that gang masculinity is established against other masculinities within the school context. Gang boys challenge the day-to-day running of the school by engaging in risky behaviour including truancy, non-completion of tasks, and anti-school uniform campaigns. Gang boys act out their protest masculinity in multiple ways. Additionally, they are involved in dagga or tobacco smoking, consuming

intoxicating drinks, bullying, teasing, and hanging around with gangs outside the school. Sometimes, they act out their toughness by not doing homework, absenteeism, and arriving at school late. In this instance, an intervention programme that can assist African boys particularly in their development is suggested. It will require the guidance and support of educators, parents, and the community at large for these gang boys to realise their full potential.

As evidenced in the research, there are many socio-economic factors which impact negatively on the school such as poverty, family violence and gangsterism. At NPS, an informal settlement school at Amaoti, economic conditions are low and are not very different from other African schools in similar circumstances in South Africa. Learners at the school could barely afford basic school needs, such as school uniform, stationery, and school fees of R90 per annum. According to Pinnock (1998), this area is characterised by poor facilities, low levels of economic activity, poor education, and high unemployment. The low income status of boys often forces them to earn their living through illegal activities, such as drug dealing/taking (mainly dagga), stealing, and housebreaking.

However, it can be argued that socio-economic status is not the only causal factor for these boys to join gangs – other factors persist alongside. These boys engage in gang-related activities not only for monetary benefits, but also for prestige and power. The boys in this study are economically and socially disadvantaged. Gang membership provides an immediate sense of power and control.

This research project has demonstrated the relationship between violence, masculinities and schooling. It uncovered the ways in which violent forms of masculinities are enacted, shaped or constrained and lived through gang cultures. These forms of masculinities are often marginalized and constructed as deviant boys by educators. In the first place, the school's context is important in the enactment of violent masculinities. Gang boys align themselves to

oppositional patterns of aggression as the mechanism to maintain a sense of status and through such enactments, gain material dividends (Bhana, 2002). Ulova masculinity is a form of protest masculinity, which targets educators, other boys and girls. Boys labelled as 'Ibhari' by 'Ulova boys', in their view, display hegemonic patterns of masculinity in the school, for example, are targets for abuse because they do not engage in anti-social behaviour and their compatibility with the school and educators casts suspicion on Ulova masculinity. Thus timid boys, educators and other learners, marginalize Ulova masculinity because of the claim that Ulova boys are clever and stylish. Ulova masculinity rejects other gender identities and is rebellious.

The notion of belonging to a masculinised friendship group within gang cultures is enacted through dress code and admiration of male power. In this instance, boys have a strong desire to assert their power in which 'Ulova' masculinity is constructed. Ulova is a violent Africanised urban style, a thuggish male gang who risk being at the wrong end of the school's authority. The violence that is directed against the subordinated masculine identities, such as ibhari and isitabani, is part of the process that reproduces violence in general and sustains aggressive and violent gang masculinity and violence against girls and women (Bhana, 2002).

Challenging the relationships between masculinity and violent gang masculinity can begin anywhere within a school, for example, within the curriculum, through pedagogical reforms or structural changes. It is important to note that such challenges do occur. For too long the relationships between masculinities and violent gang masculinity have been ignored in many schools in South Africa.

Schools need to foster a wider range of positive masculine behaviours and roles than are currently available. This research has documented powerfully the extent, nature, and multiple forms of violence and the negative effects of such violence on schooling.

Nowhere in South Africa is the prevalence of negative gang culture more noticeable than in schools in informal settlements, such as Nhlonipho Primary School. Many South African children were born, reared, matured, married, and died in violent situations. Some have become so immune to violent actions that they see violence as an acceptable form of expression and as a way of channelling their emotions. Schools located in disadvantaged areas, where the culture of violence reigns, are plagued with negative masculinities often associated with violence, crime, gangs, drugs, and other related problems. Much more work is needed to deal with this problem – in schools with both learners and educators – and to create a sense of better economic possibilities for children.
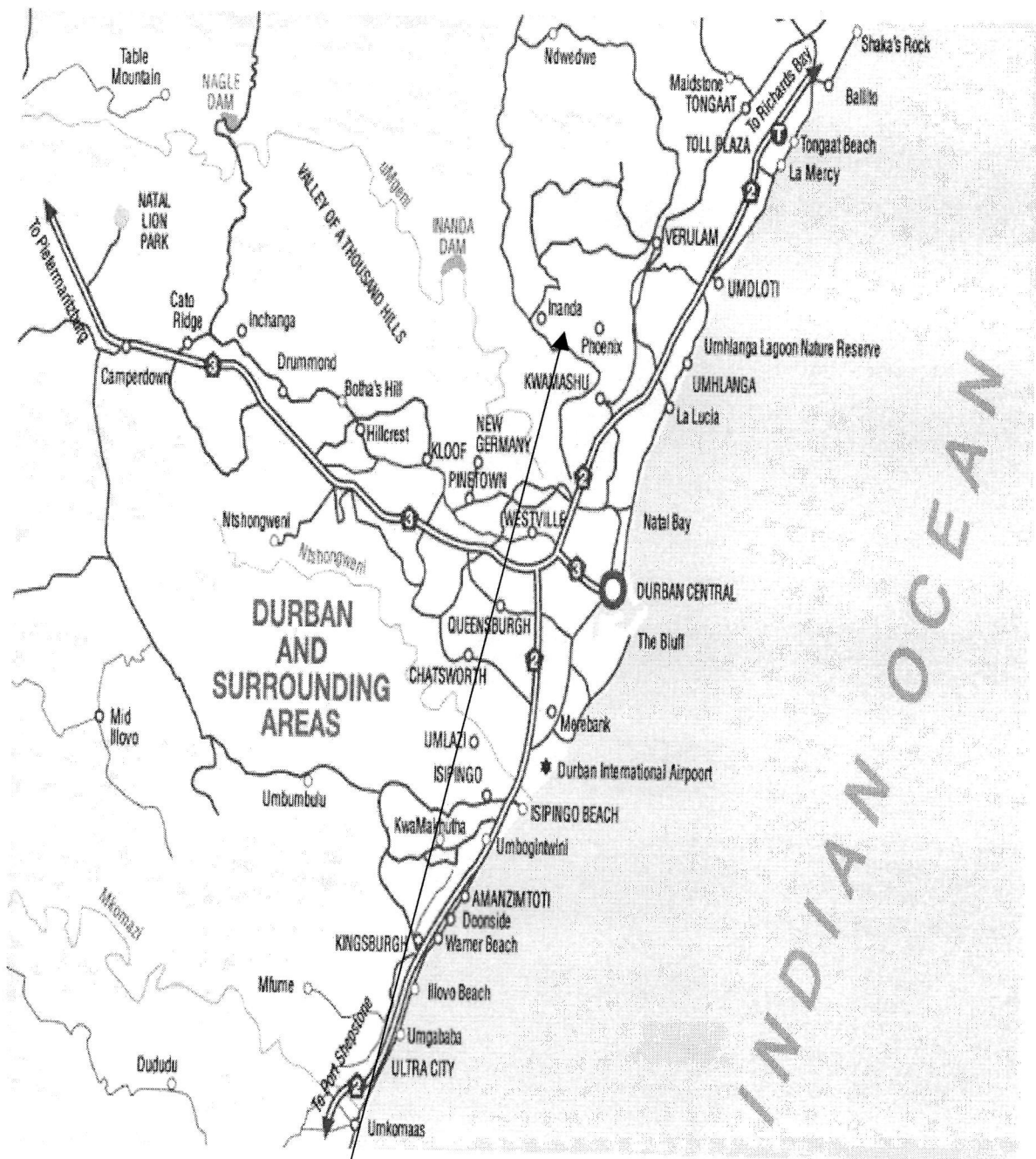
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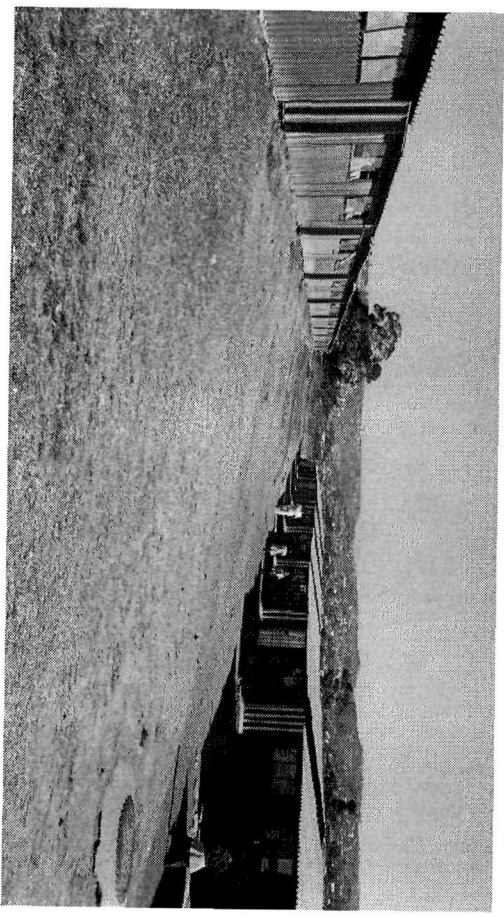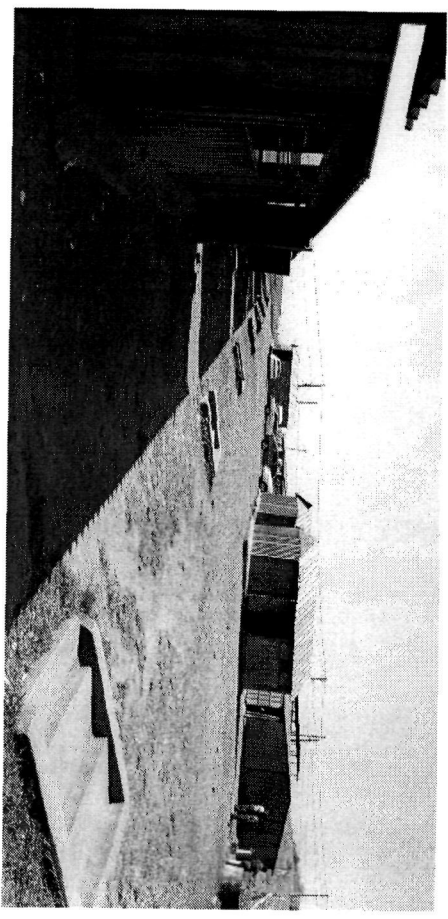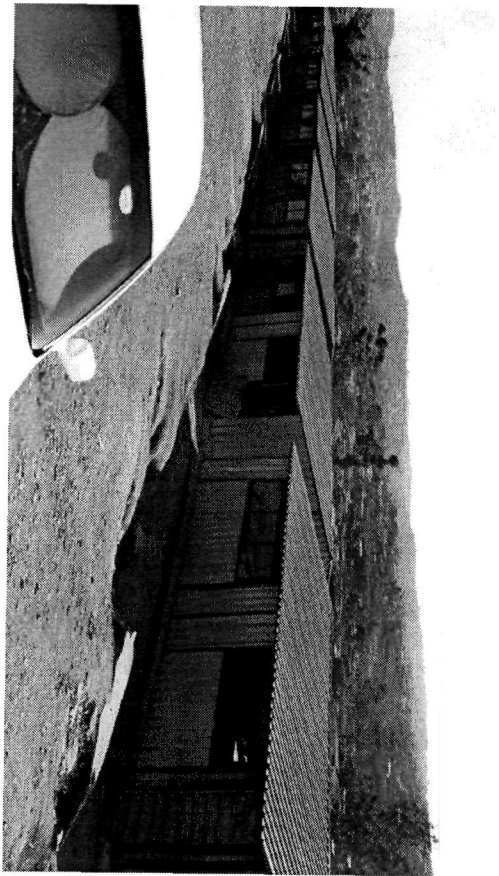
7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

AMAOTI

APPENDIX II

NHLONIPHO PRIMARY SCHOOL (*Temporary Structures*)

APPENDIX III

Letter Requesting Permission

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am at present doing Masters in Education (i.e. part-time studies) with the school of Education at University of Natal (Durban). I am undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis on Gender Studies. I would be most grateful if you could assist in this research project by giving permission for your son to participate. This research project explores African boys and gangs: Construction of masculinities within gang cultures at the school. This is aimed at finding solutions to boys' behavioral problems, which impact negatively on their scholastic performance and achievement as well'

I propose to make observations and interviews for the next six months with a group of ten boys (aged 12 – 16 years). In addition, I intend to make tape-recorded interviews with these boys. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and confidentiality. All the participants will be given pseudonyms to protect their identity. Your son is entirely free to discontinue participation at any time or decline to answer particular questions.

Parent's/Guardian's Consent Form
I ………………………………………………………….the parent/guardian of ……………………….. who is doing grade seven, hereby agree/disagree to give permission for my son(s) to participate.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely
I. D. Maphanga (Deputy Principal)