`Coloured` boys in 'trouble': an ethnographic investigation into the constructions of Coloured working-class masculinities in a high school in Wentworth, Durban.

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'As the candidate's supervisor I agree / do not agree to the submission of this thesis'.

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TO:

My dear husband Len, my son Kealan and daughter Nikita, to whom I dedicate this thesis. Thank you for understanding that much of my time spent with this thesis meant being away from you.

My late mum for teaching me to be determined and to overcome in spite of the enormous challenges that I am confronted with daily.

My personal Saviour, through whom all things are possible.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

This thesis is about the lived experiences of 13 Coloured[1] boys, but it also about me. It is an exploratory study of how troublesome boys in a predominantly working-class, high-school context construct their masculinities. It is my intention to show how boys in trouble are an issue of masculinities. I draw on research on men and boys to show how trouble is linked to toxic forms of masculinities displaying rampant hypersexual and violent behaviours. In this preface I look to my own experiences of Coloured men and boys, which I draw on to illustrate how my life imbricates with that of my participants. The construction of masculinities in this instance, what it means to be a Coloured male in Wentworth, has greatly impacted upon my life. This is not to suggest that I have encountered only Coloured males in my life, but the focus of my study and my history in apartheid South Africa confines my experiences to this context. My personal journey as wife and mother, sister and daughter all mesh together to produce a reading of Coloured boys and men in ways that are enmeshed and entangled with who I am as a Coloured woman.

I am Coloured. Apartheid named me as such and shamed me in the process. I have lived in Wentworth, the heart of a working-class community in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. In this thesis I write about Coloured boys within a community of people with whom I have strong ties. These include our Coloured identity, growing up in a working-class context, problems of stigmatisation, absent fathers and single-parent families. This is not to say that these similarities predispose me to an emic perspective into their lives. Boys and girls, women and men do experience life in the Wentworth Coloured community and culture in distinctly

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[1] Coloured: A racial categorisation in South Africa used to refer to people of mixed descent. `Coloured` is constructed as a residual, supplementary identity, `in-between` whiteness and blackness and interpellated in relation to registers of respectability and (sexualised) shame (Erasmus, 2001).

different ways. Coloured men and boys in particular have been the cause of extreme feelings of elation and sadness, discomfort, emotional turmoil and contentment, pain, worry, anxiety and uncertainty in my life.

My life in the Coloured township of Wentworth began when I was four years old. The Group Areas Act of 1950 saw the forced relocation of my family from Mayville to Wentworth. This township comprised[s] largely of flats (see Appendix D) and became a dumping ground for Coloureds who were forcibly relocated here from Cato Manor and from as far away as the Eastern Cape. It also became a perfect breeding ground for a host of social problems exacerbated by high levels of unemployment and poverty. My family's financial woes, however, began long before we moved to Wentworth. When I was just eight months old, my father deserted my mother and six children. My mother, from whom I inherited a strong sense of family and a resilient character, procured employment in which she worked long hours in a clothing factory for little remuneration. As I was a young girl, the chain of events had serious consequences for me. In our family of six children, four boys and two girls of whom I was the youngest, the gendered expectations weighed extremely heavily on me. My mother's long hours at work meant that we had to take care of the home. As far as I can recall, we spent very little time with my mother because she was determined to prove that she could adequately provide for her children. Her maternal instinct coupled with enormous pressure from social workers to give us, *her children*, up released a venomous resistance in her that in many ways had a negative impact upon us, the very objects of her affection. Her desperate bid to keep social workers from placing us in foster care propelled my mother into a determination of typically `patriarchal` proportions. She developed a brutish, stoic and regimental disposition that earned her the title, `The General`. In our home `getting down to business` was the order of the day, with a great emphasis on getting work done around the house. Survival amid extreme economic

hardships permeated our everyday existence and left little or no place for open expressions of love. Even though we knew, deep down in our hearts, that our mother loved us, as children there was never any tangible affirmation of this love. In retrospect, I often think of how desperately all of us craved for a little love and affection. I know that a hug or even a goodbye kiss or 'I love you' from my mother would certainly have made a difference. We soon realised that love was of secondary importance amidst her extreme struggles for survival. To supplement my mother's income my older sister was compelled to leave school in standard seven (grade nine) to find employment. That left me home alone with `the boys`. I suffered the effects of the socialisation process that perpetuates, normalises and enforces particular gender stereotypes on women and girls in domestic roles. My mother, the matriarch of the family, colluded with this male domination, even if unwittingly, by reinforcing my duty as a girl in ensuring our home was clean, regardless of who untidied it. My mother's collusion with a patriarchal gender order that served to oppress me incited extreme frustration and anger within me. It was only later in life that I have begun to face my own marginalised position of disempowerment as a young girl growing up in a predominantly male dominated and somewhat dysfunctional home. I do, however, acknowledge the monumental sacrifices that my mother made for us, and that she was ignorant of how complicit she was in perpetuating a patriarchal culture.

I now confront my innermost thoughts and emotions that are marred by paradoxical memories of love and resentment, pain and pleasure. In this preface, which calls on me to probe into my memory bank, I now face my `ghosts of the past` that I somehow stored in the darkest and deepest corner of my mind. I have come to the realisation that I had developed my own coping mechanism, by deliberately blocking out certain traumatic and embarrassing events from my present consciousness. My childhood memories take me back to a time in my life

that I would prefer to erase permanently, starting with my absent father, whom I did not know from the time when I was a baby, and who later unexpectedly and briefly reappeared when I was sixteen. I was confronted by a stranger who called himself my father. I was most uncomfortable and ill at ease in his presence. I had no idea how to relate to him or how to address him. My older brothers and sister knew him but I did not! I struggled to call him `daddy`. I tussled with this inner conflict: how do I refer to a man who biologically is my father, but who failed me in so many ways? In fact, he was a total stranger to me. Growing up without a father resonates strongly with the circumstances of many boys in my study and certainly influences me not only to sympathise but also to empathise with them. In presenting the findings of my thesis, I have endured criticism for attempting to portray these boys as `angels in need of a hug`. Coloured males particularly have been and still are vilified and negatively stereotyped, without any real concern for their contexts, which largely sanction troublesome masculinities.

As I recollect, the parallels between my brothers and the boys in my study become increasingly apparent. The ambiguous roles inhabited by my brothers were simultaneously those of bullies and protectors. While I knew that they were always `looking out for me', I was also aware of how easily I could become a victim of their violent temperaments. The many incidents of violence that my participants spoke of resonate strongly with my own life in ways that I have begun to confront only while documenting my research, and more specifically in this preface. I, too, experienced the effects of a violent masculinity both in my home as well as in the broader community. Interestingly, during weekdays there was a relatively calm ambience, routine, order and sanity in our home. I dreaded weekends. Friday, `pay day`, marked the beginning of many weekends from `hell` that were characterised by drinking, drunken brawls and interpersonal and gang violence. I still marvel at how alcohol had the power to transform my brothers and many other men in the community who were passive (with little or

no alcohol consumption) to crude and violent men on the weekends. The most heartbreaking aspect of this was that my mother also resorted to excessive drinking in order to fit into `a man`s world'. In our attempts to get her to stop, she justified her drinking problem by reminding us of how she `works like a man` and so she is entitled to `drink like a man`. Simply put, weekends in Wentworth signified hard drinking, aggressive behaviour, fighting and sexual promiscuity. This behaviour reified the historical `hotnot`[2] stereotypes of how Coloured people are transformed by excessive alcohol abuse. My sister, in her bid to escape this turbulent home environment, made a hasty decision to marry a man who still wanted to drink, party and womanise. She admits that on her wedding day she knew her marriage would soon end in divorce. Her new life with her husband was no different from her life with her family.

I, too, trudged along the same trajectory, in which I found myself attracted to Coloured men who undermined me, eroded my self-esteem and made me feel that I could never do better. I became involved in relationships with men who apparently came into the relationship with problems of their own. In hindsight, I realise how the discourse of male violence sanctioned, normalised and rationalised the emotional and physical abuse I endured during my relationships with Coloured men. It is these experiences and encounters with men that profoundly impacted upon my outlook in life and influenced what I would become and what I would stand for and work towards: respectful and meaningful relationships between men and women.

My husband, being some fourteen years older than I, entered my life with particular preconceived notions of male-female relationships that suggested specific male and female roles and gender appropriate behaviours. When I met my husband I was 24 years old. As I became older I `came into my own` and the

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[2] A `hotnot` is a shortened name for Hottentot – a disparaging term for Coloured people in the Cape.

new, independent, strong-willed and determined ME began to emerge. My doctoral study has evoked ambivalent responses and feelings in my husband who, although extremely supportive of my work, often derides me for only having book knowledge and being ignorant of the `ways of the world`. To his friends, especially, he jokes that I need a PhD to cope with him. These actions illustrate the multiple positions he takes up with different audiences (`performance in action`), the ambiguous nature of his masculinity, as well as his attempts at subverting my powerful academic position. In spite of his shortcomings and even if at a much later stage in his life, my husband has made a tremendous effort to challenge assumptions and expectations around sex roles in his bid to be a hands-on father and supportive husband.

This study has provided this group of boys with the opportunity to talk about their lives, particularly the things that affect them. Research that focuses on men and boys now presents an opportunity to many men to talk about and reflect on how they construct themselves and others. My research at the very least sets out to do this. I felt a real connection with these boys, who were respectful towards me and, when they felt comfortable in my presence, were forthcoming. I wanted them to know that I was interested in them and to let them know that there was hope for them. In getting to know and understand them a little I now realise that my brothers were in a very similar situation. Growing up in a family of four brothers in Wentworth, I have a relatively good idea of these boys` experiences and their struggles. Despite the strong gang culture in Wentworth in the 1970s and 1980s, none of my brothers became affiliated to any gang. I attribute that to my mother, who wielded the power and instilled fear in my brothers. She was unyielding in her stance that no gangsters would live in her home. This is not to say that my brothers were not involved in any fights. They did become involved in numerous altercations that often culminated in legal battles.

I have witnessed many violent encounters both interpersonal and gang-related in Wentworth. Even during my research I have endured extremely traumatic incidents that have clouded this doctoral journey. Three of the males in my family have died violently. My brother and nephew, both relatively young, committed suicide by shooting and hanging. Another nephew was murdered in a shooting incident in Wentworth. These traumatic incidents have resulted in my becoming paranoid and have translated into extreme conflict with my sixteen-year old son, whom I am desperate to protect from potential harm. I have witnessed the detrimental effects of extremely violent masculinities in this community and in wanting to preserve my son I run the risk of alienating him. He has expressed how my extremely protective demeanor is smothering him. I realise how vulnerable young boys are and that in their pursuit of acceptance and a sense of belonging as well as in `standing up` for themselves, they find themselves in situations from which they often do not emerge safely. I continue to have hope for the boys in my study because I have hope for my own son. I pray to God each day to protect my children, with stronger devotions for my son. This is not to say that my daughter is undeserving or in less need, but rather because of the increasing vulnerabilities around masculine behaviours that penetrate men's and boys` lives.

When my son was in Grade One his teacher suggested a psychological assessment because he was unable to remain focused and was often disruptive in the classroom. A pediatrician recommended that he begin a course of Ritalin to suppress his `hyperactivity` disorder. I dismissed this and instead took him for occupational therapy and simultaneously enrolled him at the local gymnastics club. This decision proved to be constructive and beneficial. He excelled at gymnastics and went on to compete at national level on numerous occasions. Despite his and our investment in sporting activities, coupled with our unwavering parental support, he continued to display erratic behaviours at school. This included setting fireworks off on the school

premises. He was perceived to be problematic in school and was constantly under surveillance. During the sessions with my participants, I `saw` my own son and felt a connection with them in many ways. I realised how vulnerable they really are. In hearing their stories and their concerns about not being listened to and not taken seriously, I realised how I too had not really listened to my son, but rather imposed my own values upon him. I have since learnt to listen more carefully to him, to take him seriously, and to guard against imposing my own moral judgments upon him. I must admit, it is difficult! I can attest that my research has achieved the desired academic output, but has also highlighted my shortcomings as a parent. For me, this has been some form of action research. He is now sixteen years old and presently in Grade Eleven. Unlike the boys in my study, my son has become more focused and has adopted a more positive orientation to schooling. This I attribute largely to my not giving up on him together with the continuous support and encouragement of family and friends. I do appreciate that the support network and stable home environment that my son benefits from is absent in many of my participants` lives.

My daughter has always been extremely diligent and disciplined and has not had conflict with school authorities. I experience my children very differently but love them the same.

I am certain that many will question my choice to reveal such personal details about my life. It has become common-place in qualitative research for writers to reveal something about themselves, since books are written from certain standpoints and many writers have advocated that it is important for readers to understand where writers are coming from. With this in mind, I have taken the decision to disclose intimate, personal and private details of my life. My decision to disclose specific details is a declaration of my commitment to my participants, who endorsed my study by revealing much about their lives. The difference lies in the moral and ethical obligation to ensure that their identities remain

anonymous, while I have opted to lay both my identity and my life story open for public scrutiny. My prior understanding of research meant that I had to distance myself from my subjects and adopt a critical and objective stance. When it was pointed out to me that I could use the first person `I` instead of `the researcher` when writing up my research, it gave me a newfound sense of ownership, commitment and connection to this study.

In conclusion, I must point out that some people in my community have subjected me to a barrage of comments over the years for `torturing` myself in pursuit of my doctorate. The tendency for women in this community who are financially secure to become complacent is common. Many cannot understand why I (being financially secure) opt to put myself under such pressure when I could be `a lady of leisure`. These comments propel me more in my determination to be an example to the youth and to provide something for them to aspire to. I am driven by an intense desire to prove to myself, to my family and to the broader community, that despite all of the challenges and struggles in my life, my testimony and achievements are sufficient to destabilise and challenge negative stereotypical images of all Coloureds as lazy, worthless and unrefined. My lifelong dreams have materialised. I encompass all that I hoped to be: an academic, a mother, a wife, a sister, a confidante, and friend. It is to my personal saviour, The Good Lord, that I attribute my strength and determination to break a cycle of poverty and stain and to leave a legacy of pride and moral character for my children and significant others to cherish.

Abstract

This study has focused on Coloured working-class constructions of masculinity, as they affect and define the lives of 13 young males between the ages of 14 and 17. Drawing from ethnography, the study examines the kinds of trouble these boys get into, their explanations and understanding of this trouble, as well as the effects it has in their lives. An examination of the ways in which their troublesome behaviours are located within complex and conflicting notions of masculinity is integral with their particular constructions of Coloured working class masculinities.

Despite the fact that social circumstances affect the constructions of masculinities leading to the stereotype of the` bad boy`, there has been relatively little investigation of the contradictory positions inhabited by boys, which would seem to contradict the oversimplified `bad boy` stereotype. The data reveal that the boys in this study are not simply bad, but rather that their problematic socio-economic context and marginalised positions offer spaces for anti-school, anti-authoritarian and anti-academic masculinities to flourish. Evidently some boys contest, negotiate and resist familiar notions of a hegemonic Coloured masculinity, and in so doing provide a rationale for the alternative positions they take up. The thesis argues that despite the hegemony of harmful masculinities, the same boys, given the opportunity, strive for academic success, seek peaceful, mentoring relationships, reject violence and demonstrate more loving and respectful versions of masculinity. The focus on these specific boys draws attention to possible ways of working with them and their teachers in an attempt to improve their life chances, by making their schooling better and more sensitive to their plight.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

'The shots rang out soon after 1pm on Saturday last week and many of us ran out of the barracks - blocks of flats next to the Engen refinery - to find yet another teenage corpse: Zukz MacDonald. He joined Tersia Heslop, Roman van Schalkwyk and Sebastian Roskruge as some of this year's victims of Wentworth violence. A growing epidemic of drug usage and gangs is causing the death of too many of our youngsters. Violence is raging out of control. Nightclubs seem to be the main site, and gangs the main source.' (The Mercury Eye on Civil Society, 2008:1)

This media extract of young murders provides a gloomy picture of a Coloured working-class community in Wentworth, KwaZulu-Natal, a community plagued by violence and social ills such as substance abuse, unemployment, poverty and the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS. The prevalence of violence, particularly male violence, in Wentworth is cause for great concern. The concerns about boys are linked to broader social issues including race and class that impact on men and boys in ways that include high suicide rates, violence and harassment and hypersexualised behaviours. It is imperative to understand what exactly it is about some men and boys that lead to these behaviours (Barker, 2005).

The above extract illuminates the context out of which the boys who participated in this study emerge. They are boys between the ages of 14 and 17 in a race and class-specific context. That is, they are Coloured, working-class boys. The study turns to Merewent[5] High School in Wentworth in the South Durban Basin of KwaZulu-Natal, from which my sample was drawn. Wentworth is a predominantly Coloured community in the province of KwaZulu-Natal one of nine provinces in South Africa (see Appendix A).

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[5] Not the real name for research site. Merewent is a pseudonym.

Statistics for 2009 show that the Coloured population constitutes 9%, that is 4,433,100 of approximately 49, 320, 500 South Africans (Statistics SA, 2009). The majority of Coloureds, which is more than 3, 000 000, resides in the Western Cape Province (also see Appendix A), while KwaZulu-Natal, the province with the second highest population of 10, 45 000 000 has approximately 176 000 Coloureds (Statistics SA – Statistical Release PO301)). In July 2009 there was an estimated 2 137 300 Coloured males in South Africa at the time, accounting for 9% of the male population in South Africa (Statistics SA). There were an estimated 210 400 Coloured boys aged 10-14, slightly higher than the 208 200 Coloured girls aged 10-14 for the medium variant estimates; and there were an estimated 206 200 Coloured boys aged between 15-19, over 1000 more than Coloured girls of the same ages (Statistics SA, 2009).

In February 2006 I began a year-long ethnographic study at Merewent High School. The ethnography is located within a qualitative framework. Qualitative research allows us to "explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate" (Mason, 2005:1).This ties in with my purpose to explore the experiences and imaginings of a group of thirteen Coloured boys who seemed to be constantly in `trouble` (reason for enclosing in inverted commas will be explained later in this chapter) and to capture the ways in which their troublesome behaviours is located within complex and conflicting notions of masculinity. Why were Coloured boys specifically the focus of my study in this school? Despite the growing interest in studies that focus on men and boys, there remains a lack of empirical research on Coloured boys in particular. My assumption is that context is vital and that the particulars of working-class Coloured boys' experiences will be helpful in illuminating `trouble` as an issue of masculinities. While there is a

burgeoning literature on Black boys in South Africa, the paucity of scholarship devoted to Coloured boys amounts to the neglect of Coloured boys` experiences, concerns and difficulties in schools. This study captures and describes the specificity of these boys` experiences. Research has been conducted on Coloured men in the Cape, yet there is a relative silence on Coloured men and boys in KwaZulu-Natal. The lack of scholarship to draw upon for this research illustrates how Coloured boys experiences are often marginalised and hidden within academic research and writing (Mirza, 1999). And in the few spaces where they are addressed, they are mostly negatively represented and conceptualised within dominant social and educational discourses and are seen as a source of particular social problems (Archer, 2003). This study provides a glimpse into the lives of thirteen Coloured working class boys with the purpose of supplying a view of their particular concerns, anxieties, behaviours and perceptions. Ethnographic methods have been employed which will reflect the particular circumstances of these boys` lives and provide a 'contextualised description of the social action within their context' (Pole and Morrison, 2003). The focus on context ensures that the structures that shape, limit and to some extent define social action are central to the explanation and understanding of that action (Pole and Morrison, ibid). Through ethnography it is established what types of troublesome behaviours these boys are implicated in (beginning with a three-month pilot period of observation – see Chapter Four), how they understand and explain these behaviours (see analysis chapters) and the effects of these behaviours (see concluding chapter). The ethnography includes participant observation to capture the boys` behaviour as it happened, as well as in-depth interviews to examine their constructions of these behaviours. In-depth, semi-structured group and individual interviews facilitate engagement with specific performance-based behaviours of these Coloured boys in an attempt to understand their subjective experiences through their own accounts. In addition, ethnography is useful in understanding the nuanced meanings that

boys give to their masculinities as well as how these meanings are shaped by broader social factors.

Being Coloured in the South African context is strongly associated with being poor and being marginalised. Coloureds were marginalised in the apartheid era and still experience marginalisation in the new democratic dispensation. Coloureds are often constructed and contruct themselves as 'not white enough and not black enough' (Adikhari, 2005). This resonates with the ever-present sense of displacement and `not belonging` which has plagued Coloured people in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world perhaps, over many centuries. Here, the sense of uncertainty, unworthiness and even inferiority arising from the decades of the apartheid government's discrimination against the community has resulted in marked material disadvantage and social and economic lack in the community. The marginalisation experienced by these and many other Coloured boys, and their various subsequent vulnerabilities, have varying consequences. In addition, the negative stereotyping of Coloureds serves to intensify the plight of many of these boys, some of whom have expressed their determination to ameliorate their lives. The affirmative action policy in South Africa designed to present greater opportunities and better prospects for employment and life improvement for the previously disadvantaged is perceived to further marginalise Coloureds. The pressing socio-political and cultural challenges that face post-apartheid South Africa impact upon this already marginalised community and ultimately on this group of boys. Furthermore, research has shown that (young) men from working-class backgrounds have been identified as being most affected by the changing economic conditions (Hunter, 2002; Archer, 2003). Access to employment is difficult in Wentworth, leading to much frustration among males. Employment is sporadic and sees

many families in Wentworth becoming dependent on social welfare and pensions for survival.[6]

Merewent High, a public, co-educational Coloured high school in Wentworth, is weighed down by the lack of parental support and is severely under resourced (as described in Chapter Two). There are no support structures available for those boys who are experiencing difficulties in schools. Currently there exists no school policy designed to help such boys. Rather, the current trend seems to marginalise them and thus perpetuate their troublesome behaviour. The aim of this study is to highlight the specific experiences of these troublesome Coloured schoolboys in the hope that an analysis of their experiences will be important in suggesting ways of working with troublesome boys. The emancipatory impact of my research looks to `bring a voice` to these excluded and marginalised young boys, but it is also important not to become naïve and self-deluding, because emancipation is not something that one person can confer on others. It is an ongoing practice. The way these boys construct their identities facilitates the development of new dimensions in our vision of them and of our understanding of the things that shape their thoughts and actions.

This research does not claim to make any generalisations based on the findings. Experiences, insights, understanding, appreciation and intimate familiarity are its objective, rather than searching for any truth. The study does acknowledge that there are girls who present problems in school, but it is not the intention of the study to interrogate the broader perspective, but rather to focus exclusively on a specific group of boys, since the concern is that the intimate stories and narratives of men and boys (Critical Men`s Studies), both local and international, remains very limited (Shefer, T. et al., 2007). The way in which these boys see themselves, their peers, the girls in the

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[6]In South Africa the child support grant is intended for the support of poor children up to 14 years of age and an amount of R240 a month is paid to the caregivers. Old age pensions of R1010 a month are paid to aged persons (taken from South Africa.info: Gateway to the Nation 23 October, 2009).

school and their teachers will be investigated. In dealing with their accounts, this study takes these boys` lives seriously by affording them the time and opportunity to talk about their lives and to gain insight into the issues that inform the following research questions:

Key questions in this research:

1. How do some of the boys in this school understand their own behaviours?

2. How do these boys construct their teachers and other girls and boys in school?

3. How do their constructions of masculinity lead to troublesome behaviour?

4. What are these thirteen boys` understandings and experiences of getting into `trouble`?

5. How do their representations of being Coloured relate with their experiences of getting into `trouble`?

6. Do biological, backlash and sex-role perspectives help in understanding the ways in which the boys in this school construct and forge their masculine identities?

7. Is anything being done in the school to help these boys or are they merely being positioned as the cause of trouble in school?

The study is located within the context of the debates about boys` education (Connell, 1996; Francis, 2000; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Kimmel,

2005; Skelton, 2005; Mills, Martino and Lingard, 2007) which demonstrates that the concern about boys is not confined to the South African context, but is a global issue. 'What is happening to boys in our education systems and what can we do about it?' were two of the guiding questions examined at a two-day sub-regional meeting in Belize in 2007 (Lawrence-White, 2008; Neal, 2008). This question highlights the global concern with the problem with boys. Concerns about boys have become topical in countries such as Australia, the US, and the UK (Epstein, 1998; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Barker, 2005). In engaging with these concerns and the research questions in this study, I draw on the masculinity approach and find the theories of biological essentialism, backlash and sex-role (discussed in detail in Chapter Three), that attempt to present boys as a homogeneous group, unhelpful. The question of the extent to which boys' constructions of their own masculinities gives rise to their performance in school has been totally neglected, hindering the potential for improving schooling for both boys and girls (Mills, et al. 2007). As will be seen, this study supports the premise that masculinity is socially constructed within the bounds that gender identity is collective rather than individual.

It is shown here that as boys come into contact with each other they create meaning through their interactions. It is for this reason that this study is situated within the `new` sociology of children and childhood in which children are no longer perceived as passive bystanders (Renold, 2002). The participants are positioned as people who actively construct their identities in everyday forms of interaction, through talk (Foucault, 1979) and the kinds of everyday performance (Butler, 1990) that come to be associated with and give substance to their particular identities. The study focuses upon the significant aspect of masculinity and how it functions in relation to authority structures, femininity and other forms of masculinity. The study attempts to capture and draw upon what boys say and do in their specific school context in the process of accomplishing their masculinity. The assumption is that their experiences and behaviours are influenced to a large extent by the authority

structures in the school. Research has shown how schools are critical sites in the process of identity construction (Morrell, 1998). While schools are gendered institutions, this is not to say that they actively choose a form of masculinity for boys to occupy and enact, but rather the ways in which these boys respond to school disciplinary interventions often have detrimental consequences. I have also linked their ideas about masculinity with their dynamic experiences of being Coloured boys in Wentworth. It is demonstrated here that the formation of certain culturally exalted masculinities propels boys to deviate from the norms or code of conduct of the school and that they therefore find themselves in `trouble`. Thus, in the name of thoughtful inquiry, policy development and social justice, it is imperative to understand what it is exactly about the socialisation of these boys that leads to their [troublesome] behaviours (Barker, 2005).

This thesis argues that masculinity is performance in action where boys are in the process of negotiating their identities either by accommodating or resisting particular ways of being Coloured males.

<u>Masculinities: A concept</u>

In trying to highlight the problems that surround these boys, this study asserts that masculinity is central to understanding how and why they behave in certain ways. The study examines how their troublesome behaviour is located within complex and conflicting notions of masculinity and in so doing draws attention to the contradictory patterns of behaviour. This research attempts to broaden current perceptions of masculinity and recognises the range of masculinities represented in schools. Connell offers four categories of masculinity (dominant, complicit, submissive and oppositional or protest) to make sense of the relationships between groups of men and boys (1995). This conceptual arrangement helps us to make sense of the power relationships that operate between different groups of men (discussed in Chapter Three).

Hegemonic masculinity is a dominant masculinity, which serves to subordinate other masculinities (Connell, 1995). The patterns of conduct that are associated with hegemonic masculinity are usually authoritarian, aggressive, heterosexual, physically brave, sporty and competitive (Connell, 1987; 1995; 1998; Connolly, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; 1996, Salisbury and Jackson 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Lesko, 2000).

In South Africa research on masculinities and schooling is not new. However, South African studies conducted by Morrell, a key proponent of men and masculinity studies, focus predominantly on Black men and boys (1998; 2001). Coloured masculinity in South Africa remains relatively under-researched. I draw on the literature on masculinity studies which argues that teenage and adolescent boys` experiences are shaped by notions of power, and that these are strongly related to racialisation, classification and marginalisation (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 2001). I also focus on what the boys say about their experiences of relationships, sexuality and violence and use their voices as a basis for dis-covering the factors that inform their masculine perceptions and constructions. In all of these versions there is a common feature of masculinity and living up to certain versions of what it means to be a man. Among the problems that arise among boys in general are violence, especially gender-based violence, sexual harassment and abuse, substance abuse, homophobia and declining educational achievements (Zimmerman and Bingenheimer, 2002; Frank, Kehler, Lovell and Davison, 2003; Caldwell, Cohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavours and Zimmerman, 2004; Blackbeard, 2005) This study attempts to limit itself to themes related to the boys` Coloured identity in terms of their sexuality and their inclination to engage in violence. Their involvement in physical and sexual violence and the difficulties they face in schools are the key foci in this study, and are central to understanding the making of masculinities among this group of boys. As illustrated in the introductory extract and overwhelmingly elsewhere, research on boys and schooling in South Africa has suggested the troublesome ways in which

masculinities often manifest in (gender) violence and in abusive patterns of behaviour (Wolpe, Martinez and Quinlan, 1997; Morrell, 1998). This situation is also reflected in the ways in which masculinities, particularly African masculinities, have been seen as troubling and troublesome within South African society. Much of the social concern rests in the intersection between masculinities, crime, violence, and sexual abuse (Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith, 2004), with the socio-economic context playing a crucial role in understanding these patterns of violence and abuse. I speak of the working-class context in particular because it forms the basis of this study, given the facts that the development of masculinities cannot be understood without paying critical attention to race and class factors, and that this study is conducted in a working-class community. This study of Coloured boys resonates strongly with research that has shown how young Black African men in Southern Africa have been particularly problematised in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, with campaigns and literature especially addressing them as people with multiple partners and engaging in forms of sexual harassment and violence (Hunter, 2004; Kalipeni et al., 2004; Pattman, 2005). These studies highlight the consequences of sexual violence and promiscuity where men are the major vectors in the spread of HIV and AIDS as well as the consequences that these behaviours have for women and girls and boys and men themselves. As a matter of concern, statistics in the National School Violence Study undertaken by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention indicate that KwaZulu-Natal has the third highest percentage of pupils reporting sexual assault, with 3, 8 percent being abused at school (The Mercury, August, 2008: 3).

The data derived from this study demonstrates how their backgrounds of deprivation and their early experience of violence plague the lives of these participants and lead many of them along a trajectory of callous and misogynistic behaviour. This thesis demonstrates the ways in which their context makes it possible for violent, callous and non-academic masculinities

to flourish. It is evident that their lives are afflicted by poverty and deprivation, violence, getting into trouble with the law, and rampant, hypersexualised behaviours. However, it is important to remain wary of the kind of totalising analysis that is often prevalent in the media – that is, an analysis that represents all working-class Coloured boys in a particular way, as if all of them were the same. The proclivity to typecast and homogenise boys is rife. As prevalent as the stereotypes about boys are, the data reveal that there are those who do not conform to them. It is for this reason that many gender scholars argue that gender identities are socially constructed and also note the ceaseless contestation around the formation of gender identity (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Bhana, 2002; Barker, 2005; Renold, 2005) which is a prevalent argument of this thesis. The assumption is that the contradictory and ambivalent accounts and responses of these boys are tied in with multiple masculinity perspectives. Moreover, boys` experiences and perceptions of masculinity are quite context-specific and the ways in which race, class and gender intersect have implications for their schooling and social experiences. By exploring their particular constructions of what it means to be a male in Wentworth this study provides insight into their lives, and in so doing contributes to our vision of the multiple and evolving nature of masculinities. This perspective provides a persuasive argument which rejects oversimplified and uni-dimensional conceptualisations of boys as a coherent, homogeneous group, by stressing the multiplicity of masculinities that compete and overlap in school settings (Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Haywood, 1996; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Martino, 1999). This argument offers new insights and ways of thinking about the diverse masculinities that exist in various contexts. Multiple masculinities theory accounts for the complexity of the everyday lived experiences of boys, taking into account the contradictory and ambiguous nature of their discourses and performances. Moreover, social constructionist perspectives argue that people cannot interact with others independently of the social world in which they

live. Thus, a person cannot exist outside of the social context and is therefore always socially constructed.

Central to this perspective and to this study are the ways in which these participants` discourses construct others, namely their teachers, other boys and girls. Through their discourses, the participants make meaning of their lives by simultaneously reproducing and destabilising taken-for-granted notions around schooling attitudes, sexuality and violence. The ways in which certain positions of power are constantly challenged and resisted are illustrated in the analysis chapters of this study, which show that where there is power there is resistance, even if it manifests as subversion through discourse. It is demonstrated that in negotiating their masculinities, these boys present differing versions of themselves by accommodating and resisting culturally exalted masculinities in their context. Some of the boys in this study simultaneously inhabit both hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities, thereby reifying the multiple, unstable and contradictory nature of masculinities. One of the key arguments is that despite the way in which all of these boys are portrayed as uniformly bad, there are boys who negotiate their masculinities in more exemplary ways. The study illustrates how some boys develop alternative masculine identities and performances, yet still retain a sense of themselves as acceptable boys by cultural and conventional standards of masculinity – a fact which may be thought to be of particular significance. The study demonstrates that there are boys who not only reject physical and sexual violence, but cooperate with teachers and are respectful and academically successful. The fact that they are able to negotiate non-violent, respectful and loving ways of being boys in Wentworth challenges the all-encompassing negative stereotype that portrays all of these boys as simply bad, and destabilises the essentialist view of boys as being biologically predisposed to violent behaviours. This research posits that if the risk behaviours of men and boys are to undergo substantial modification, then their constructions of masculinity itself must be revealed, called into question

and challenged. More importantly, the nature of this research encourages the participants to become self-aware and able to recognise, through their own accounts, what it is they say and do, and why. By drawing from their experiences the study aims to highlight the everyday concerns, anxieties and struggles these boys encounter and to find key ways to make their schooling better and more sensitive to their plight.

The focus is on school rituals and practices, teachers' attitudes, and the relationships that boys have with others, which highlight the problems associated with hegemonic and toxic forms of masculinity. Men may have multiple ways of behaving, but the performance of masculinity is ultimately located within gender power structures which locate and place limits on their particular performance (Morrell, 2001). `Performing masculinity, therefore, is about men making and remaking masculinity, about challenging hegemonic masculinity and reconstituting it` (Morrell, ibid: 208). Within their micro context there is evidence of a range of masculinities that are available for these boys to occupy. This is illustrative of how masculinities are made and remade, negotiated, resisted and accommodated. This helps us to understand the meanings that these boys make of their working-class context and provides a basis for interpreting their accounts. This is with a view to encouraging and nurturing alternative and more non-hegemonic masculinities that emerge amongst these boys. Even though their sense of masculinity is influenced to a certain extent by the socio-economic and cultural context within which it emerges, their performances of their masculinity convey a notion of their agency. This agency manifests in the complexities of their masculine behaviours and is illustrated in the contradictory and ambiguous performances that highlight their abilities to position and reposition themselves in relation to whom they are interacting with. Thus the study examines these boys` particular perceptions and behaviours that lead to masculine constructions that dictate to a large extent their responses and reactions to others. At the center of this occurrence are the authority figures,

teachers in particular, whom the boys encounter on a daily basis. Schooling practices and teacher attitudes are implicated in perpetuating and producing certain masculinities as well as in the occupation of other positions of power. Our common-sense understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power is the notion that knowledge increases a person`s power (Burr, 2003). This thesis demonstrates these boys` aversion to schooling and the ways in which teachers are implicated in aggravating an already difficult situation. The way in which these boys encounter their teachers and schooling is extremely significant in the schooling itself, often makes the boys outsiders, and pigeonholes them as troublemakers. Emanating from this is my decision to interview a few teachers to get their perspectives on the boys whom they perceive to be troublesome, bearing in mind that identity is constructed in opposition to other perceived identities, and in this instance, to authority structures.

Moreover, the purpose of this research is to try to understand their troublesome behaviour and how masculinity is related to this behaviour. How these boys are affected by their constructions of masculinity is pivotal to this research, and has implications for finding strategies in dealing with the boys.

Masculinity and troublesome behaviour

`Getting into trouble` and troublesome are used interchangeably in this study. All the participants in the study have openly admitted that they often get into trouble with their teachers and that they are also troublesome in other areas of their lives. In order to illustrate their behaviour and the effects on their lives, this thesis shows how these boys differ from other boys in the school and how they understand themselves and shape their masculinities in dialogue with teachers' understandings of troublesome behaviour. Studies have shown that class and racial status disadvantages Coloured men on the whole, resulting in

violent men who seek to reclaim a sense of masculinity through dominating women and other men (Salo, 2005a; Sauls, 2005). Connell (1995) states that in the gender experience masculinity must be constantly accomplished. My assumption is that it is in the process of negotiating and inhabiting particular forms of masculinity that these boys get into `trouble`. The focus is on `trouble` and how the accommodation and/or rejection of troublesome behaviour have effects on the formation of certain masculinities. The purpose is to engage with the multiple ways of understanding `trouble` as it affects and defines these Coloured boys in school, including the ways in which they are depicted and situated within complex and conflicting notions of masculinities. `Trouble` has not been conceived of in a predefined way but was explored more fully with the boys as the study proceeded. For the purpose of this study I have developed (using the participants and teachers` input as well as through my own observations) a working definition of `trouble`. In order to generate a sufficiently complex and nuanced understanding of the notion of `trouble`, I have devised a continuum from petty offences on the one end to criminally liable misdemeanours on the other. This continuum includes back-chatting and making a teacher `a fool`, refusing to do schoolwork, swearing at or threatening to hit teachers, bunking classes, fighting, stabbing others, armed robbery, gang banging (group sex where a girl has sexual intercourse with many boys one after the other) and blackmailing girls into having sex. It is apparent that these boys` interpretations and understanding of 'trouble' conflict with teachers` understanding. For instance, the boys often say that their teachers `pick` on them for small things. This has implications for these boys, who believe that their teachers` disciplinary interventions have negative effects on them, and give rise to their attempts to make light of their troublesome behaviour. The focus is on trouble and while it is mostly trouble in school, the concern is how the lives, more broadly, of many of these boys are 'in trouble' and how `trouble` is tied in with problematic masculine behaviours.

This study provides a glimpse into the lives of these thirteen boys. In an attempt to offer some background information on each one, I have compiled a description of each participant. Pseudonyms have been used.

<u>Biographies of participants:</u>

1. John *is 15 years old. He is in Grade Nine. John lives with both of his parents in a council house. His mother works in a bank and his father is a construction worker. He has an older brother and his younger sister passed away a few years ago. He spends his time listening to music and drinking with his friends (boys and girls). John was suspended from school for smoking, fighting, running away from school and disrespecting his teachers. He spoke at length about his 16-year-old friend who died in a car accident due to speeding and how traumatised he was by the incident. He also said that he had never spoken about his sense of loss and trauma to anyone else.*

2. Neville *is 15 years old and in Grade Nine. His mother passed away when he was about eight or nine years old - he is not really sure. He lives with two uncles, an aunt and a grandfather in a council flat. He states that he has no real family life because everybody does his own thing. There are no rules in his home. One of his uncles works and the other, who is unemployed, says Neville, is the `housewife,' because he cleans the home and cooks. Neville has been involved in violent incidents that include stabbing and armed robbery. He associates with much older males in his area and molds his behaviour around how they conduct themselves. He has witnessed many violent incidents in the flats including the murder of a friend (by another friend). He claims that because of this experience he has become skeptical about friends. He spends most of his time `hanging around` the flats with other men, drinking, talking and teasing others.*

 3. Brendon *is 15 years old and is in Grade Nine. He lives with his father and stepmother in a council flat. His father is employed in construction and his stepmother is a house-wife. He does not get along with his stepmother and articulates how unhappy he is living in the same house with her. His mother lives elsewhere and*

he gets to see her only when she visits her mother (his grandmother) in Wentworth. He does not wish to live with his mother because all of his friends are in Wentworth and he would not like to be far from them. The offences at school for which he has been suspended include fighting, swearing and back-chatting teachers. His weekend activities include drinking and going to parties and spending time with his friends and girlfriend(s).

4. Shawn *is 15 years old and in Grade Nine. He lives with his father and grandmother in a council flat. He says that he does not get along with his father and he feels that his grandmother does not really like him because she never shows him affection. His father works sporadically and his grandmother receives a pension. He likes going out with (dating) many girls, dancing and playing soccer. Shawn talks at length about his penchant to be desirable to women and girls. He has been suspended for absconding from school, writing on walls, not doing school work and being rude to teachers.*

5. Joe, *who is 17 years old and in Grade Ten, lives with his sister and grandmother in a council flat. His sister, who works in a clothing shop, does not earn a good salary and his grandmother receives a government pension. His parents never married. His mother lives in Wentworth but he does not get to see her often. His father died in an accident at work. He enjoys playing soccer, listening to music, cars, food and playing video games at the shop. He has been suspended from school for smoking, back-chatting teachers, refusing to do work and stealing and copying exam and test papers.*

6. Evan *is 17 years old and in Grade Ten. He lives with both of his parents and his younger sister in a council flat. His mother works in a supermarket and his father works on construction (sporadic employment). He gets on well with his mother and has no relationship with his father. He says his father is closer to his sister. His weekend activities include going to discos, playing loud music, socialising, cars and shopping for clothes. He dislikes people who are spiteful and people who `think they are better than you. ` He has been suspended from school for making a noise in class,*

fighting, being disruptive in lessons and not co-operating with teachers. Evan has been prosecuted for a stabbing offence.

7. Dane, *who is 16 years old, is in Grade Ten and lives with both of his parents in a council flat. His father is employed in construction and his mother stays at home. The family attends a Pentecostal church in Wentworth and is `born again` Christians. He says that his father was a gangster in his days and has since reformed - when he turned to religion. Jason belongs to the ITB gang. He has been involved in many gang fights and has been charged for stabbing offences. He likes rap music and pretty girls. He has many girlfriends and enjoys `playing the field. ` His dislikes include slow cars and girls who 'act funny' towards him. Dane has been suspended from school for smoking, fighting, running away from school and being disruptive in class.*

8. David *is 16 years old and in Grade Ten. He lives with his mother and grandparents in a council flat. His grandmother is unemployed and his grandfather works on construction. He has an older brother and a younger sister. His parents are divorced. There has been no relationship between him and his father for the past five to six years and his father has just come back into his life. He does not know what work his mother does and is not interested. He has been suspended from school for fighting, back-chatting teachers, refusing to do his work and bunking classes. He has been involved in a robbery with Kerwin (one of the other participants) and has been getting into trouble with the law. He spent time in jail and was compelled to attend counselling sessions at NICRO (National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders) or face prosecution. His favourite pastimes are spending time with friends, drinking and going to parties.*

9. Tony, *who is 16 years old and in Grade Ten, lives with his mother in a council flat. His mother is unemployed. He has an older brother and a younger sister. His father was murdered in 2005. He witnessed the murder of his father. He has attended trauma counselling sessions for this and says that they did not help him in any way. He has been involved in stabbing incidents. Tony was expelled from school and is presently attending a technical college and studying civil engineering. He has been*

suspended from school for bullying, fighting in school, smoking and being rude to teachers. His weekend activities include `hanging around` the shops, being with friends and his girlfriend and drinking. He has recently fathered a child (2008).

10. Kerwin *is 15 years old and in Grade Ten 10. He lives with his mother in a council flat. His mother works in a retail store. His father lives in Johannesburg. He is an only child. He talks very fondly of his maternal grandparents and is very close to them. He is not familiar with his paternal grandparents. He is a member of the ITB gang. He has been implicated in a robbery at the Fun Fair in which he and a few other boys allegedly robbed two Indian boys. He has spent two nights in jail. Kerwin has been compelled to attend rehabilitation sessions at NICRO or face prosecution. He was suspended from school for fighting, back-chatting teachers and refusing to do work. He spends his time drinking with friends, going to clubs and just `hanging out` at the flats.*

11. Byron *is 16 years old and in Grade Nine. His parents are divorced. He has an older brother and a younger sister. His mother works and lives in Johannesburg. He used to live with his grandparents. He then moved in with his father and his father`s girlfriend in a rented flat in town. His father is a construction worker and struggles to find employment. Byron states that he does not get on well with his father because he (his father) has been violent with him. He hates violence and does not get involved in fights unless he has to defend himself. He indicated that in 2007 he would be returning to live with his mother in Johannesburg. He has been suspended from school for chronic absenteeism, a poor work ethic, and back-chatting teachers. His weekend activities include `hanging out` and drinking with friends.*

12. Mark, *who is 16 years old, is in Grade Ten. He lives with his mother in a council flat. His mother works in an old-age home and does not earn a good salary. He says that because his mother cannot afford a domestic worker he is responsible for doing the domestic chores in his home and he says that he does not have a problem with this. He does not have a relationship with his father and prefers not to talk about him. He has a girlfriend whom he loves very much but her parents do not approve of the relationship*

and prevent them from seeing each other. He enjoys good food, soccer and drinking with his friends. He dislikes not having money and girls who `act` for themselves. Mark has been suspended for bunking school, back-chatting teachers, refusing to do work and fighting.

13. Paul *is 16 years old and in Grade Nine. He lives with his grandmother and sister in a council flat. His grandmother receives a government pension and his sister, who works, assists him by buying his clothes. The most important person in his life is his mother even though he does not spend much time with her. He enjoys playing soccer and says that he would like to matriculate. He says that he dislikes people swearing at him and he likes teasing others. He spends his weekends 'hanging out` and drinking with his friends and gambling. He has been suspended from school for smoking in school, bunking and back-chatting teachers.*

Conclusion

This introduction contextualises and problematises my research project and identifies the gap in research on masculinity studies in South Africa. In this section I have presented the extent of the problem with boys both locally and internationally and outlined the perspective this study utilises to explain the problem with boys. The methodological process, the aim of the study and the key research questions have also been sufficiently introduced in this chapter.

Chapter Two provides a broad overview of Coloured identity in South Africa, while paying particular attention to being Coloured in Kwazulu-Natal, and more specifically to Wentworth in the south Durban basin. This chapter attempts to problematise the complex, multi-layered and heterogeneous nature of Coloured identity and lays the foundation for understanding Coloured identity as a social construct. It also introduces the community from which my sample is drawn.

Chapter Three examines the theoretical framework and lens through which data is scrutinised, analysed and interpreted. It also examines the literature in South Africa and abroad and points to the gaps in South African studies of Coloured boys, masculinity and schooling. In conceptualising masculinity (ies), the study engages with explanations surrounding debates that attempt to explain the problems with boys. Critical Men`s Studies perspectives on boys and schooling will be reviewed for this scholarship.

Chapter Four examines and documents the methodology executed in this study with a detailed description of the research site. I present a detailed description of the ethnographic process, paying particular attention to myself as researcher and the ways in which I am implicated in the data-collection process. Interventions, the limitations, and the ethical and emancipatory implications of the study are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five investigates the specific ways that race and class intersect with the performance of gender (heterosexuality) from the point of view of these boys. This chapter demonstrates that experiences of being Coloured and working class influence the masculine performances of many boys. This is reflected in the positions of power that many boys compel themselves to take up in their attempts to assert and reclaim their heterosexual positions of dominance. Masculinities that are simultaneously callous and loving are explored in this chapter.

Chapter Six considers the opinions and perceptions of both the boys and their teachers, with special reference to how the boys negotiate the relationship between their schooling and their masculinity. It also investigates the kinds of trouble that these boys get into in school and the detrimental effects it has on their schooling experiences. The ways in which alternative schooling masculinities are negotiated is key in this chapter.

Chapter Seven investigates the disposition and responses of boys in this study to violence, by focusing on experiences of pain and trauma that predispose boys to engage in violent masculine behaviours. In particular, gang violence and the boys` (dis)investment in gang discourses are examined.

Chapter Eight provides a conclusion based on the findings of this thesis in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, together with the implications of the study and some recommendations to all stakeholders.

CHAPTER TWO

Beyond Race: Coloured identities in South Africa

Introduction

This thesis explores the ways in which a particular group of Coloured schoolboys located in the predominantly working-class area of Wentworth in the province of KwaZulu-Natal conduct their masculinities. Apartheid definitions, although long dissolved, remain important in any analysis of race, class and gender in South Africa, as these intersecting dynamics illustrate the differential life chances and experiences of people in the country. As this study of working-class Coloured boys will show, the social context has particular effects in understanding how their lives are experienced. Rejecting an essentialist interpretation of the category Coloured, this chapter argues that the category Coloured is varied and heterogeneous, and that its meaning is intricately intertwined with social location.

In exploring Coloured identity, this study draws upon the literature which argues that identity does not occur in isolation but intersects with individual and family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts (Tatum, 2000). In addition, this thesis supports the view that identity is constantly under construction, is contested, and is in flux (Hall, 2001; Burr, 2003). 'A person`s identity is achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads` (Burr, 2003:106) and constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, which we draw upon in our communications with other people. Burr declares that these threads may include race, age, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, income and level of education, among others. It is these and other factors that are woven together (and intersect) to produce the fabric of a person`s identity (Burr, ibid: 106).

Despite the considerable amount of interest and controversy that Coloured identity has evoked in the past and more recently, there remains a lack of empirical research on Coloureds particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. Debates around the history and implications that Coloured identity holds for South African society have generated much controversy, yet there has been no systematic study of Coloured identity (Adikhari, 2005:xi).

During the late nineteenth century through to the apartheid period, Coloured identity was moulded by the interplay of marginality, racial hierarchy, aspirations towards assimilation, negative racial stereotyping, class divisions and ideological conflicts (Adikhari, 2005). What is disconcerting is that in post-apartheid South Africa Coloured identity is one of fragmentation, uncertainty and confusion (ibid, 2005). Interestingly, in post-apartheid South Africa race is still the key signifier of identity for many South Africans. Although it is true that apartheid has played a key role in the formation and consolidation of South African identities, Coloured identities are not simply apartheid labels imposed by Whites. They are made and re-made by Coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meanings to their everyday lives (Erasmus, 2001:16). Similarly, Coloured is not an identity which can be objectively defined in terms of a single language, culture or religion (Erasmus, ibid). Rather it is the junction in which other identities meet (Erasmus, 2001). Hence any reductionist argument that attempts to posit the existence of a `typical` Coloured person remains questionable. This chapter argues that Coloureds are not a homogeneous group to which specific physical and cultural qualities can be attributed. The purpose of this chapter is to problematise the complex, multi-layered and heterogeneous nature of Coloured identity. Mokae (2004) aptly describes the concept when he states that Coloured is multi-layered and pregnant with multiple meanings. The metaphor he uses encapsulates the essence of the heterogeneity, fluidity and complexity of this identity.

This chapter provides a broad overview of Coloured in South Africa, showing how apartheid interventions attempted to establish race as a determinant of identity. Coloured is often construed as meaning of `mixed race.' The pejorative connotations of Coloured as `mixed` is the focus of the second part of this chapter. As Conning (1999:7) argues, 'not having an overt cultural or collective identity or something they could call their own, Coloured people have experienced, in a sense, a major identity crisis'. In the latter section of the chapter the focus is on Coloureds in KwaZulu-Natal and more specifically the Coloured community of Wentworth. My sample of boys for this study has been drawn from this community. This section highlights how social location, race and class have interacted to limit the economic and social mobility of these Coloured people and how, despite the ending of apartheid, these factors continue to mark and constrain the life chances of Coloured people. It is within such broader contexts that the boys within the micro-context of their school give meaning to their identities in Wentworth.

Coloured in South Africa: a broad overview

South Africa is a country that has been weighed down by its national history of racial oppression, discrimination and prejudice. Central to the governance of the country during the apartheid regime was the issue of apartness or separateness (apartheid). South Africa was and still is a country that remains locked in its racial determinants. It is this racial division that resulted in the establishment of four distinct categories of people, namely, Black, White, Indian and Coloured. To add to this complexity, there was further subdivision within the Coloured category, a strategy of the apartheid government to further divide and rule. This is illustrated in the way Coloureds were reclassified as Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, and `other Coloured.` These groupings were made based on phenotypical features. If you had straight hair with a Malay-Indian complexion and features, you were categorised as `Cape Coloured`, and if you had `kroes` hair (the curly,

crinkly hair of indigenous African people) with flat features, you were classified as `other Coloured` or simply Coloured. In this categorisation process identification was based purely upon the perceptions of apartheid government officials. White clerks at the Government Offices of Home Affairs were responsible for determining the `specific` racial identities of Coloureds. This often resulted in members of one family being categorised into different categories of Coloured (see Mokae, 2004). It is this practice that strongly resonates with Burr`s assertion that who was doing the identifying, and `the identity we confer has more to with our purposes than the actual nature of the thing itself` (2003:106). The so-called pencil test might be carried out in attempts to `verify` the categories of Coloured. In the apartheid system of division into White, Coloured and Black, with its attendant deprivations, hair was used as a tool of racial classification. The pencil test was an additional criterion determining the boundaries of Blackness. It policed the borders of Black and White identity and maintained Coloured identity as a buffer zone. The pencil test entailed putting a pencil through the hair, and if it fell out you were Coloured but if it stuck, you were Black (Powe, 2005). Only Coloured identity was in crisis when the pencil test was administered (Mercer, 1994; Powe, 2005) because there were and are Coloureds who strongly resemble Blacks. When applying on more than one occasion for an identity document, a Coloured person could be registered in one category of Coloured by one clerk and in another category by someone else (Powe, 2005), a fact which led to a reclassification provision in the Population Registration Act to argue `how difficult it is, in certain cases, to say with any certainty whether a person is a Coloured or not` (Sunday Times, 2003). I draw on my personal family experience, which bears testimony to this abhorrent practice. My sister was registered as a `Cape Coloured` on one occasion and upon applying for an unabridged birth certificate on another occasion, was classified as `other Coloured`. These `middle children` of South Africa found themselves isolated not only from both Black and White fellow citizens as a result of apartheid policies, but often even from members of their own families. How does one

justify such a system of categorisation? These racially classified impositions certainly were subject to the incumbent White clerks` perceptions of their subjects. This resonates strongly with Erasmus` assertion that `very little under the apartheid system could have made any legislative and administrative sense without a framework of racial and ethnic classification inscribed in the legal order` (2001:73). Moreover, this practice served to highlight the extreme heterogeneity and complexity of Coloured identity in its application of a system of categorisation that was complicated and affected Coloureds more than any other racial group.

The aim of the apartheid practitioners was indeed to create separate identities in the interest of White supremacy. Although it is true that apartheid played a key role in the formation and consolidation of Coloured and other identities, there have been attempts by Coloureds to 'reconstruct a sense of purity based on claims to ethnicity and indigenous roots, or on the other, a complete denial of this identity' (Erasmus, 2001:16). Moreover, due to cultural, class and regional differences, it cannot be assumed that Coloured identities are simply apartheid labels imposed by the White government, despite the apartheid government`s attempts to give closure to the identities of groups of people in the interests of separate development (Erasmus, 1998).

 Both Erasmus (2001) and Adikhari (2005) have written about how Coloured has been constructed and experienced as a residual, supplementary identity `in between` whiteness and blackness and interpellated in relation to registers of respectability and (sexualised) shame. Similarly, there exists an underlying assumption which posits that there is something fundamentally wrong with this identity (see Erasmus). These assumptions do not take cognizance of the larger context of identity constructions in South Africa and the profound complexities that prevail. It is important to consider that `Coloured people have over the years creatively produced their own identities in the context of their relationships to both whites and Africans, as well as their relationships

within different Coloured communities' (Erasmus, 2001:23). It is also important to mention the relationship between Coloureds and Indians since the boys in this study have negative perceptions of their Indian teachers and this has effects for their schooling experiences. There is a perception that Coloureds have of Indians which suggests that they are physically weak, easily intimidated and can be dominated. This perception contributes to the attitudes with which these boys approach their Indian teachers (see Chapter Six).

Although it is evident that Coloured identity has evolved and is still evolving, Adikhari (2005) argues that during the apartheid regime the Coloured identity was construed as relatively stable. He attributes this to 'marginalisation being central to the relative stability of Coloured identity because of the limitations it placed on their possibilities for independent action.' (Adikhari, 2005: xiii) Furthermore, Coloured conformity to white racist expectations and reaction to the fear of being cast down to the status of Africans were further incentives for maintaining the status quo. Evidence of Coloured conformity is cited in the fact that 'Coloureds were not subject to influx control regulations and other systems of control for Black people' (1998:71).

Although many Coloureds were active in the struggle for freedom and liberation during the height of apartheid, there has been and still is a tendency to label Coloureds as having colluded with a White apartheid government. This could go some way to explicate the absence of any real sense of belonging of Coloureds, even in post–apartheid South Africa, and further entrench labels such as `God's step-children` and the `in-between children,` to name but a few. The assertion that Coloureds have held an intermediate status in the South African racial hierarchy, distinct from the historically dominant white minority and the numerically preponderant African population (Adikhari, 2005: 2), also entrenches an intermediate status which is

reflected in the colour brown (symbolic of neither black nor white). In a sense this reifies the commonly used term `bruin ous` (meaning brown people) to refer to Coloured people. This sense of intermediacy is aptly expressed: 'For me, growing up Coloured meant knowing that I was *not only* not white, but less than white; *not only* not black, but better than black' (Adikhari, 2005:10). The lack of any specific characteristics in determining Coloured, with instead the reference to what Coloured is not, has resulted in this group of people being characterised by a 'discourse of lack' (Rose 1997 in Jones 1998:52). It will be investigated in this thesis how the importance attached to our racial classification, and ultimately how we are treated, as well as how our social and economic positions, either privileges or disadvantages us.

Coloured: a mixed race?

The dissolution of the apartheid government and emergence of a new inclusive democratic system has yet to address Coloured identity in South Africa. An assumed expectation of the new democratic dispensation was that the issue of race would have disintegrated with the apartheid regime. However, this is not the case. Racial boundaries still remain embedded in our everyday encounters, specifically in terms of Coloured identity. There is the perception that racial distinctions are further entrenched in the wake of discourses and practices around `not white enough, not black enough, `reversed racism` and affirmative action. Adikhari (2005) claims that for many Coloured people the adage `the more things change, the more they stay the same` rings true regarding their position in the new South Africa (as discussed in the conclusion). He continues, 'few will deny that their lives have been profoundly affected by the changes of the last decade' (Adikhari, 2004:168).

The racialised discourses around Coloured signify a sense of exclusion where Coloureds were and still remain the in-between people. A demonstration of

this sense of in-between–ness is evident in the accounts of the participants in this study who define Coloureds as `a mixture of white and Black or a mixture of Indian and White you know…any races mixed is a Coloured`. Research conducted by Jones (1998:54) among members of the Wentworth community reveals the extreme difficulty and impossibility of giving closure to Coloured identity because the 'boundary of this category becomes very blurred, perhaps invisible or impossible to define'. To quote one of his respondents: 'The old government said if it`s not White, African or Indian, then it`s Coloured` (Jones, ibid). Coloured denotes a space in which identity is collective only through a shared `lack`, yet there is nevertheless a `content` that is temporarily and contingently created out of everyday life social practices, beliefs and interactions (Jones, 1998:56).

To reiterate, Coloured, in the South African political and historical context has simply referred to a people of mixed race or hybridity. The implications of this categorisation are numerous. The South African Dictionary of South African English reveals that the word Coloured has been used since the 1840s to refer specifically to South Africans of mixed race, while the term `Cape Coloureds` came into use around the turn of the / centuries. During the century the people of Griqualand, who would now be known as Coloured, were known by the Afrikaans term *Bastaards.* Historically, Coloureds have been perceived as having no real sense of belonging and were commonly referred to as the `bastard` race. Several authors are of the opinion that Colouredness is not a passive identity, since people historically classified as such appropriated and contested these frames (Jones, 1998; Erasmus, 2001; Mathey, 2004; Adikhari, 2005). `Coloured alludes to a phenotypically varied social group of highly diverse cultural and geographical origins.' (Adikhari, 2005:2). Omotoso aptly describes Coloured people`s skin colour, the most important of these phenotypical features, as varying from 'charcoal black to bread-crust brown to sallow yellow and finally off-white cream that wants to pass for white' (Adikhari, 2005:2). Coloured is a contentious racial

classification with many variations attached to it, and has frequently been described as a very elusive and or indefinable identity. Conning, playwright of `A Coloured Place,' describes Coloured as being mixed and therefore `historically invisible` (1999). Coloureds are often identified as South Africans who are of mixed race, who are descendants of the sexual liaisons between colonials, slaves and the indigenous Khoisan (the name by which the lighter-skinned indigenous peoples of southern Africa, the Khoi (Hottentots) and the San (Bushmen) became known in recent times). Given that there are many varying possible descriptions, definitions and `mixes` of Coloured. This prevents the erection of any distinct boundaries pertaining to this absent identity, and instead creates a blurring, making it impossible to define. Because of the complexity and difficulty involved in attempting to reach a distinct definition, it becomes impossible to give closure (Jones, 1998) to this identity, even in a period of democracy.

Furthermore, there is an even greater divisive force within the Coloured communities. The nature of Coloured is such that there could be extremely diverse physical features among members of one family. It was and still is common to find very fair-skinned and very dark-skinned members within a single family, some with straight hair and others with `kroes` hair, some with sharp features and others with flat features. During the apartheid era, family members who could pass for white often disowned and denied their Black ancestry whilst openly acknowledging their ancestors of European descent. This was done in the context of the loopholes through which a few individuals could `pass` for white to avoid the harsher discriminatory conditions facing `non-whites` (Mokae, 2004). In my attempt to highlight these pervasive oppressive forces at work in the lives of Coloured people, I draw on first-hand experiences related in the autobiography of freedom fighter, activist Robert McBride (from Wentworth). In this autobiography McBride in Mokae (2004) traces his father`s lineage and ultimate ostracisation from his `White` family because of his darker skin colour. Derrick McBride,

Robert`s father, was born into a family of fair-skinned people and because he was much darker than the rest of his brothers and sisters was an outcast and became the `black sheep` of the family. This story typically depicts the discriminatory dynamics within Coloured communities and the inherent `racism` that further disintegrated an already divided group of people. This occurrence frequently led to Coloureds with fair skins being passed for White and this, according to Clark and Unterhalter in Western (1981) was motivated by their quest to gain better economic opportunities. 'Entry into the (Coloured) elite is eased considerably by the possession of a fair complexion and European features' (Watson, 1970: 17 in Western, 1981). The colour of one`s skin has usually been a key determinant in one`s status in the Coloured community. Fair-skinned Coloureds were associated with higher economic status. Many Coloured people deny (ied) their African heritage and eagerly or readily acknowledge and lay claim to their white ancestry. According to Mathey (2004) the dilemma facing Coloured people in terms of their identity has been a controversial topic for many years. She quotes from Arthur Nortje`s poem, `Dogsbody Half-breed' (1973), which succinctly describes the Coloured dilemma as `growing between the wire and the wall` (Lewis, 1987). Essentially, she says, Coloureds often find themselves in difficult positions with regards to their social and cultural identity: on the one hand, they are confronted with the culture and discourse of their white antecedents; on the other hand, they need to come to terms with their African ancestry. Interestingly, the political shift owing to South Africa`s transition into a democracy since 1994, together with the dissolution of the apartheid legislation, has marked the implementation of equity and preferment. It has been alluded to that there is a tendency of some Coloureds to identify with Blacks in the attempt to be regarded as previously disadvantaged and benefit from certain social and economic opportunities created for Black people in the new democratic South Africa. This remains uncertain.

Dan Sampson (in Adikhari, 2005:81) highlighted a common perception of social stratification in the Coloured community when he described a three-tier distinction. The categories were: the sunken, the sinking, and the uprising class. He described the sunken as being prone to filth, vice, dissipation and crime. Of the sinking he said they were neither the openly vicious nor the hardened criminals. The uprising class consisted of those who were concerned about their advancement in life, zealously watching over the moral and intellectual training of their offspring. There are Coloureds who conform to and reify some of the pejorative stereotypical notions and views of them as immoral, unworthy and drunks. There are also those who strive to improve their lives and are determined to be successful, provide for their futures and struggle to rid themselves of the stigma associated with all Coloureds. Stereotypical ideas and views about Coloureds which previously were constantly reinforced are now been eroded and challenged due to the `uprising class`, (Dan Sampson in Adikhari, 2005:81), and there is an emerging class of Coloureds (this is not to say that there never was before) consisting of professionals and business persons who are increasingly driven by the desire for success. There have been remarkable achievements in intellectual, economic and social spheres within the Coloured communities. A case in point is the appointment of the first female non-White (Coloured) judge, Leona Theron. There is evidence of progress and upward mobility in the lives of many Coloureds, many of whom hail from Wentworth. Those who strive to improve their lives are determined to be successful, to provide for their futures and to rid themselves of the negative stigma associated with this identity. This paves the way for the negative stereotypical perceptions of Coloureds to be contested, destabilised and eroded.

Coloured in KwaZulu-Natal

In this thesis my reference to Coloured pertains specifically to the KwaZulu-Natal context, about which very little has been written. Coloureds have been

present in Natal since 1824, unlike the `Cape Coloureds`, who were around from 1652, being a product of miscegenation among Whites and Khoisan (Erasmus, 2001; Jones, 1998). The main groups that make up KwaZulu-Natal Coloureds are Euro-Africans, Mauritians and St. Helenans. The Euro-Africans were the descendants of local Zulu women and British settlers. They established settlements on the borders of Zululand. Here they founded families such as the Ogle, Dunn and Fynn clans, who later assimilated a Western lifestyle. Chari (2005) states that Wentworth Coloureds continue to battle with origin stories such as claims to be descended from the Griqua (a subset of the derogatorily named Bastard Coloured people under Adam Kok and Barend Barends), a subgroup of South Africa`s heterogeneous and multiracial Coloured people who originated in the northeastern section of the Cape Colony. KwaZulu-Natal Coloureds lay claim to a Zulu[7] heritage which gives them land rights or chieftaincy, and has also resulted in a sense of dissociation from families who passed into White or Indian areas. The Coloured people of Wentworth (`Wenties`) are predominantly descendants of the Euro-Africans deriving from the Ogle, Fynn, King and Dunn families, who settled in Zululand in the 1820s.

Some among the British 1820 Settlers moved from the Eastern Cape into the then Port Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) on the tenth of March 1824 (Stuart and Malcolm, 1969). John Ogle was the son of Wohlo (the Zulu name of the original settler Henry Ogle). Henry Francis Fynn, Henry Ogle and Dick King lived to see Natal as a British colony. They were ceded (by Shaka) entire and full possession in perpetuity of a tract of land including the port or harbour of Natal (Stuart and Malcolm, 1969). King, Fynn and others made independent settlements at various parts of the bay. They lived practically as Zulu chiefs in Zululand, trading with Shaka (a fearsome chief of the Zulu nation in the 1820s) and gathering round them many refugees from that monarch's tyranny

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[7] The Zulu (a*maZulu*) are the largest South African ethnic group, who live mainly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

(Stuart and Malcolm, 1969). John Dunn, the heir of South Africa's most famous Scottish immigrant, Robert Newton Dunn, fathered more than one-hundred-and-thirty-one children by sixty-five Zulu wives. The Dunn clan won a High Court case giving them permanent rights to land granted them by the Zulu king Cetshwayo. John Dunn died in 1895 at the age of 61, but the British confirmed the White Chief of Zululand's family landownership in the John Dunn Land Distribution Acts of 1902 and 1935. The lives of John Dunn's descendants were complicated by the 1955 Race Classification Act, introduced by the white Afrikaner apartheid government, which dictated South Africans' rank and location in society according to their colour. The great sprinkling of genes from John Dunn and his wives has left some Dunns pale-skinned, some coal black, and others in between (Stuart and Malcolm, 1969).

The Mauritians arrived in Natal between 1850 and 1865 as immigrants and worked as technicians in the sugar industry. Mauritius was the source of a trickle of immigrants after 1843. The flow increased in 1850 when about fifty Mauritians arrived with the intention of trying sugar growing on the Natal coast. An 1854 arrival from the island, James Renault Saunders, was the founder of one of Natal's leading families in the sugar industry - the Saunders of Tongaat (Jones, 1998).

The St.Helenans, who were also of mixed descent, arrived from St.Helena, also in the mid nineteenth century, to work as domestic workers in the houses of the wealthy (Kamwangamalu, 2004). These two groups were absorbed into the white population and subscribed to the European way of life.

In the mid twentieth century five areas of KwaZulu-Natal were designated specifically for Coloured people (see Appendix B). They are Wentworth, Sydenham, Greenwood Park, Marianridge, and Newlands East. Wentworth, Newlands East and Marianridge have been severely afflicted by social problems, which can largely be attributed to overcrowded flat-dwellings

(cluster, high-rise buildings – see Appendix D), high levels of unemployment, and high consumption of alcohol and drug use. On the other hand, Sydenham and Greenwood Park have been associated with more a more elite group of Coloureds. In Sydenham and Greenwood Park residents were predominantly home-owners. The majority of the residents occupied permanent, stable and often professional jobs, and the perception was that their children were largely `sheltered` and not exposed to the high levels of violence and abuse that children in Wentworth were subjected to. This prompted the assumption that they were superior to Coloureds from Wentworth, Marianridge and Newlands East. Many Coloureds from Sydenham and Greenwood Park adopted a self-imposed elitist and supremacist view of themselves in relation to Coloureds from the other three areas. They were known to express extreme apprehension and fear at the prospect of going into Wentworth, particularly, due to the gang wars and the horror stories of rape, murder and other crimes that plagued this community. There was a sense of reluctance on their part to identify with Wentworth Coloureds. In addition, there existed (s) clear dissimilarities amongst the Coloureds from these different areas in terms of speech, dress, behaviour and social status, which has accentuated and presented a clear divide between them. The issue of class became distinctly evident and a very obvious feature was the inability of the predominantly middle class `elite` Coloureds to identify with slang, an unmistakable and distinguishing hallmark of Wentworth Coloureds. This phenomenon serves to highlight the complexity of the Coloured people and the multiple and diverse nature of this identity, not only within South Africa as a whole, but specifically within the Kwazulu-Natal region, also draws attention to how space and identity are inextricably linked, and more specifically the way in which class and economic affluence further divide an already divided Coloured people (Jones, 1998).

There is an inextricable link between Coloured identity and location. In KwaZulu-Natal Coloureds are chiefly English-speaking, while Coloureds in

the Cape are predominantly Afrikaans-speaking. However, the `upper class' Coloureds in the Cape pride themselves on being English-speaking. Erasmus (2001) and Natter and Jones (1995) attribute this phenomenon to geographical location in accentuating the physical, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of Coloureds, giving credence to the assertion that the content of Coloured identity is not based on a common sense of culture, place or language (Jones, 1998). Rather there is a multiplicity of cultures and identities within the Coloured community, each with varying degrees of overlapping and connecting strands. Coloureds in Kwazulu-Natal are not synonymous with Coloureds in the Western Cape. Even though Coloureds in the Cape also speak slang, it differs considerably from the slang spoken by Coloureds in Wentworth. There is disparity even within the Coloured community of Wentworth, a small population of more than 40 000, because they too differ historically, culturally, phenotypically, and in religion.

Wentworth (`Wenties`): a `melting pot`

This section will give insight into the Coloured community of Wentworth and provide some understanding of the particular constructs of identity born out of the circumstances in which these people found themselves. The people in this area subscribe to a particular notion of Coloured, one that is context specific.

Wentworth is a predominantly Coloured area situated in the South Durban Basin. The Coloured township of Wentworth, more commonly referred to as `Wenties,` officially consists of four distinct areas, Wentworth, Austerville, Merewent and Treasure Beach (see Appendix C), but is generally considered to be one area. Wentworth became a `melting pot` as a result of the relocation of residents from extremely diverse backgrounds such as the Eastern Cape, Cato Manor, Candella Road and Mayville (Chari, 2005). Residents were forcibly removed from their homes as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950

and forced to co-exist as a community (Chari, ibid). This Act provided the ideal breeding ground for people already associated with and plagued by social ills such as violence, gangsterism, and drug and alcohol abuse. The Group Areas Act enforced by the apartheid regime legitimated a strategic and manipulative relocation of the Coloured community, with no consideration for the well-being of the people. Residents drawn from far and wide were put into cramped flats (see Appendix D) and next to oil refineries (see Appendix E). They found their lives shaped by new forms of violence and constraint. There is a striking relationship between the removals of Coloured people from one area to another and the development of criminals throughout South Africa: The result is a frightening picture of deprivation, rootlessness and social instability (Chari, 2005).

Apartheid made the racial group the determinant of all social interaction. 'How else could it have been possible to restrict "racial groups" to particular places of residence?' (Erasmus, 2001:73). A history of oppression and marginalisation and an identity plagued by derogatory stereotypes placed them in an invidious position from which they have found it difficult to emerge or advance. The tendency to hold the apartheid government responsible for the relocation laws and ultimately gang subcultures as well as other forms of antisocial ills still prevails. Chari argues that 'street gangs did not emerge as a direct consequence of forced removals but that removals disrupted territorial gangs and they only re-emerged in more cohesive neighbourhoods, when male youths established a bond with their environment and their peers, when they develop a sense of identity based on overlapping personal and territorial familiarity' (2005:13). Gangs in Wentworth were often multigenerational, and scores were settled over generations. While gang cultures in Wentworth are pervasive, there is evidence of important shifts (Chari, 2005), resulting, more recently, in a waning gang culture (see Chapter Seven).

There are high levels of unemployment in Wentworth with 50% of the adult population being unemployed (Dwyer, 2004) and a relatively low per capita income (R4319 per annum compared to the South Durban average of R7339) (Scott and Risdale, 1997). Wentworth`s low income and high unemployment levels have over the years also contributed to its developing a notorious reputation for its high incidence of social problems, particularly poverty, a high prevalence of deaths from HIV and AIDS, substance and alcohol abuse, unemployment, gang violence and domestic violence. KwaZulu–Natal provincial statistics indicate that this province has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the country (Noble, 2007).

Wentworth was previously a military transit camp built during the Second World War and used as a concentration camp for recalcitrant Boer women and children, during the Anglo-Boer War[8]. It is sandwiched between the industrial area of Jacobs and the Engen Oil Refinery. Both of these industries spew out noxious and toxic fumes and this already disadvantaged and poor community is subjected to these toxins and pungent fumes (see Appendix E). It was initially demarcated as an industrial area, but the Group Areas Act led to its becoming a residential area, as did the quest for cheap labour. Racked by lung-related illnesses, the community is embroiled in an ongoing battle with the surrounding refineries to hold them accountable for the suffering and medical costs incurred, in a bid for sound compensation. Wacquant (2004) and Chari (2005) assert that Wentworth was a hot-bed of political activism during the 1980s and has over time become a ghetto in the analytical sense, characterised by stigma, constraint, spatial confinement and institutional containment. 'Wentworth forms part of the Southern Industrial Basin and as such is surrounded by very busy transport corridors and by dirty and unsightly heavy industries' (Scott and Risdale, 1997 in Jones, 1998:8) including two of South Africa`s largest petroleum refineries.

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[8] A war in South Africa between the British and the Boers (1899-1902) instigated by the British colonial statesman and financier Cecil Rhodes, then premier of the Cape Colony, who desired to bring all of southern Africa into the British Empire.

Apartheid was not only an example of political injustice but it was the most glaring example of environmental injustice (Durning, 1990). The zoning strategy of apartheid and its `racialised` separate development philosophy resulted in black South Africans being coerced into living in overcrowded `Bantustans` and townships located `downwind or downstream from industrial complexes' (Chari, 2005). Added to this was the extreme poverty of the people and their poor and inhumane working conditions. Apartheid spatial planning deliberately sited black residential areas near dirty industries in order to facilitate easy access to cheap labour, and generally these black townships were located within close proximity to toxic dumps, sewerage treatment plants and polluting industries (Whitaker, 2001). Initially, industries located in and around Wentworth were obliged to recruit and utilise labour from the community. Sourcing labour from within the Wentworth community would at least guarantee some form of employment. However, this was short-lived. The lack of employment opportunities at the oil refinery compelled many men, often skilled artisans, to pursue work away from home (a migrant labour system). This tore families apart for lengthy periods and often led to a large number of dysfunctional family structures.

Migrant work and itinerant employment has shown an increase in the breakdown of family relationships and an exarcebation of promiscuous life styles, resulting in a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Many Coloured men in Wentworth are equipped to work only in particular kinds of employment, for example, on refinery shutdowns. This means that they work for short periods of up to three months and are then unemployed for longer periods before they find employment. 'After some of the more lucrative jobs in building the refineries of Sasolberg, men coming out of circuits of gang and artisanal labour began investing more in conspicuous consumption: in fancy cars, and occasionally guns, and a growing drug trade' (Chari, 2005:14). The lifestyles they appropriated during the sporadic periods of employment

included hard drinking, driving flashy cars, and dressing expensively. Chari argues that 'former gangsters are among today`s labour brokers, labour organisers, entrepeneurs, social investment coordinators and saved pastors' (2005:14).

Industries continue to pollute the area, causing and exacerbating diseases like lung cancer, asthma, emphysema and other chest-related illnesses. Many residents suffer a poor quality of life and poor health. Apartheid has left an indelible scar on the lives of this community, a scar that has resulted in many social ills, including extreme disillusionment, apathy, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity and violence.

The only sport that the majority of this community supports or participates in is soccer. Sundays are spent on the Ogle Road grounds (a mini-stadium in Wentworth), where residents support and cheer on their local teams. Community members from all over Wentworth congregate on the grounds to enjoy the yearly events such as Youth Day festivals and church-based rallies. In Wentworth, the church and soccer are alternatives (Chari, 2005).

A very interesting phenomenon, and a growing one at that, is the number of churches that are active in Wentworth. There are more than forty churches, where even classrooms have been converted into praise and worship arenas on a Sunday. Chari (2005) makes reference to this `Holy Spirit` sensation to illustrate the way in which many Wentworth residents have turned to religion to deliver them from their plight of poverty, unemployment and strife (as discussed in Chapter Seven). The sense of despair of this community has propelled women to establish mothers` prayer groups to pray for their children and families (Chari, 2005). Their sense of hopelessness generates a perception that only God can deliver them from their afflictions (see also Chapter Seven). The patriarchal church has often been used as a counter-ideology to the stigma of violent Coloured masculinity to reign in improper

masculinities and bring men back to their proper families (Chari, 2005). Chari describes Wentworth as a dystopian urbanity in which young men are drawn into an irresistibly cool gang subculture only to turn into beasts, and the only effective redeemer is the good priest, in implicit alliance with the police state (2005).

I offer a rationale for the growing number of churches in Wentworth. In recent times there have been an increasing number of congregants who break away from churches they have been attending for many years. Upon leaving, they set up their own churches elsewhere and financial gain can be seen as driving this move. The attempts at upward mobility, where church leaders collect substantial tithes from committed and loyal members, are palpable. Amidst all the `holiness`, devout prayer and numerous churches, remains a Wentworth community lost in despair. The increase in criminal elements and criminal activities is disquieting. Moreover, police corruption in Wentworth is ominous and depicts a daunting image of the justice system. Overt bribery and the corruption of police officials are no secret, and the poor remain powerless in their quest for justice in the face of powerful drug lords and criminals who consider themselves `above the law`. Chari asserts that 'While organised crime has progressively become stronger as a route to accumulation, through the alliance of drugs, big men and police, a larger population of informal drug runners mimic the older style of gang membership where little is gained but a little respect' (Chari, 2005:14). This oppressed community, a product of marginalisation in an apartheid era is now plagued by a crime–ridden, unjust and unequal society, in which both members and civil servants of this community perpetuate these oppressive and subjugated positions. Some of the older residents have been known to say that they were `better off under the white government` where White police brutality ensured that civilians `towed the line` (Jones, 1998). While this sentiment resonates with a white supremacist ideology, it certainly reflects on the difficult situation in which the people of Wentworth find themselves.

`Wenties` and slang

The linguistic cohesive factor among the Coloureds in Wentworth is slang. Slang is predominantly spoken amongst the males in this community. Kwamangalu (2004) describes slang as a language including informal, non-standard words or phrases (lexical innovations), which tend to originate in subcultures within a society. The use of slang often suggests that the person utilising the words or phrases is familiar with the hearers` group or sub-group. It can be considered a distinguishing factor of in-group identity. Slang expressions often embody the attitudes and values of group members. In order for an expression to become slang, it must be widely accepted and adopted by the members of the subculture or group. Slang has no societal boundaries or limitations as it can exist in all cultures and classes of society as well as in all languages. In order for expressions to survive they must be widely adopted by the group which uses them. Slang has been adopted chiefly among the males in Wentworth, who identify with one another, and it thus establishes a sense of belonging. Homosexual males refrain from using slang and instead have `developed` or fabricated their own language, `the Gayle`, with which they can identify, thus expressing and confirming their cohesion as a group. An exploration of this homosexual language does not form part of this study, and it will therefore not be discussed further.

More broadly, according to Kamwangamalu (2004) language is intimately linked to an individual`s or group`s social identity. A particular slang is a key linguistic feature of the Coloured people in Wentworth. Their speech is easily distinguishable from that of Coloureds living in Sydenham, Newlands East, Greenwood Park or Marianridge. It is easy to distinguish Coloured accents and slang usage by members of the Wentworth community as opposed to those from the other Coloured areas. Anyone from outside of Wentworth may find it difficult to understand. For instance someone speaking Wentworth

slang might speak of `moonah`, `maacha`, `dough`, `kwacha`, `pounds` or `crown` all of which stand for money.

In refuting the notion of there being one homogeneous group identity in Wentworth, the study acknowledges that the participants subscribe to similar and different constructions of themselves and others. This will be explored in greater detail in the methodology and analysis sections. Merewent High School is located within this predominantly working-class community of Wentworth where apathy, disillusionment, teenage pregnancies and dropouts from school are commonplace.

Conclusion

This chapter has problematised the complex, multi-layered and heterogeneous nature of Coloured identity, and has delineated Coloured identity within the South African context more broadly, while narrowing the focus to KwaZuluNatal and more specifically, Wentworth, a Coloured township in the South Durban Basin. It has also sought to provide the reader with some idea of Coloureds, a racially classified group of people about whom much uncertainty still exists, despite the dissolution of the apartheid system of government in South Africa.

It is evident that race and class are crucial determinants in the actualisation of prospects and opportunities for Coloureds. Although it is true that apartheid has played a key role in the formation and consolidation of these (and other) identities, Coloured identities cannot simply be considered to be apartheid labels imposed by Whites. They are made and re-made by Coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meanings to their everyday lives (Erasmus, 20001:16) and they are also constructed by others.

This section has shown how the social context has particular effects in understanding how Coloureds experience their lives in diverse contexts and

the meanings they make for themselves. Historical and cultural differences are key in the formation of these specific Coloured identities in South Africa. Rejecting an essentialist interpretation of the category Coloured, this chapter has argued that what is signified by the term Coloured is varied, heterogeneous and intricately intertwined with the social location. These differences are reflected and demonstrated in their historical backgrounds, phenotypical characteristics, and speech. The specific cultural context of Coloured determines and defines certain character traits and behaviours, and the way in which space and identity are mutually constitutive provides a backdrop for understanding the distinctiveness of Coloureds from Wentworth.

The next chapter will draw upon relevant local and international masculinities scholarship, which will inform this study.

CHAPTER 3

Literature Review

Introduction

The Coloured boys in this study who are described by their schools as being troublesome exemplify the complexity of the ways in which masculinities can be constructed, and in order to investigate the ways in which they construct their masculinities, it is necessary to investigate the ways in which they are in `trouble`. This is the main thesis in this study. This chapter examines the literature that informs this study and argues that particular versions of masculinity are conducive to landing the boys in `trouble`. How `trouble` is constructed by the thirteen Coloured boys in this study is intricately related to the formation of their masculinities. The focus on these thirteen Coloured boys is `specific rather than implicit or incidental` (Hearn, 2007) and this specificity lends itself to the Critical Men`s Studies approach to examining their masculine behaviours. In adopting this approach I draw largely on the work of key proponents such as Messner (1989); Connell (1995; 2000); Hearn (2007) in the field of masculinity studies. In this chapter I will engage with the broad scope of Critical Men`s Studies and focus primarily on Connell`s (1995) masculinity framework in trying to extend and strengthen understanding of and insight into the behaviours and identities of these working-class Coloured boys. Connell`s (1989; 1995; 2000) notion of hegemony readily supports my focus, particularly a toxic or harmful form of hegemonic masculinity within which the troublesome behaviour of these boys is predominantly located. The literature will also show that there are boys who actively choose to reject certain harmful culturally exalted behaviours and instead inhabit alternative ways of being males.

In this chapter I firstly engage with some of the theories that have been put forward in attempting to explain the reasons behind boys' `troublesome` behaviour. Some of these theories are not helpful in understanding the complex nature of boys` behaviour. I draw on masculinity as a conceptual tool and utilise the theoretical developments around masculinity studies to understand these boys` particular constructions and the effects they have on their lives. In linking trouble with masculinity I claim that `trouble` is gendered and that it is located within particular forms of behaviours and notions of what constitutes masculinity. This study examines the ways in which `trouble` affects and defines these boys, including the ways in which they are depicted and situated within conflicting and contradictory notions of masculinity. In theorising the link between `trouble` and masculinity, I remain mindful of how gender (masculinity) intersects with race and class in the formation of Coloured working-class masculinities. This compels the focus on the racialised and classed nature of masculinities, which is crucial to understanding the specific experiences, perceptions and difficulties in the lives of these boys.

In the second section of this chapter I engage with the growing body of international and local literature on masculinity studies. There are certain key themes that have relevance for this study. In dealing with these key themes, I review the literature by focusing on the following:

- Masculinity and Violence

- Gangs and Violence

- Teachers, Discipline and Violence

- Female Masculinity: Girls` Complicity in Boys` Violence`

- Masculinity and (Hetero) Sexuality

- Girls upholding rampant hypersexuality

- Transactional Sex and The `Sugar Daddy` Phenomenon

The `trouble` with boys

Many theoretical perspectives attempt to explain boys in `trouble` and the `trouble` with boys. In this section I briefly acknowledge some perspectives which do not necessarily help my study in understanding the fluid, evolutionary and multiple natures of boys` behaviours and their internally contradictory performances. Even though these perspectives are not helpful it is necessary to outline them in order to draw attention to the distinction between these perspectives and the masculinity approach, which caters for the impact of social interaction and social context in examining the behaviours of this group of Coloured boys. The explanations ranging from biological essentialism to criticism of feminism ('the gains of feminism') view boys as naturally predisposed to being boisterous and aggressive and suggest that there is nothing that we can do about it.

I will begin with the perspective that focuses on biological explanations. The theory of biological essentialism is simplistic in that it posits that boys are naturally inclined to being more active and aggressive than girls. What this perspective implies is that if these are natural behaviours, boys are a homogeneous group (Epstein et al., 1998) and there is nothing we can do to change or challenge their behaviours. Chapters Five, Six and Seven in this study will demonstrate that the boys in my research population display behaviours that are aggressive and violent, callous and anti-school, but also that these are not fixed behaviours indicative of character types. Rather, the study shows that these boys simultaneously perform troublesome and non-

troublesome roles which depict their behaviours within conflicting notions of harmful and alternative masculinities.

Other perspectives posit that the `gains of feminism` have been at the expense of boys – that the provision of equal opportunities for girls has `gone too far,` and has served to alienate men and boys (see Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Arnot, 1996; Bleach, 1998). Current research and debates argue for and against this idea (Kenway and Willis, 1998; Foster, Kimmel and Skelton, 2001). There is also the 'failing schools' perspective, which is often criticised for using narrow achievement measures and managerial models which ignore real issues of culture, gender, isolation and poverty (Raphael-Reed; 1995; Epstein, 1998; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998).

Lastly, the traditional sex-role theory was the first systematic attempt to present a social account of gender differences. However, in contesting this theory some gender scholars believe that it attempts to position girls and boys as passive recipients of the socialisation of others (Salisbury and Jackson, 1996; Francis, 2000; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). In addition, sex-role theory constructs two monolithic identities – masculinity and femininity - and denies the fact there are many forms of masculinity and femininity and that these are constantly evolving and changing as boys and girls negotiate their identities within specific social contexts (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). Another criticism of sex-role theory is its neglect of the issue of power, especially in relation to studies of masculinity (Connell, 1987; 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1996).

In all of these perspectives little attention is paid to the relations of power and control not only between boys and girls but also between different groups of boys. The relations of power between the boys in this study and other boys and girls as well as the teachers in the school are illustrated throughout this thesis, thus rendering these perspectives unhelpful. They are seductive in

their simplicity, with no attention given to the constructions of masculinity that have potentially detrimental effects for those boys who experience difficulties in school. To explore the configurations of masculinity in these boys` everyday experiences it is useful, then, to adopt an approach that is mindful of social practices, as advocated by Connell (1987; 1989; 1995; 2000).

Constructing masculinities

One of the primary objectives of masculinity studies is to move away from the biological and simplistic moorings of manhood by focusing on the constructed nature of masculinity. There is a significant body of research on masculinities (Connell, 1987; 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; 1996; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002; Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003; Barker, 2005; Hearn, 2005; Renold, 2005; Reid and Walker, 2008). In theorising masculinities I engage with Connell`s (1995) most theoretically developed and widely-used account, which focuses on power and the way that different forms of masculinity are hierarchically structured in relations of domination and subordination. Therefore, rather than attempting to define masculinity as a `thing` we need to focus on the processes by which it is constructed and its relational nature.

In advocating the range of masculinities available for boys and men to occupy I draw extensively on the work of Connell (1987; 1995), which provides a useful framework within which to examine the variegated masculine performances of the boys in my study. While acknowledging that there are many different forms of masculinity in practice, Connell (1987; 1995) groups four main categories as a framework within which to situate the range of masculinities that he describes. These four are the hegemonic, subordinate, marginalised and complicit masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity occupies the dominant or culturally exalted position that caters for the unbalanced nature of gendered power relations (Connell, 2005). This concept of

hegemonic masculinity has been challenged, not least because changes have been made to the theory of gender that framed it (Connell, 2002) and in addition, much richer empirical research on men and masculinities is now available. It is my understanding that Connell`s (1987; 1995) framework merely serves to reinforce and highlight the existence of a number of competing and alternative masculinities and in so doing rejects any dichotomous masculinity-femininity binary distinction. For this reason it must be borne in mind that there is no suggestion that the four categories offered by Connell (1995) encompass the whole range of possibilities. Instead, the paradigm serves to reinforce the understanding that masculinities do not occur in linear ways (as demonstrated in Chapters Five, Six and Seven), but rather are contingent upon the contexts in which they are produced. This gives credence to the assertion that masculinity is such a complex phenomenon that boys cannot simply be labelled as belonging to one type of masculinity or another (Morrell, 2001). My study focuses on hegemonic masculinities that achieve the highest status and the greatest influence and rewards. Hegemonic masculinity is characterised by compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia, the flaunting of sexual prowess, physical strength and assertiveness, amongst other traits. Subordinate masculinities refer to those masculinities that are actively repressed. The most obvious example of a subordinate masculinity is that of gay masculinity. The concepts of hegemony and subordination are useful in examining and understanding the gender power relations within a `legitimated` gender order among these boys and other boys and girls in this study. In this Chapter I focus on some of the key characteristics of hegemony, including misogyny, homophobia, the stress on sexual prowess, and anti-authoritarian behaviours. These attributes separately and together describe the boys in this study. However, Connell is mindful of the local contextuality of masculinity and its specificity, which has its own common inflections but does not apply uniformly to all men. Its effects are very complex (Morrell, 2001). More recent research has shown the contradictory nature of masculinities, suggesting that men and boys are able

to simultaneously occupy both powerful and vulnerable positions (Bhana, 2002; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002; Allen, 2003;; Renold, 2005;). The multi-dimensional nature of masculinity has yielded more realistic interpretations of boys` behaviours than previously (Allen, 2005; Renold, 2005; Shefer et al., 2005).

In this thesis I argue that these Coloured boys` experiences of getting into `trouble` are linked to their constructions of working-class masculinities in a context of social problems and economic deprivation. Their context is intertwined with the construction of hegemonic, troubling masculinities which are largely toxic but are also fluid and changing. Moreover, evidence of the alternative positions which some boys choose to take up suggests that despair would be premature. There is hope yet for these boys.

Masculinity and `trouble`

Contemporary research into boys` schooling requires neither clinical nor psychological abstraction, but a theoretical orientation that recognises masculinity as the embodiment of boys` actions and beliefs (Imms, 2000).

In the light of this statement, this study does not make reference to any psychological, biological or psycho-analytical notions of trouble, but relies on Connell`s (1995) representation of masculinities, which is found to be helpful in understanding the gendered notion of `trouble`. The assumption is that it is boys who get into `trouble`. The ways in which these boys get into `trouble`, their explanations for this `trouble`, and the effects that this `trouble` has on their lives are crucial to understanding them. Many of the ways in which these boys get into `trouble` in school are through conflict with authority (teachers), and have to do with anti-academic, anti-authoritarian and violent masculine behaviour. Like Connell`s (1989) classification of the boys in a school as `cool guys, swots and wimps`, getting into `trouble` indicates the

ways in which the actions of these males are constantly defined in relation to institutional power. Moreover, Connell demonstrated how the sexualised and gendered nature of their troublesome behaviour is located within hegemonic notions of masculinities that include misogyny, homophobia and compulsory heterosexuality. The significance of their masculine performances also serves to highlight the complex nature of `trouble` in the simultaneous accommodation and rejection of toxic masculinities by many of these boys. The alternatives to the toxic hegemony that are taken up by some boys, particularly with reference to this study, challenge the `exclusively repressive view on power` (Stolen and Vaa, 1991:9). In the next section I engage with the literature that has highlighted the occupation and performance of alternative masculinities.

Alternative masculinities

Many studies highlight the ways in which boys perform masculinity in non-hegemonic ways (Renold, 2005; Mills, MacNaughton, 2000; Barker, 2005). They make reference to the widely held knowledge that to `do boy` in non-hegemonic ways often involves inhabiting a marginalised and often painful position within a system of gender relations that carries a host of derogatory labels for any boy who dares to deviate from the normative masculinity. Some of these derogatory labels include Willis`s (1977) `ear oles`, Best`s (1983) `losers`, Kessler et al`s (1985) `cyrils`, Connell`s (1989) `swots and wimps`, Abraham`s (1989) anti-school boys, Thorne`s (1993) `sissies` and Gilbert and Gilbert`s (1998) `nerds`. In attempting to negotiate alternate forms of masculinities these boys run the risk of being marginalised in their failure to perform popular forms of masculinity. Despite this risk, there are boys who still choose to inhabit behaviours that resist the more harmful ways of being males. Recent studies have demonstrated the existence of non-hegemonic masculinities and the dynamic, transient, unstable and tense nature of power Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Reay, 2002; Renold, 2005), where the uncritical discourse

of male-dominance-female submissiveness (women as victims and men as perpetrators) is rejected (Foucault, 1979). It is important to consider that despite the fact that the negative stereotypes about boys are prevalent, there are those who do not fall prey to them. In destabilising the negative stereotypical perceptions of all working-class boys as anti-academic, Reay recognises that there are hard-working boys who are trying to achieve academically (2002). This has strong resonance with some boys in my study (although they are a minority) who demonstrate a positive orientation to school work and strive for academic success. This is discussed in Chapter Seven. My study also demonstrates that there are boys who resist violence and seek peaceful, loving relationships, and this has strong resonance with other research which draws attention to the existence of alternative masculinities (Pollack, 1999; Allen, 2003; Renold, 2005). Renold`s (2004) study highlights how primary schoolboys resisted, subverted and indeed actively challenged in public and private ways the power relations embedded in popular, hegemonic masculinities through humour and parody, through locating `safe spaces`, and through drawing upon collective peer group support and solidarity. She also explores how these boys defined themselves as `boy`, given their often marginalised and questionable `masculinity`, through feminine and female disassociations, heterosexual identifications and `masculine` fictions – thus engaging in the very practices that marked them out as Other (Renold, ibid). Evidently much attention is being given to encouraging, nurturing and promoting masculine behaviour that is non toxic. The understanding is that more respectful and non-violent alternative masculine behaviours make it possible for more gender equitable and non-oppressive male-female relationships to flourish. Moreover, strategies have been offered to encourage boys to inhabit more positive and exemplary forms of masculinity which renounce violence and are more respectful (Keddie and Mills, 2007). MacNaughton (2000) proposes ways in which teachers can nurture, encourage and promote these alternative masculinities.

This thesis demonstrates the agency that the boys in this study display in their simultaneous accommodation and rejection of the toxic hegemonic masculinities prevalent in their problematic context. In so doing it highlights how they simultaneously occupy toxic and alternate ways of being boys, and draws attention to the contradictory ways of being masculine. The potential to destabilise culturally exalted and harmful masculinities in Wentworth is promising. Imms asserts that mobility between masculinities (tension among men`s ideas and values) might become the basis for mediation among masculinities and make possible men`s acceptance of `the other` (2000).

Classed and racialised masculinities

The growth in masculinity studies in South Africa over the past decade compels the examination of how the political, social and economic landscape of South Africa is related to the constructions of masculinities. I rely largely on the work of Morrell (1998; 2001; 2005; 2007), who asserts that the growth in academic work on men and masculinities in Southern Africa has enhanced the understanding of gender relations here, but the existing body of South African literature on gender studies neglects the study of masculinity in Coloured boys. More importantly, there is a general neglect of studies of boys in the school context. Over the past decade, Morrell`s contribution has largely focused on Black masculinities in South Africa. This has evoked some criticism for the exclusivity of its focus. In this section I draw on the literature on masculinities which argues that teenage and adolescent boys` experiences are shaped by notions of power, and that these are strongly related to racialisation, classification and marginalisation (Connell, 1994; Morrell, 2001). This means that in order to understand the troublesome behaviour of these boys and its relationship to toxic masculine behaviours, we need to focus on the specific experiences of these working-class Coloured boys and the impact that race and class factors have on them.

What we know from the literature on masculinity and schooling has mostly been gleaned from well-resourced first-world contexts. The specific complexities of the South African educational setting are not reflected in the literature and might have unanticipated effects on the theoretical writings if fully documented. In general, gender interacts with issues of race and class to affect boys` relationships to schooling and render the relationships varied, complex, and often inconsistent (Longlands, 2008). This gives rise to the assertion that masculinities cannot be understood without paying particular attention to race and class (Connell, 1995; 2000; Morrell, 2001). The complexity of how gender intersects with other identity relations - such as social class, ethnicity, rurality and sexuality - exacerbates issues of educational disadvantage for particular groups of male and female students within but also beyond the context of schooling (Mills, 2003; Lingard, 2003; Mills, et al., 2007). There is consensus that it is social class and ethnicity (race) that are the most accurate predictors of educational disadvantage, and not gender (Collins et al., 2000; Connolly, 2004; Francis and Skelton, 2005). Yet even though race and class are critical forces in determining the life experiences of men, they do not have an equal effect on all men, and their effects are very complex (Morrell, 2001). Furthermore, race in the metropole is not the same as race in South Africa (Morrell, ibid) and while there are obvious similarities between the experiences of Black people and the development of racism in, say, the USA and countries like South Africa where rule has been exercised by a White apartheid regime, there are equally significant differences. It is important to note that despite the dissolution of apartheid and the coming into power of the African National Congress (the African majority party that promotes a democratic system of governance) the lives of many South Africans continue to be circumscribed.

The assertion that there remain strong socio-economic inequalities (in South Africa) which are still heavily racialised (Morrell, 2007) is illustrated in the way the Coloured working-class boys in this study remain in a marginalised

and disadvantaged position on the basis of their Colouredness. In Chapter Two some light is shed on this matter of identity in South Africa, and more specifically in Wentworth, KwaZulu-Natal. As discussed in that chapter, socio-economic constraints still weigh heavily on this group of people. However, the data demonstrates that these boys negotiate their circumstances and do not mechanically inhabit the hegemonic masculinities that are available to them. The inequalities of the past that continue to plague them include a community that places very little value on academic performance. The compulsion to `get a job` together with high drop-out rates (often a result of their suspension from school) sees many of the boys in this community leaving school prematurely, thereby limiting their chances of securing gainful employment or undertaking professional careers. Connell writes that `the making of masculinities in schools is far from the simple learning of norms… it is a process with multiple pathways, shaped by class and ethnicity, producing diverse outcomes` (2000:164).

There is moral panic about boys in South Africa at the moment, but this is racialised, centering on Black boys and young men, and the focus is not on educational achievement but on the presumed anti-social and delinquent nature of young black males. Concerns about Black boys and young men in South Africa draw on deep-seated assumptions about them as being `bad`, as perpetrators of violence and makers of dangerous spaces (Pattman and Bhana, 2006). The portrayal of Black boys in a more positive light, taking into account the subjective realities and particular positions that boys take up in response to their background, is crucial in their constitution of masculine identities (Pattman and Bhana, ibid).

In another segment of the South African context, unemployed Coloured men from Manenburg on the Cape Flats have responded to the boredom and poverty that arises from their marginalised positions by engaging in violence and rape, whereas interviews with Black boys from poor backgrounds in

South Africa reveal that they attach much importance to education as a means for self betterment and of improving their lives. Even though the boys remained pessimistic about their futures, they still strongly invested themselves in school and the school's work ethic (Pattman and Bhana, 2006). This suggests that the `badness` of Black boys is complex, contradictory and much exaggerated. Even the very bad boys, although violent elsewhere, were not violent in school. The research suggests that these bad boys were anxious and concerned about fending for themselves and their families irrespective of the tough male image they exhibited (Pattman and Bhana, 2006). They bucked authority and earned the `naughty` boy label from which they derived status, yet this was insufficient to allay their fears regarding their futures. Much like the boys in my study, their attempts to reclaim power over their lives compelled them to present themselves in a threatening way by intimidating teachers. It is this ability to instill fear that becomes a source of power for these boys. However, they were not simply bad, but rather there was a desire within them to become good and responsible breadwinners (Pattman and Bhana, ibid). This is demonstrative of the serious impact race and class factors have in influencing the life experiences and masculine performances of boys. As demonstrated in the analysis chapters, the performance of toxic masculinities by most of the boys in this study is largely the product of a deprived and problematic context which permits the formation of masculinities that further limit their life chances. Bhana's (2002) study of young children in four South African schools (White, Indian and Black) confirmed the race and class differences between boys in their everyday experiences of masculinity in schools. It is impossible to understand the shaping of working-class masculinities without giving full weight to their race and class as well as their gender politics. There is a complex interplay between masculinity, race and class (Westwood, 1990) in the context of a South African society which is structured by racism as well as by patriarchy. Studies have captured the racialisation of disaffection in the over disciplining of Black boys in primary schools, a process that sets up a vicious cycle of

stereotyping (Ferguson, 2000; Morrell, 2001; Pattman and Bhana, 2006). Black boys seem to have more negative interactions with teachers and schooling than White or Asian boys (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Davis, 2001; 2006). Explanations offered for this include the ways in which Black boys and men compensate for their marginalised positions differently. Black men often cope with their frustration, embitterment, alienation and social impotence by channelling their creative energies into the construction of unique, expressive and conspicuous styles of demeanour, speech, gesture, clothing, hairstyle, walk, stance and handshake (Frosh, et al., 2002). To compensate for their marginal racial identities, the Black boys in Sewell`s (1997) study survived modern schooling by positioning themselves as superior to White and Asian students in terms of their sexual attractiveness, style, creativity and hardness and by referring to the White boys as pussies. By labelling white boys as homosexuals and ridiculing them for not being daring these boys were resisting racism, but at the same time playing to and reinforcing white racist stereotypes of Black men (Sewell, 1997). Ferguson (2000) explores the intersection of power, agency, race and gender among young African-American boys. She found that their being labelled as `bad` restricted the `bad boys` identity and that saving face and peer support were crucial to acting out their `bad boy` status. This has strong resonance with the resistance that `troublesome` boys in my study showed in response to teacher disciplinary interventions, to save face amongst their peers.

The ways in which race and class are implicated in the formation and negotiation of violent, misogynistic and hypersexualised masculinities are integral to this study. Research in the UK and Brazil shows that stereotypes of Black criminality often focus on the hyper-masculine nature of Black young men and condition the interpretation placed upon their behaviour (Sewell, 1997; Ferguson, 2001; 2003; Barker, 2005). It is perhaps no surprise that it is boys and men from working-class and marginalised racial backgrounds who engage in risk-taking activities (Martino and Meyenn, 2001). The research also

asserts that `for many boys and men, these forms of masculinity are among the few ways in which they can exert some form of power within a world in which they have very little influence` (Martino and Meyenn, ibid). In addition, the assumption is that race and class are strong determinants in influencing teacher attitudes and practices towards boys, rendering their schooling experiences negative or positive. Like the boys in my study, Black boys were more likely to be drawn into fights and to develop `hardened` identities, which then meant they were more likely to be noticed by teachers and disciplined for being aggressive (Sewell, 1997; Ferguson, 2001; Pattman and Bhana, 2006). More importantly, the violent context which exposes the boys in this study to early experiences of extreme violence (as discussed in Chapter Six) is a major contributing factor to their aggressive and violent dispositions. The issue of violence will be further discussed in the next section.

Masculinity and violence

The fact that males are at the centre of the accounts of violent disputes reported attributes boys` problematic behaviour in school to the wider social context of male violence (Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). The increasing violence among men and boys certainly requires a continued focus on them, given that recent studies have focused on violence in African schools as an inhibitor of gender equality (Unterhalter, 2007). Much of the theorising in men`s studies suggests that an exploration of masculinities certainly helps in understanding men and boys as gendered beings as well as in understanding ideals about manhood that inform men's and boys` behaviours and how these are related to the use of violence (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Morrell, 2001; Field, 2001; Lang, 2002; Salo, 2005a; Sauls, 2005).

The patriarchal ethos that is implicated in the way boys and men assume power and dominance over their partners extends to the way in which they

assume power over other boys as well. These behaviours are often implicated in incidents of physicality, aggression and violence. Violence by males against males, which is often interpreted as 'boys being boys' or as bullying, is indeed gender-based (Collins, et al. 1996; Mills, 2001). Mills posits that this violence is often a form of boundary policing, usually with a homophobic edge, and serves to normalise particular constructions of masculinity while also determining where a boy may be positioned within a hierarchical arrangement of masculinities (2001). The capacity for boys and men to commit violence is one of the most dominant forms of masculinity (Mills, 2001), yet it is evident that they are not exempt from the processes that may hurt them too. Clark asserts that:

"Violence that is prevalent among young men at times becomes associated with aspects of criminality. Thus men`s higher rate of criminality and violence is not just an expression of masculinity. Men and boys use crime and violent practices as resources for constructing masculine identity. Groups of boys engage in violent crime, fighting and sexual abuse not because their hormones drive them to it but in order to acquire prestige, to mark differences or to gain pleasure. These practices become central to the making of masculinity when boys lack other resources for avenues for gaining prestige, respect or esteem." (1996:8).

This assertion is consistent with Mills' (2001) suggestion that assumptions about man`s natural proclivity towards violence and desire for coercive power are not natural, but are instead the product of social constructs that serve to reinforce masculine privileges. It is these masculinised attributes that normalise the association of masculinity with violence (Mills, ibid). The association of low socio-economic backgrounds and violence is common. Many early ethnographers - Willis (1977), Mclaren (1989), Fitzclarence (1995) and Walker (1988) - have documented the aggression and violence exhibited by working-class males they studied. It is also important to acknowledge that not all men and boys are violent. Some studies draw attention to the ways in

which boys choose alternative patterns of masculinity that are non-violent (Mills, 2001 Renold, 2005; Jensen, 2008). My study demonstrates that even though their context permits and endorses the formation of extremely violent masculinities, some boys reject violence in all its forms. Often, boys are coerced into violence which is not so much about the desire to fight as about the desire to stand up for friends, which is a key defining feature of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1989; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Pollack, 1998; Frosh et al., 2002; Barker, 2005). Not running away from fights and being able to protect and defend their friends demonstrate that for many boys `being tough` was their understanding of what it was to be male (Mills, 2001).

What is alarming is the conclusion that has been drawn, which presents South Africa as one of the most violent societies in the world (Morrell and Makhaye, 2006). The legacy of the brutality of apartheid in South Africa is a violent social context characterised by high levels of unemployment, extremes of wealth and poverty, continuing racism, the easy availability of guns and patriarchal values and behaviours (Harber, 2001). During the colonial era and the period of the apartheid regime, both the state and the forces opposing the state created a situation of violence was which naturally affected schools and those teaching and learning in them. The legitimation of force and brutality during the apartheid era is culpable for breeding an oppressive and violent version of masculinity, a hegemonic masculinity that serves to oppress others. Many young Black boys` enactment of violence has its roots in the history of a violent and oppressive past (Bhana, 2002) and understanding this past, together with the boys' early life experiences of violence, aids the understanding of how school masculinities are shaped. Consideration should also be given to the fact that before 1996 the use of violence in schools was legitimated through the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. The South African Schools' Act of 1996 has outlawed the use of corporal punishment in schools. However, after the banning of corporal punishment in 1996, both the rate and extent of violence in South African schools has

increased considerably. Chapter Seven demonstrates that some teachers continue to administer corporal punishment in disciplining learners. In that chapter I draw attention to the use of aggression and brute force by some teachers in their attempts at trying to regulate the behaviour of some boys. The literature that resonates with these findings is further discussed later in this chapter.

To further highlight the extent of violence in schools I refer to Morrell`s assertion that 'Violence is a problem for schools and a problem for young men' (Morrell, 2006:153). The violent behaviours of boys in South African schools are reflected regularly in the media, which indicate both the levels of violence as well as the frequency thereof. Several bodies of research support the contentions that violence is widespread in schools and that such violence is most often perpetrated by males (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Wolpe, et al. 1997; Morrell, 1998; Kariuki, 2004) and can thus be understood as an expression of certain types of masculinity. Concerns about adolescent boys have also been widely articulated in South Africa, with particular focus on cultures of violence in townships, sexual abuse, harassment and the exploitation of young women (Lindegger and Durrheim, 2001; Morrell, 2001a; Morrell, 2001b; Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Attwell, 2002; Blackbeard, 2005). The increasing prevalence of gendered violence in schools, where men and boys are implicated in making schools unsafe for girls, is an important concern in South Africa.

Research conducted in South African schools proves that the worst violence is experienced in societies where resources are most limited Wolpe et al., 1997; Bhana, 2002; Morrell, 2002; 2006). While all schools suffer some form of violence (Human Rights Watch, 2001), frequent violence with high levels of intensity is concentrated in schools that service the poorest communities (Morrell, et al., 2006). Evidence of the high prevalence of violence in poor communities can be found in the ways in which the boys in my study often

straddle a need for the sense of belonging and the protection that gangs offer, and a resistance to being classified as a gangster. The findings show that violence in Merewent High School emanates largely from spin-offs of gang-related fights in the community. In primary school, on the other hand, research has shown that young boys often resort to defining and asserting their masculinity by demonstrating their strength through collision with each other (Bhana, 2002). Violence in this instance is used as a means of asserting control. The mere threat of violence is sometimes sufficient to ensure compliance from other boys and girls in the school (Bhana, ibid).

Despite the gloomy image that is depicted here, there is some evidence of changing masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa (Morrell, 2001; 2005). Where change has been uneven, the continuing economic disparities may both hinder change and exacerbate violence (Morrell, 2001; Bhana, 2005). More recently, research has demonstrated the ways in which some boys negotiate more peaceful masculinities by rejecting violence (Morrell, 2006). This resonates with many studies that show that not all men and boys are violent, but rather that `there are more men who avoid violence than resort to it` (Morrell and Makhaye, 2006) with alternative patterns of masculinity open to them (Morrell, 2005). More importantly, violent masculinities must be seen as changeable, making it possible to deal with and work towards eradicating violence in schools. Beinart (1992) attempted to show that violence was not part of an `unbreakable cycle`. He rejected the naturalist understandings that men were inherently violent and argued that men have social force within the workings of non-violent organisations and institutions too (Beinart, ibid).

Over the years violence in Wentworth has largely been a result of gang and drug wars. Despite the continued presence of gangs in Wentworth, there is also evidence to suggest that it is a waning subculture. The changing and evolutionary nature of masculinities in this community (as discussed in Chapter Seven) compels boys to occupy the most popular masculinity at a

given time. Gangs lose their salience when boys pursue other more 'in` forms of masculinity. The next section will provide some background into gangs in South Africa and more specifically in Wentworth, and how the effects of racialised and classed masculinities contribute to the formation of gangster masculinities.

Gangs and violence

Chapter Seven will show the strong link that exists between the types of violence the boys in this study become involved in and gang cultures. Similarly, the literature demonstrates a clear connection between violence, gangs and masculinities. With the notable exception of Scharf (1989) and Pinnock (1984) contemporary South African research remains inadequate (Mokwena, 1991). The most incisive attempt to provide some theoretical explanation has been by Glaser (2000). Although this work is useful and does make inroads into the area of violent youth subcultures, its focus remains limited to the period 1935-1976 and focuses predominantly on the youth gangs in Soweto.

Both Pinnock (1984) and Glaser (2000) argue that the formation of gangs is a form of resistance to the hegemony of the dominant classes. They suggest that gangs arise out of a politically hostile environment and that they are in some senses a response to political domination.

As in most metropolitan areas, gangs in Durban started off as part of the street culture in some of the townships, particularly in Coloured areas such as Newlands East and Wentworth (N.A. Monograph, 1998). These gangs also operated in their own defined territories, but in comparison with the situation in the Western Cape, they were far fewer in number in any given area. In the 1970s gangsterism became rife in Wentworth. Wentworth has an extremely violent history characterised by gruesome gang wars, rapes and the murder

of innocents. As in the Cape Flats, political and economic marginalisation of Wentworth Coloured men under apartheid influenced the construction of a violent, sexualised masculinity linked with gang membership (Moolman, 2004). Gang members took to raping women (Moolman, 2004; Salo, 2005a; Sauls, 2005). The involvement of many youth in gangs therefore derives from the socio-political factors of poverty, poor education, broken families and the massive urban relocations of people of colour under apartheid (Chari, 2005; Glaser, 2000; Pinnock, 1998). Indeed, some authors suggest that specific versions of violence characterised by a willingness to kill, callous attitudes towards women and an exaggerated sense of male honour (traits reinforced by membership of a gang) represent an extreme or exaggerated version of the hegemonic masculinity found in low-income settings (Barker, 2005). Youngsters are born and bred in surroundings where particular gangs have been operating for decades (Mokwena, 1991). Being feared gives rise to `respectability` and is an authentic way of surviving difficult socio-economic circumstances. Similarly, the identities and lifestyles of `bad boys` in a South African school context were conceived as responses to predicaments, expectations and pressures which affected black township boys in general (Pattman and Bhana, 2005). The `bad boys` were acting as `merchants` selling drugs in and out of school in their attempts to be the breadwinners in their homes and trying to fend for themselves and their families in conditions of unemployment and poverty (Pattman and Bhana, ibid).

Where gangs prevail, men continually confront the choice of either joining a gang and being protected, or being victimised and vulnerable to attacks (Field, 2001). It is demonstrated in this study that gang membership in Wentworth is a way for boys to gain power among peers while also finding a sense of belonging and acceptance. This illustration of how gangs offer spaces for violent masculinities to flourish is integral to my argument in Chapter Seven. Glaser (1998) attributes this preoccupation with territory in the youth subcultures and the interdependency of boys as some type of personal loyalty

between gang members related to the necessity of defending turf. African male associations and gangs played a key part in teaching fighting skills, producing codes of loyalty and belonging and regulating the extent to which violence was actually used (Morrell, 1998). Violence was and still is being used by some teachers to regulate boys` behaviour in schools in the form of corporal punishment. As the next section will demonstrate, the legitimation of corporal punishment to discipline boys is problematic in its potential to encourage violence.

Teachers, discipline and violence

In the past, a regular part of school life in South Africa was corporal punishment, with authority and discipline being closely linked with masculinity (Connell, 1985; Beynon, 1985; 1987). Since the enactment of the South African School`s Act of 1996, which has banned corporal punishment in South African schools, many teachers feel that there are few alternatives available to discipline learners. Despite the outlawing of corporal punishment it is evident from the findings in my study that there are teachers who continue to use brute force to discipline boys illegitimately. There is evidence to suggest that aggressive forms of discipline are related to the development of particularly `tough` forms of masculinity (Skelton, 2001), which prompts us to ask what roles teachers and schools have to play in the reinforcement of and resistance to the production of violent masculinities. Mac an Ghaill`s (1994) study illustrates that in response to the teacher and police authoritarianism, boys develop a `tough` version of masculinity centred on collective strategies of counter-interrogation, contestation and survival. Identification with a group is of central importance in the construction of boys' masculinity in response to their `conflict with the institutional authority of the school` (Connell, 1989; Johnson, 1991a as cited by Mac an Ghaill, 1994). Mac an Ghaill calls the boys who `survived against authoritarianism` from the school authority `Macho Lads` (1994:56). `Methods of control and

domination using tactics of discipline and punish, rather than engagement and discussion only lead to further student rebellion` (Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). Kenway and Fitzclarence (1997) argue that if schools favour heavy-handed discipline and control and avoid and discourage empathetic, compassionate and emotional responsibility, they are in some way complicit in the production of violence. Often, the use of violence in controlling children has the potential to create conditions which allow violence to flourish (Bhana, 2002).

Furthermore, it is argued that a violent discipline system promotes competition in `machismo` amongst boys and sometimes between male teachers and boys in school (Willis, 1977; Connell, 1989). The perception in schools is that male teachers are predominantly seen to be the disciplinarians, which resonates with the idea that discipline and punishment are part of the role of being a male teacher (Martino, 1999; Skelton, 2001).

Increasingly, news reports have publicised the extremely violent attacks by male learners on both male and female teachers in schools (The Mercury, 2008: 3). Yet, whilst the main focus has been on the violence of young males, there is growing concern over aggressive girls (Brinkworth, and Burrell, 1994; Davies, 1999; Alder and Worrall, 2002; Bhana, 2009). The next section focuses on girls` behaviour and the ways in which girls are seen to be engaging in what has been traditionally perceived as masculine behaviour.

Girls` violence and complicity

There is increasing concern about the perceived increase in violence perpetrated by girls and young women, as a survey of recent scholarship shows. In both academic (Hardy and Howitt, 1998) and media accounts (Brinkworth and Burrell, 1994), girls' violence is commonly portrayed as more grave and disquieting than boys' violence, and as presenting more of a

problem (Batchelor et al., 2001). Worrall (2004) looks at the broader effects of the massive attention now being paid to girls' aggression and violence, suggesting the phenomenon has led to shifting parameters and changing categories of girlhood, particularly the increasing criminalisation of girls. These 'popular constructions' of girl violence in the media are fuelled by 'the search for equivalence' and a desire to demonstrate that 'girls do it too', arguing that these new sensationalised categories of risky girl behaviour have increasingly devastating effects on girls (Alder and Worrall, 2004; Chesney-Lind and Irwin, 2004; Worrall, 2004: 47).

Disrupting the notion that violence is a male domain, feminist research shows how women who do violence are often constructed as monstrous as being more ruthless than men, thus reproducing rigid gender binaries (Macdonald, 1991). Girls are now implicated in gang membership, weapon possession and violent altercations (Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003). Halberstam coined the phrase `female masculinity` to refer to the ways in which females are engaging in violent behaviours that have traditionally been perceived as masculine (1998). Breaking with gender binaries, she argues that gender-ambiguous constructions are often pathologised and suggests that female masculinity can be an empowering model in gender relations in the possible combination of female and masculinity. Her research is useful in that it challenges the assumption that transgressive women are the victims of pathology (Halberstam, 1998).

Despite the high level of interest in 'girl violence' (Stanko, 2001), there is a paucity of literature on girls and violence, as most research on youth violence has focused on boys, and girls' voices are rarely heard. Bhana has begun work in this area in South Africa. She draws attention to the relatively under-researched study of violence amongst (primary) schoolgirls in the South African context (2009). Her work draws on primary school ethnographic work and makes a case for theorising and beginning work in this area. She

argues that the ongoing silences around the issue of girls` violence in South Africa has led to the conflation of the category `girl` with attributes derived from traditional western conceptions of the private sphere such as `weakness` and `vulnerability`. She further argues that the high level of concern with men's and boys` violence has served to mobilise and secure existing racial codes that position working-class women as objects of pity and African working-class men as misogynistic savages (2009). This view of girls as victims merely `fragments our knowledge about their schooling experiences and creates an unhelpful dichotomy which reduces girls to homogeneous stereotypes and ignores the possibility of multiple forms of femininities, just as there are multiple forms of masculinities` (Bhana, 2009:97). The girls in Bhana's study use their sexuality to fend off violent space-invading boys by `showing their panties` to embarrass and humiliate the boys. Similarly, girls in Renold`s (2002) study transgressed conventional heterosexual expressions and performances by being physically violent towards their boyfriends. Bhana (2009) and Renold`s (2002) findings contrast with Davies` (1993:136) construction of girls` heterosexual engagements as predominantly fragile and vulnerable. Moreover, this violent disposition is used to acquire material, social and emotional rewards for girls who offer protection to gentler girls. It is evident that the ways in which girls experience violence, like the boys in this study, is mediated and shaped by factors of race, class, sexuality, and their place of residence (Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003). The use of violence by some girls reinforces their power positions (Bhana, 2009; Currie et al., 2007). Girls who lack economic and social power find a resource in peer status groups. Bhana suggest that this pattern of female invisibility in terms of gendered school violence is experienced not only in Africa, but rather extends beyond the continent.

Even though this study focuses on Coloured boys, the literature and findings of this study demand that some attention be paid to girls, particularly as the toxic forms of hegemonic masculinities (discussed later in this section)

amongst some boys in this study are upheld by some girls who support violent masculinities. As stated above, studies have shown that girls are complicit in upholding forms of masculinity which are indeed toxic to their well-being and to others (Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003; Halberstam, 1998; Bhana, 2009). Through the voices of the boys in my study it becomes evident that there are girls who are complicit in upholding, encouraging and supporting male violence even if it is only by concealing and smuggling weapons into school to be used in gang fights. These girls are identified as `status seekers, `who are said to gain prestige from being a gangster's girlfriend (Vetten, 2000). More importantly, in her study of gangs in South Africa, Vetten argues that the emphasis on women as victims reinforces stereotypes of women as being passive and as living on terms dictated by men (2000), an assumption that has been challenged by various writers in this section. Research conducted by Artz (1998), Baskin and Sommers (1998), Chesney-Lind (2002) Miller (2001), and Stewart and Tattersall (2000) points to a strong relationship between girls who have been frequently physically, sexually and emotionally abused and their potential to use violence. Despite the existence of the `female masculinity` referred to by Halberstam (1998), male toxic hegemony is imbued with power in its exaltation of a misogynistic oppression of females and its celebration of sexual prowess. The `patriarchal dividend`, a phrase coined by Connell (1995), permits men and boys to dominate women and girls in the sexual arena, as discussed in the next section.

Masculinity and (hetero) sexuality

In dealing with this section I engage with the literature that reveals how men and women, under different conditions, identify with constructed masculinities and femininities which are aligned with power relations. In asserting their hegemonic masculinity, men and boys display key defining attributes of homophobia, misogyny and exaggerated sexuality, which will be

discussed in this section, and which are illustrated in Chapter Five of this thesis. The public display of (hetero) sexuality is central to dominant constructions of masculinity (Campbell, 2001), where boys` masculine identities are linked to, and defined by, what they do with and to their bodies (Swain, 2008:4).

Hegemonic masculinity sanctions misogyny, rampant hypersexuality and homophobia by permitting boys to confer power on themselves through the domination of girls and other more effeminate boys (Connell, 1987; Mac an Ghaill, 1989; Frank, 1992; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998). In pursuit of such hegemony, boys reject any other sexual orientations that are conceived of as deviant, and such 'deviant' boys are therefore `fair game` for harassment (Connell, 1995; Frosh, et al., 2002; Renold, 2002). Those boys who display effeminate tendencies or overtly show `gay` attributes are ostracised, ridiculed and alienated by `masculine` boys. Both primary and secondary school-based studies have illustrated how `homophobic` discourses and anti-gay/lesbian talk and behaviours saturate boys` peer- group cultures, social relations and masculinity-making activities (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Nayak and Kehily, 1997; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Duncan, 1999; Letts and Sears, 1999; Sunnari et al, 2002; Swain, 2003). Renold shows how `homophobic performances such as name calling, teasing and labelling were directed at boys who failed or chose not to access hegemonic masculine discourses and practices` (2002: 425). For those boys who display an `abnormal` or `questionable` masculine identity, their heterosexuality is thrown into doubt, thereby creating the potential for their behaviours to be questioned (2002; 2005). Differentiating oneself and subordinating homosexuals by shouting out and positioning other boys as `gay` were all ways in which boys assert and attempt to make coherent their heterosexual identities, and are a means of policing the boundaries of hegemonic heterosexual masculinities (Nayak and Kehily, 1997; Swain, 2003) and of policing the `Other` (Kimmel, 2005). Thus, homophobic performances seem to offer a way of producing `heterosexual

coherence,` which signifies a coherent masculine identity (Renold, 2002:425) and the strong enforcement of heterosexuality as normative.

Moreover, there is tremendous diversity in the ways that heterosexual young men interact with and treat young women – from callous, misogynistic behaviour at one end of the spectrum to more gender-equitable behaviour respectful of the equal rights of young women at the other (Barker, 2005). Young boys perform their heterosexual identities through objectifying and sexualising women and girls (Renold, 2000; Frosh, et al., 2002). Connell describes this as getting the `dirty books` out and `talking about women` (2000:136), where sex talk is an open validation of their masculinity. This rampant sexuality is not restricted to girls in school but extends to female teachers (Walkerdine, 1981) as well, where boys attempt to subvert teachers' power by sexualising them. This `patriarchal dividend` (Connell, 1987) is also implicated in the ways boys and men assume power and dominance over their partners, which are discussed in Chapter Five.

In accordance with their ideals of masculinity, adolescents of both sexes view sexual experimentation positively for men but negatively for women. While having multiple partners gives status and prestige to men and boys, the same standard does not apply to women and girls (Kistner, 2003; Barker, 2005). The double standards applied to male-female relationships, which are prevalent particularly in low-income urban settings, are fraught with mistrust (Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Barker, 2005). Too many men (in the lower- and middle-income groups) accept and defend the double standards that they are allowed additional sexual partners while their girl-friends and wives are not. In addition, `successful` masculinity is partially defined in terms of young men`s capacity to control their girlfriends (Wood and Jewkes, 2001). Barker`s studies on men and boys illustrate how they channel their sexual desire in a way that emphasises the quantity of their relationships and partners rather than the quality of their relationships (Barker, 2005). Research has shown that while

some girls view sex as an act of intimacy, love and ultimate bonding, there are those boys who tend to view it, at least partially, as a way of confirming their masculinity (Pollack, 1998; Frosh, et al., 2002; Renold, 2005). However, research has also indicated that these callous representations of boys and of girls as victims are being challenged and subverted. Later in this chapter I will draw on literature that shows that there are girls who want sex and boys who want love (Allen, 2003).

Young African men living in townships largely construct their masculinity in terms of their sexual prowess. Scholars have noted how dominant masculinities in South Africa can shape men`s sometimes violent control over women, the demand for `flesh to flesh` sex, and the celebration of multiple partners (Campbell, 1997; Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Hunter, 2002). Conversely, research conducted with high-school girls in KwaZulu-Natal demonstrates how their sexuality is located within the competing discourses of romantic love and security. The girls rationalised their risky sexual behaviour and explained in terms of love and trust why safer sex was not necessary for them (Reddy and Dunn, 2007). Their quest for love is exercised in terms of their not insisting on safe-sex practices despite the risks involved (Reddy and Dunn, ibid).

The impact of poverty and unemployment on their sense of worth is evident in the attitudes and actions of men in Manenburg, on the Cape Flats, who are determined to demonstrate to their male friends that they have achieved many sexual conquests, and view women mainly as objects for their sexual pleasure (Saul, 2005; Salo, 2005a; Field, 2001). Race and class are instrumental in the performance of sexuality in South Africa, particularly amongst Coloured men (many of whom are gangsters) on the Cape Flats. The intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality is also illustrated in the responses of some Coloured men to their marginalised and disadvantaged positions of deprivation, poverty, unemployment and boredom, in which

they resorted to gang-raping women to assert their masculinity (Moolman, 2004; Salo, 2005a; Sauls, 2005). Similarly, the boys in this study, who are affected by their past and present marginalised positions, go to great lengths to prove their masculinity in ways that demonstrate misogyny, homophobic and rampant hypersexual performances.

The literature describes the prevalence of a rampant and dominant sexuality amongst men, despite their knowledge of the seriousness of the rapid spread of HIV and AIDS, (Morrell, 2003; Hunter, 2004). Young Black African men in Southern Africa have been particularly problematised in the context of HIV and AIDS, with campaigns and literature especially addressing them as people with multiple partners and engaging in forms of sexual harassment and violence (Pattman, 2005). My study, too, demonstrates the ways in which the rampantly hypersexualised behaviours of the participants with their multiple sexual partners negate the gravity of the pandemic. On a more positive note, in a study of changing masculinities in KwaZulu-Natal Hunter (2004) shows that while virile, assertively heterosexual models of masculinity amongst Zulu men have fuelled the pandemic, the corollary (of illness, the wasting of male bodies and death) has generated new understandings of masculinity that are less sexually predatory and more self-preserving. There are important changes occurring which are easy to overlook, due to the ways in which most Blacks have been and still are often perceived as promiscuous.

It is important to consider that girls (as indicated in the earlier section on violence) are not simply passive victims of these boys` rampant hypersexualities. Some girls have been implicated in encouraging these forms of masculinities by initiating gang banging sexual activities. The next section draws on the existing and emerging studies that illustrate this.

Upholding callous sexuality: girls` choice

This section shows that it is not only violent forms of masculinity that some girls uphold, but they are also implicated in supporting and promoting callous, crude and the rampantly hypersexual masculine behaviours of boys in this study. The complicity of girls in supporting the callous behaviour of boys also appears to be an under-researched area. My study sheds some light on the ways in which some girls are implicated in initiating and agreeing to `gang banging` (as discussed in Chapter Five) by boys who objectify girls and view them as merely there to satisfy their sexual needs. More recent research conducted amongst 17 to 19-year-old girls has demonstrated their resistance to the stereotypical in their constitution of their sexual subjectivities, where unconventional expressions of female sexual pleasure and desire emerged (Allen, 2003). Some girls draw on a discourse of female sexuality that legitimates young women's desire and enables them to resist being positioned as sluts by constituting their sexual desire as `normal` (Allen, ibid). In addition, the research shows that children actively construct their gendered and sexual identities (Renold, 2005) and girls should not simply be viewed as passive victims of boys` antics. It is demonstrated in Allen's (2003) study that some of the girls were not seeking any emotional attachment – whereas some boys were. These findings destabilise the oppositional binaries that suggest that women and girls are emotional beings who are looking for love and men and boys seek sexual gratification without any emotional ties. Most importantly, my study draws attention to the ways in which this group of boys often simultaneously inhabits crude and callous as well as loving and respectful heterosexualities, and in so doing, highlights the contradictory and ambiguous positions they take up in constructing their masculinity.

This section has argued for the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality in the formation of callous, misogynistic and rampantly hypersexual masculinities. The consequences that economic disadvantage and deprivation

have for the exchange of sex for material rewards are illustrated in the next section.

Transactional sex and the `sugar daddy` phenomenon

The intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality is further implicated in the ways in which sex is used as a tool in acquiring material possessions. In impoverished communities there is a high prevalence of transactional sexual relationships which frequently take the form of what is commonly known as the `sugar daddy` phenomenon, which involves the exchange of gifts or money for sex (Swidler and Cotts, 2007). The stereotypical `sugar daddy` is an adult male who exchanges large amounts of money or gifts for sexual favours from a much younger woman (Le Clerc-Madladla, 2004; Lindegger and Maxwell, 2007). The prevalence of the `sugar daddy` phenomenon also highlights how socio-economic realities enable men to monopolise sources of income and gives older men more social and economic power than young men. Different kinds of male partnerships are entertained for different types of material support (Kistner, 2003). This has implications for race and class inequalities in South Africa in the ways that economic deprivation coerces boys and girls into sexual relationships based on economic gain. The effects of economic deprivation manifest in various ways. African and Southern African studies show how poverty, economic need and material desire impact upon relationships between men and women (Bledsoe, 1990; Calves et al., 1996; Meekers and Calves, 1997; Ankomah, 1998; Temin et al., 1999; Hulton et al., 2000; Nyanzi, 2001; Gregson et al., 2002; Longfield, 2002; Lindegger and Maxwell, 2007). The propensity for girls to strike up relationships with older men is a way of accessing `car, cash and cell` (Leclerc-Madlala, 2004). Girls see ideals of masculinity in terms of the provision of material goods. Those involved in these relationships can be manipulated into having unsafe sex with their sugar daddies, who themselves have been found to be promiscuous. Because the female is usually in the relationship for financial

gain, she endeavours to oblige her sugar daddy (Dike, 2004). Hunter (2002) aptly sums this up by positing that economic marginalisation closely corresponds to sexual marginalisation.

Being given free rides in taxis (kombis) in exchange for sex is a regular occurrence in Wentworth, and is yet another example of the many forms that transactional sex takes. The girls strike up relationships or exchange sex with taxi drivers or condyes (boys and men who collect fares) for free taxi rides.

South African researchers in the field of sexuality have focused on constructions of masculinity and on transactional sex over the last six years. Anecdotal evidence and several qualitative studies suggest that transactional sex is common among adolescents throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Bledsoe, 1990; Castle and Konaté, 1999). There is now evidence of the emergence of a `sugar mummy` phenomenon, but the general response to the notion that women may be making advances to boys is as negative as in itself to provide evidence of the existence of double standards in sexual relations (Lindegger and Maxwell, 2007). This phenomenon has strong resonance with my study in its suggestion that it is not only women and girls who engage in sex for economic gain. There is evidence to show that there are boys who have sex with older women in exchange for free movies. It is also a fact, despite the apparent contradiction here, that these boys are willing to compromise their homophobic positions by engaging in sexual acts with homosexual boys for material and monetary gain. The contradictory behaviour of men and boys who engage in such practices in their derogation of girls who strike up `sugar daddy` relationships is obvious, since they too engage in sex with gay boys and `sugar mummies` for material rewards.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the ways in which the troublesome behaviours of a group of Coloured working-class boys have been investigated through the lens of a masculinity conceptual framework. It has been argued that the ways in which these boys construct their masculinities results in their getting into `trouble`.

The scholarship has engaged with conceptions of multiple masculinities as they apply to the study, taking into account that masculinity is never unified or homogeneous, but rather that it is varied. Moreover, the scholarship draws on the literature around collective and socially constructed forms of masculinity. If one realises that masculinities are socially constructed one has to reject the notion that men are merely passive beings shaped by `society` or `culture`. In addition, the formation of alternative masculinities demonstrates how transient and unstable hegemonic positions are. This chapter has also sketched the ongoing debates that attempt to explain the increasing problems of boys in schools. The research underpinning this thesis has drawn largely on the work of Connell (1987; 1995) to provide a framework within which to examine the multiple natures of masculinities. The unstable nature of gender power relationships between boys and girls suggests that there is a potential for the subversion of hegemonic masculinities as well as the destabilisation of assumptions that position all girls as vulnerable and victims. Moreover, the emerging South African and international literature that draws attention to the relative silence around girls` complicity in boys` violence and the destabilising of the assumption of girls as vulnerable victims has begun to open up possibilities for further research in what Halberstam coined `female masculinity` (1998).

The literature (local and international) has been studied with the purpose of generating and presenting a sufficiently nuanced perspective of both the toxic

hegemonic and the alternative forms of masculinities. The literature makes specific reference to race and class and how this impacts upon factors such as violence and sexuality that are crucial in the making of masculinities. The literature on gang subcultures in deprived communities clearly shows the relationship between deprivation, the urge to form gangs, and the violence that results. The influence of their socio-economic contexts is seen in the formation of particular masculine behaviours where boys are viewed as agents in negotiating, contesting, challenging and accommodating particular masculine attributes. The fact that the boy's present different versions of themselves suggests that contemporary young masculinities in Southern Africa may be lived and experienced in quite contradictory ways (Pattman and Bhana, 2006). The implications these experiences have for boys are discussed by drawing on the limited local research conducted in South Africa, which illustrate the negative effects race and class have on Black boys in school who commit crimes in their attempts to provide for their impoverished families. The literature on masculinity and schooling highlights how the schooling experiences of boys are largely affected by teacher attitudes and practices and what negative effects humiliating disciplinary interventions have for boys.

This chapter has drawn attention to recent research that also illustrates the construction of alternative masculinities that manifest in ways that reject violence and misogyny as well as ways in which boys adopt a more positive orientation to schooling.

In the next chapter I theorise and describe the ethnographic methodological process utilised to gather data for this study.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I provide a detailed and theorised description of the process and rationale for gathering data from among a group of Coloured adolescent boys in a high school in Wentworth, Durban. This study intends to explore how boys in a working-class context construct their masculinity in an attempt to give meaning to their lives. It advocates that this construction occurs in the intersection of social interactions within and against which lives are inscribed in the search for meaning (Visweseran 1994; St. Pierre 1997; 1999; 2000). In providing their perceptions and views both on their schooling as well as on their social lives, these boys describe their sense of agency in negotiating their difficult circumstances. Simultaneously I, too, examine the construction of my own subjectivity within a similar nexus of power relations, in the belief that this is a necessary act of honesty if one acknowledges that ethnography is created in contexts which ooze with power (Katz, 1992), including the researcher's power in the research situation. The study aims to negotiate these complex situations holistically and honestly, taking into account the complexity and multiplicity of the contexts to which the boys have to respond, as well as the nuanced complexity of their responses. The methods employed here include extracting biographical data, perusing site documents, conducting interviews and engaging in participant observation, and the information (the data) developed in these ways is used to provide a rich image of these boys' lives.

The study assesses the extent to which these boys' constructions of their masculine identities cohere and diverge, and of how these notions of themselves influence their schooling experiences. The study performs these tasks in accordance with the proposition that their identities (in particular) are

fluid, in the sense that their masculinity must constantly be accomplished (Connell, 1995) and then reaccomplished. In an attempt to discover how and why this process of becoming gets the boys into `trouble`, the study will give them `voices` and use these `voices` as the basis for content and discourse analyses. The thesis underlying this method is that the ways in which we describe, explain and represent our perceptions are derived from social relationships, including power relations (Burr, 2004).

This chapter provides a description of the process of data collection and analysis employed in the study, as follows:

o A description of the ethnographic process

o Entering the research site and describing it

o Participatory observation

o The sampling strategy

o Breaking through to the boys

o Interviews (with the boys and some of their teachers)The nature of 'trouble': the boys as expert

o The female researcher: victim or agent?

o The boys' display of interest in the life of the researcher

o Collecting data: a heartrending experience (the boys' hunger and pain)

o Ethical considerations

- Leaving the research site

- A description of the method of data analysis and data interpretation

- The emancipatory effects of the research

- Conclusion

Ethnography

Gathering insight into the background of my research participants is part of this ethnographic approach. Initially my intention was to obtain the life stories of these boys, but this developed instead into in-depth semi-structured and open-ended interviews. Thus my attempt at writing life histories was unsuccessful and the methodology changed quite substantially to one which simply `draws` on this method. My rationale for wanting to write their life histories was to get my participants to provide accounts of their early childhoods, to relate in something like a narrative form and with little prompting from me their experiences of school and home life, their perceptions and constructions of their identities, and their views of others. This did not materialise because, in my opinion, I had underestimated the difficulties of breaking through to these boys, who were understandably suspicious of me during the initial stages of the research. The chances are that little has been lost. The life history method may have been unable to capture what happens in the classroom, in the corridors of the school, and on the playground, and more specifically the interaction between the boys and others in the school. While the life history technique is peculiarly suited to discovering confusions, ambiguities and contradictions generally, the method that I happened upon instead, that of engaging in boy-centred, open-ended

interviews permitted me to collect biographical data and generate rich accounts that permitted the examination of ambivalences and contradictions.

I engaged in a year-long ethnographic study in which I utilised in-depth, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F), participant observation and site documents (log-books) to gather data. My rationale for sourcing the three kinds of data is that this enabled me to compare my observations with whatever I derived from the interviews and with whatever I came across (very little, in fact) in the documents. This was a sort of triangulation which, I hoped, would point to contradictions and inconsistencies, and reinforce and support whatever was consistent. Not that inconsistency would necessarily indicate the falsity of such data. We know, of course that 'our own experiences and lives are often characterised with moments of indecision, contradictions and ironies' (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:284). In combination these methods involve a detailed interrogation of `talk, text and interaction` (Pole and Morrison, 2003:18). It is the 'multiplicity of methods and its triangulation that has been described as a routine hallmark of ethnography' (ibid).

 The only site documents that I was privy to were the day-to-day log-book entries in which teachers recorded the names of learners who present problems during lessons. The principal explained that it would unethical to allow me access to any confidential records due to the nature of some of the incidents documented as well as his obligation to uphold the right to learner and parent confidentiality.

A key aim of this study was to be boy-centered. This is exemplified in the interview process, which allowed individual respondents to influence the pace and direction of their interviews. That does not mean that there was an uncritical acceptance of the boys` versions of events. Meaning is inherently ambivalent and context dependent, and the participants` versions of

themselves could therefore not be seen as unquestionable. Nor could their statements ever be seen as simply false or fictive. The information that matters here is always the boys' construction of events and meanings, and as such it is not amenable to being labelled either simply true or false. The boys' discourse tells us how they position themselves in relation to others, and how they perceive their world. The object of the study is not to interrogate the accuracy of the boys' perceptions against a supposed template of reality, but to discover the meanings that the boys themselves make of themselves, and then to make meaning out of their meanings.

The goal of the ethnography was to study human action from the `insider`s (emic) perspective`, which entails describing human behaviours through the setting and through the participants` accounts. Genzuk (1999) advocates that it is possible to discern patterns of socially acquired and shared behaviour through experiencing (observing and participating in people`s lives and activities) and enquiring (asking people about their experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them). Similarly, in Babbie and Mouton (2004:290), a naturalistic investigator, almost by definition, is one who deliberately does not understand. She or he is `ignorant` and needs to be `taught` - by the research participants.

Entering the research site and describing it

My observations began as soon as I entered the school site. Participant observation is an omnibus field strategy in that it 'simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation, and introspection' (Pole and Morrison, 2003:19). 'The doer is the core of the research; what he or she sees, hears and participates in are central to data collection and analysis' (Pole and Morrison, ibid). Thorne`s (1993:59) ethnography, in which she inserted herself into the research and claims that `within the ethnographer, many selves were at play`,

resonates with my own research. Like Thorne I began to relive my life as an educator, a woman and as a learner as I sat and observed in the classroom. My own memories of school life in these roles often influenced my observations and the way I perceived and constructed particular interactions, events and occurrences. Additionally, as will become evident later in this chapter, I was unable to minimise the effects of my presence on the behaviour of learners in this school. Clearly the dynamics of the relationship between the researcher and the researched differ from one research setting to another. Hence my reluctance to claim that it is possible easily to generalise from my findings in other similar settings. I identified many parallels between my personal experiences as a learner and educator and the perspective with which I entered the research site. This has implications for the research practice, which provide a basis for my ambivalent feelings towards the boys in this study (see the Preface). It is for this reason that I am compelled to acknowledge that my own background and interests in this project will inevitably influence and shape the process of data analysis and interpretation.

I hope that I have sufficiently documented my potential biases and subjectivity both in this chapter and in the Preface. I have taken cognisance of the ways in which my involvement in the research process can alter my views about others as well as highlight realisations about myself. Through the works of Margaret Mead and Redfield (in Babbie and Mouton, 2004:56), a new tradition emerged which replaced the field researcher as a `self-effacing creature without any reaction other than those of a recording machine` with a researcher as a `human scientist` whose own self and relationship with the subjects have become important factors in evaluating his observation. Pole and Morison suggest that it is the task of the ethnographer in educational settings to engage in reflexivity as a means of substantiating interpretations and findings, providing a reflexive account of themselves and the processes of their research (2003). We as researchers, whether consciously or unconsciously, choose a particular theoretical and ontological framework

within which to locate ourselves, and through which we hear and analyse our respondents` lives (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998).

As I was engaged in the observation process I often found myself reflecting on my own days at school; how I saw educators and how I presumed they saw me. This time I came into school, not as a learner but as an adult researcher and mother. The transition of my own status from the working-class to the middle class was something with which I struggled. Driving into this school daily in a `fancy` car (as the boys put it), put me on a guilt trip purely because I was aware of their own deprived positions and desires for material possessions. I was determined to trivialise my own privileged status in an attempt to fit in with those whom I wanted to be comfortable around me. To achieve this I often tried to conceal my car by parking where the learners would be unable to see the car. These were my attempts at trying to blend in with the school population and to appear as inconspicuous as possible. However, I was ever mindful that, as hard as I tried to blend in, this would be impossible. Where I lived, that is `on the hill` (a term coined for the more affluent part of Wentworth, Treasure Beach – see Appendix B), together with the car I drove, was evidence enough of my sound financial position; something which, for some reason now, I did not feel comfortable with. I guarded, if that is possible, against being perceived as somebody who was simply curious about how the other half lives, and had no genuine interest in the well-being of my subjects.

As I entered the school every day I experienced an aura of familiarity, coupled with anxiety. The familiarity emanated from my having been a learner at this school some twenty years ago. The anxiety derived from my insecurity and the uncertainty around how I would be perceived and received.

All of the fears, anxieties and concerns with which I entered the research site daily are comprehensively documented as part of the reflexive process.

Indeed, when a setting is familiar the danger of misunderstanding is especially great, because we enter a setting assuming to know certain phenomena (Genzuk, 1999:4). I could not lay claim to detailed prior understanding about the lives of these boys although I can state that my own Colouredness and having grown up in this community (see the Preface), does predispose me to some insight into their lives. I have adopted the approach advocated by Babbie and Mouton, which is that rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people (2004: 279). My identity as a Coloured female who grew up in this working class Coloured community does not necessarily mean that I am automatically privy to `the ways of being` in this community.

The research site

The fieldwork was conducted during the academic year 2006 in a high school situated in the Coloured township of Wentworth in the South Durban Basin. Merewent High was previously a mono-racial school, which experienced an influx of black pupils from the neighbouring townships like Umlazi and Lamontville after 1994. Despite the influx, it is still predominantly Coloured.

The school was established in 1972 as a prefabricated and temporary arrangement (and at the time the only high school in the area), which was to accommodate learners while a more permanent structure was being built. However, many years later the prefabricated buildings took on a permanent function since no progress was forthcoming with regard to the new and more permanent buildings. It was only twelve years later that the new permanent school structure was built.

The school`s policy or mission statement is to allow each learner to realise his/her own unique potential and to adapt to a dynamic society. The population of the school (in 2006) was 1225, of which 611 are boys and 614 are

girls. The staff complement is 44, of which 27 are female teachers and 17 are males, including a male principal and deputy. Thirty-six are Coloured, six are Indian and two are Black. Merewent High school offers a range of academic subject packages from grade 8 to grade 12 and also has a technology package from grade 10 to grade 12. These technical subjects are on offer for both boys and girls and many girls are taking subjects which previously were exclusively for boys. These subjects are civil technology, mechanical technology and electrical technology. The school boasts a fully equipped computer room and a computer teacher. All of the computers were donated by ENGEN, one of the major Oil Refineries in the vicinity, located across the road from this school. This is part of an initiative, which compels these major companies, whose excessive pollutants exacerbate health problems in this community, to compensate for the harm they are doing by uplifting the community through establishing various education funds.There is three science laboratories, which are not adequately equipped and lack crucial apparatus for grade twelve learners especially. Two multi-purpose rooms have recently been erected, which are used for music and choir lessons, drama and other extra-mural activities. Sporting activities include soccer, rugby, netball, volleyball, basketball, hockey and athletics, but their performance is contingent upon the availability of resources, equipment and space. There is one sports field and it is used for soccer, hockey and rugby.

With the phasing in of the new curriculum - Curriculum 2005/Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in 1998 in South African schools it was hoped that this approach to teaching and learning, as adopted from Australia, would enable the articulation between education and training, recognition of prior learning, and thus increase mobility for learners between different vocations (Graven, 2002). Moreover, OBE was introduced to address the imbalance in education (due to the political dispensation) and the changing demands in the market place arising from the need for a more skills-based workforce. The key principles on which Curriculum 2005 is based are: integration; holistic

development; relevance; participation and ownership; accountability and transparency; learner-orientation; flexibility; critical and creative thinking; progression; anti-biased approach; inclusion of learners with special education needs; quality standards; and international comparability (Department of Education, 1997). However, the view is that OBE has failed in South Africa (Jansen, 1998). One of the disadvantages of OBE is the removal of the guidance counselor in the school and replacing it with an all-encompassing Life Orientation teacher - the consequence of which has led to diminished emotional and vocational support for learners in this school and more broadly public schools in South Africa. Clearly, learners who experience difficulties in terms of emotional, domestic and other social problems (that may well have an impact on their academic performance or behaviour) have very few if no support structures available to them. The average educator: learner ratio is 1: 38, with some classes accommodating in excess of forty learners. Many educators have expressed extreme frustration at having to contend with such large numbers of learners. They state that it hampers their ability to assist with any non-academic issues such as emotional, physical or sexual trauma. According to Pollack (1999), boys` inability to deal with emotional problems may lead to them becoming insolent and troublesome and when this happens they find themselves in trouble with their educators. However, there are various community intervention projects in Wentworth aimed at assisting learners at the school. These projects are coordinated by organisations such as, `We Help Our Children` (WHOC), SANCA, and Wings of Love, as well by students of the University of KwaZulu- Natal, who lend assistance when requested. And the educators themselves are not insensitive to the plight of the learners. It was heartwarming to witness the actions of one of the teachers at this school, who is very dedicated to assisting and rehabilitating learners who are addicted to drugs and alcohol. He has established a group of learners known as Teenagers Against Drug and Alcohol abuse (TADA), to create awareness and to offer some support to learners who struggle with alcohol and drug addictions. He has instilled in

the learners a sense of community responsibility and the need to `look out for each other.`

This school serves a rather indigent community, where unemployment and poverty are serious problems. This community is overwhelmed by a host of social ills, namely substance abuse, violence, the high prevalence of HIV/Aids (figures for which are hard to access), the high rate of teenage pregnancy, and gangsterism. There is a distinct lack of leisure and entertainment facilities that further exacerbates the low morale amongst the youth. This township was one of the apartheid government`s dumping grounds, where Coloured families driven out of their homes were thrown together in a jungle of concrete tenements. This occurrence provided the perfect breeding ground for overcrowding and frustration, resulting in a high incidence of crime and gangsterism.

I chose to conduct my research in this school for a number of reasons. First and foremost it was my intention to focus on Coloured boys and of the three high schools in Wentworth, this school is still predominantly Coloured. I felt that Merewent High would certainly be the most suitable of the three for my purposive sampling strategy. The other two high schools in the area have had a major influx of black pupils, which I presumed may have limited my sampling possibilities in terms the number of Coloured boys from whom I could select. Moreover, as an ex-pupil of this school I feel it incumbent upon me to focus my attention here and to assist in identifying problems and rendering assistance in any way possible. This research should provide some indication of the problems surrounding boys in this context and where possible, recommendations and practical suggestions could be offered to assist them and their teachers with their schooling difficulties. It may be difficult to generalise broadly on the basis of the findings of this research project, but the study should have significance at least for the particular

school in which it was performed, and if the study has broader implications it could have policy outcomes as well.

The participant observation process

In participant observation the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the people in the observed setting. The purpose of such participation is to develop an insider's (emic) view of what is happening. This means that the researcher not only sees what is happening but "feels" what it is like to be part of the group. In terms of age and gender I had to make the conscious decision to keep my relationship with the participants professional and to guard against creating confusion regarding my role in the school. This was also applicable to my relationship with the male teacher who assisted me in accessing boys during interview sessions. I was particularly concerned with what the rest of the school (the learners, the educators and the principal) might come to think of this relationship, as the boys and the other learners were likely to intuit the existence of the wrong sort of relationship (see the section below on Female researcher: victim or agent).

Many of my observations and experiences in the school are documented in this chapter. The observations are predominantly centred on the school setting, which is integral to Chapters Five, Six and Seven, which focus on violence and sexuality, rely more heavily on the boys` constructions during the interviews, because these behaviours and performances were not entirely observable in the school setting. However, the few incidents that I managed to capture have been included in this chapter.

Foregrounding my subjectivity is crucial to my epistemology. As a Coloured researcher cognisant of the stereotypical views of Coloured males, I was aware of my own socialisation and experiences. I remained mindful of how prior knowledge and experiences could tarnish and influence the way I

viewed my participants. My subjective experiences of men and boys, my biases, could not be separated from this process (see the Preface). I coped with this by writing myself into the ethnographic record as I sat observing events in the classroom or later as office work (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Van Maanan 1988:4; Rhedding-Jones 1996). Having taught in both predominantly Coloured primary and high schools for over twelve years, I have a wealth of experience in dealing with boys in school. My experience of teaching boys, my ideas and expectations of them, certainly preempted my observation, something I grappled with regularly. During the interviews I made a concerted effort to sanitise my earlier thoughts and perceptions of boys and approach these sessions in ways that allowed me to see 'reality' through the eyes of my participants. I sharpened my focus, which concentrated upon the themes relating to boys` behaviour and attitudes, teacher attitudes and practices, the use of space, relationships, attitudes towards other girls and boys, and any perceptible work ethic, for example. I chose to document names, interactions and incidents which were relevant to my areas of interest as well as to my choice of participants. This was done in a way that was not too conspicuous so as not to alert the students to what I was looking for, the reason being that I needed as `natural` an environment as possible. However, I was aware that my mere presence in the classrooms and in the school as a whole certainly contributed to some type of behaviour modification both of the learners and of the teachers. Some of the boys mentioned that when they saw me in the school they assumed that I was working for the Department of Education and that I was `looking at the problem children in the class`.

Often, boys would walk past the classrooms while a teacher was present and make funny sounds or remarks quite loudly, knowing that pupils in the classroom would hear them and laugh. I was also tempted to laugh because, I must admit, some of the boys were extremely comical and quick-witted. I experienced great difficulty in trying to suppress my laughter because I did not want the teachers to see me as being complicit in some of the boys` antics

and I certainly did not want to offend any of them. I was privy to some of the teachers` negative responses to learners which, in my opinion, were not always justified and rational. As an ex teacher I do understand that as a result of having to deal perpetually with troublesome behaviour, teachers tend to adopt a very strict, no-nonsense approach and to react immediately when challenged or confronted by certain boys. I felt that in some way my presence exacerbated the situation. Often teachers lashed out very harshly, presumably in their own attempts to save face. I gathered that teachers were annoyed at boys' `showing them up` in my presence. This made me feel awkward and when there was conflict between learners and teachers, I pretended to be so engrossed in what I was writing that I was unaware of the altercations. In a male teacher`s class, during one of my first encounters, the learners entered noisily, playing, talking, singing and simply disregarding the teacher. The teacher tried hard to settle them down. This process took up to ten minutes, during the course of which he kept on saying 'Come now class, come, come', to which one of the boys replied, 'How, sir, why are you acting so civilized now? Because Miss is here?' (referring to me, the researcher). When the boy said this the teacher wrote his name in the log-book, to which the boy responded, 'You are wrong now, sir! I`ll never get suspended for nothing'. The teacher put him and two other boys who continued making a noise, out of the class. They left shouting 'Ek se, bra, let`s vie!' (refer to glossary) and taking their time to leave the classroom. In order to save face amongst their peers and me, they had to have the last word. This incident left me with a question: how did the teacher usually react when learners walked into the classroom so noisily? Once these boys had left the classroom, the teacher continued with his lesson and the class remained relatively quiet.

Emerson et al. (2001:353) argues: 'Fieldnotes are a form of representation, that is, a way of reducing just-observed events, persons and places to written accounts. And in reducing the welter and confusion of the social world to written words, fieldnotes, (re) constitute that world in preserved forms that

can be reviewed, studied and thought about time and time again.' Additionally, I have taken into account the experiential nature of observation and I have ensured that my data recording method, that is, jotting notes down as soon as I left the field site, helped me to observe, record and analyse my own role in and experience of the setting and interactions. I tried to be disciplined and conscientious in taking detailed field notes at all stages of fieldwork even though there were times when I became wary and distracted. Occasionally I became so engrossed in the events taking place that I forgot to document activities as they occurred. I had to do this at a later stage, when I was compelled me to relive the days` events.

While writing my observations and descriptions I ensured that I clearly separated description from interpretation and judgment. I included my own experiences, thoughts, and feelings in my field notes and observation reports. After three months of observations and visiting the school three times a week for approximately five hours a day, I had recorded over eighty pages of typed notes.

The sampling strategy

I personally selected key informants, using purposive sampling. `Getting into trouble` was the criterion for selection. Due to time constraints which include school holidays, school examinations and my personal lecturing commitments, I confined my observations to the grade nine and ten classes. Moreover, many of the teachers to whom I had spoken acknowledged that problems with boys were mostly concentrated in those grades. Teachers explained that in grades nine and ten many boys were trying to `prove themselves`, whereas in grades 11 and 12 they appear to be a lot more focused, and having `matured overnight `in preparation for their final examination.

I found my experience in my master`s study of naughty boys in a predominantly Coloured primary school to be relevant to my method of sampling here. (see Anderson, 2003). In that study I requested the assistance of teachers in identifying `naughty` boys, and the boys whom the teachers regarded as `naughty` were selected.  However, during the course of the interviews it emerged that some of these boys had actually been labeled by their previous teachers as `naughty` and that the stigma had remained with them throughout their primary school years. Evidently, the construction of them as naughty boys was to a large extent an effect of teacher disciplinary intervention. Those boys who failed to adhere to the school`s practices, code of conduct and disciplinary methods were seen to be `naughty` or deviant. Through their accounts, these boys explained how they had, on many occasions, tried to redeem themselves and conform to the school`s practices, but were never afforded the opportunity due to their previous deviance. It was with this in mind that I engaged in a three-month pilot period to observe and personally select boys for my sample in this thesis.

Over a period of about three months I engaged in participant observation in the classrooms and on the playground in order to identify boys and select some for my sample. Notes were made of boys who were constantly being reprimanded, put out of the class or suspended, being logged or otherwise punished by teachers as well as of those who openly exhibited aggressive, anti-authoritarian behaviour and insolence towards teachers and other pupils in the school. Other problematic behaviours included repeated offences like arguing with their teachers, storming out the classroom, refusing to take their books out of their bags (refusal to do work), and making jokes (the teacher being, in many cases the butt of their jokes) thereby disrupting lessons. Some boys constantly came late to class, often 15-20 minutes. In my opinion, some boys deliberately provoked teachers so that they would be sent out of the class. When they were sent out of the class or suspended they would get

together with their friends who were also suspended and `have a jol` (refer to glossary and Chapter Six).

I also perused log-books and suspension records and found that certain boys` names appeared quite regularly, and the entries were often made by the same teachers. While there were teachers who recorded repeated behavioural problems exhibited by some boys on a daily basis, there were teachers who hardly ever encountered problems with the same boys. It was interesting to see how some boys positioned and repositioned themselves in relation to different teachers. This is illustrated by their being recorded in the log book as very disruptive by one teacher, as opposed to their being described as very cooperative by another teacher in the very next lesson. I corroborated these observations during interviews with the boys and I obtained explanations from them for their apparently contradictory behaviour.

I identified more boys than were required for my sample. During the first two months, I had identified eighteen boys and it was necessary to narrow the sample down to ten. I decided against this as a precaution to ensure that if any of those I selected were reluctant or refused to participate, there were others in reserve. I retained all of the boys on my list and proceeded to approach them individually. I briefed them as to the nature of my study and asked them whether or not they would be willing to participate in the research. I also explained how I selected them to be part of my study. I told that them that it was the boys who were often in trouble with the teachers that I wanted to speak to so that they could get the opportunity to tell their stories about why this is so. About four of the boys immediately responded positively to being part of the research, while others were hesistant. Getting some of them to agree proved to be quite an arduous task. I encountered numerous delays because the selected participants were recurrently being suspended, absent or bunking classes. Some agreed to participate only if their friends were also willing. I had to go back and forth trying to persuade them.

I became frustrated at times but ensured I remained composed and had to bear in mind that these boys were crucial to my study. I depended on their cooperation and was careful not to create any tension before we started the interviews. I repeatedly had to respond to questions like, 'Why me?' 'Who told you about me?' I was aware of the fact that the boys` perceptions of the answers to these questions would ultimately influence the production of their responses and hence the production of knowledge.

On one occasion as I entered the school at 9.30am two of the boys I had selected entered the school premises as well. School begins at 8am. The security guard refused to allow them to proceed straight to their classroom. He insisted that they report to the principal first. They refused and argued with him. They simply walked out of the school, making strange sounds and mocking the security guard. The following day at school, I approached one of them and explained my reasons for wanting to interview him, but he refused to speak to me. Both of these boys were subsequently expelled from school. I decided to approach the other boy outside of the school setting to ask if he would be willing to participate in the study. He agreed without hesitation. There was, however, a problem in gaining access to him out of the school milieux because he was attending a technical college. I promised to make myself available whenever he was free and we set up interview arrangements. It was also impossible to interview him in the group, because the principal had prohibited him from being on the school premises. When I approached the other boy for the secnd time he said a vehement "No!" without giving reasons and he let me know, by his aggressive body language and facial expression, that I should not approach him again. I had made a concerted effort to try to break through to him, but to no avail. I let him be. At times I felt like a beggar, going back and forth from one boy to another, trying to convince them to participate. Some boys, on the other hand, stated quite boldly that `We want to also get a chance to tell our side of the story. Nobody listens to us`.

Within the next week I had secured at least ten boys for the interviews and hoped that they would honour their agreements with me. I think some of them agreed to participate so that they would have a legitimate reason to skip lessons. When I informed them that the interviews would be conducted during teaching time they were ecstatic. Also word had got around regarding my purpose at the school and three other boys whom I had on my list, but had not yet approached asked if they could also `tell their stories`. While I was preparing for the interviews, these boys were loitering around the school after their teacher had sent them out of the classroom for misbehaving. For a period of about a week I had noticed these three boys standing in the quadrangle, hands in their pockets, talking. I imagined that they would be anxious that the principal might see them and discipline them. This was not so. It was during the interviews that they told me that they were put out of the classroom for breaking wind as noisily as they could, whistling and singing.

During our informal chats while setting up the logistics of the interviews I discovered that some of my participants had previously been for counselling: a prerequisite for keeping them out of prison (see Chapter Seven). They believed that counsellors tend to be self-righteous and want to impose their own morals and beliefs on others. The boys had reacted with scepticism and hostility. They described how the counsellors had tried to dictate how they should live and had told them how bad they had been. They blatantly refused to heed any `advice` that the counsellors offered but attended the sessions because it was one of the requirements to prevent them from going to jail. I began to understand why they were so averse to being interviewed initially. They thought that I was a counsellor and hence remained determined not to be part of this process. Some of the boys had been referred for counselling by teachers while others were compelled by the courts to attend NICRO (the National Institute for the Rehabilitation of Crime Offenders) for being

implicated in serious offences such as armed robbery, assault with intent to commit grievous bodily harm. According to the boys concerned, these sessions had not made any positive differences in their lives. After explaining that I simply wanted to hear their stories, it was then that they agreed to participate in the interviews.

Some of the teachers also misunderstood my purpose at the school and saw me as some type of counsellor. On many occasions I had to send learners away or refer them to the relevant authorities, especially learners who were experiencing problems such as pregnancy, substance abuse, or domestic problems. I did, however, make myself available to learners who simply wanted to chat about schoolwork, get advice about career choices, or wanted to know a little about me and what I did.

I also decided to interview a few teachers. Initially I had made the decision not to speak to teachers, but since my research method was not life histories, I felt that conducting teacher interviews would enrich my study by providing greater insight and additional perspectives on my participants.

<u>Breaking through to the boys</u>

The scepticism and apprehension of participants in the early stages of the fieldwork did not allow for smooth access and consent. I realised that it would take a while before we established a comfortable and trusting relationship. This became apparent during the first group interview, which was a mixture of hesitations, silences and dubiousness. In response to topics that I asked them to discuss, most of the boys turned to each other and laughed. One or two would respond, but largely in monosyllables. On occasions when I addressed them personally, they would look around and say, 'Ask him', pointing to another boy. This went on for some time and I started to feel that I would not make any progress if things continued in this

way. I then decided that I would ask specific questions and see where that would lead. When I started to ask specific questions, then only did I get responses. Notwithstanding the abandonment of the life history method, I still required the boys to provide some biographical information about themselves, their home circumstances, their childhoods and past experiences. This required much prompting and probing.

Interviewing the boys

I tried to create a very relaxed and friendly atmosphere for the interviews and arranged the chairs in a circle formation for group interviews and a very casual face-to-face setting for individual interviews. From the outset the interview process between me and my participants became a process of co-construction. I was ever mindful of myself as the interviewer who could never at any stage be a neutral entity in this process. My own idiosyncracies, as a Coloured female, are entwined in the production of the accounts presented. Schram (2003) says that the representation or interpretation you construct of people`s lives and behaviour is neither `theirs` nor `yours`. Instead it is built upon the points of understanding and misunderstanding that occur between you and them.

Whilst offering my assistance and advising a little, I was cautious not to impose my values and beliefs on the boys for fear of being seen as judgemental and self-righteous. If I was to develop and maintain a good relationship with these boys, then I had to be very careful in the way I handled things. Most importantly, I had to guard against being likened to a counsellor. Their aversion to counsellors was very apparent and I did not want to jeopardise my study by behaving like one. I conducted two group interviews as well two individual interviews with each boy for an hour each. All of the interviews were conducted in the school`s multi-purpose centre. It

was an ideal venue for interviews because it was at the rear end of the school, away from all possible distractions, or so I thought!

Using the interview method afforded all types of data to be collected: that is, behavioral data; opinions; feelings; knowledge; sensory data; and background information. I asked different kinds of questions which were sequenced on the basis of the boys' past and present experiences. I conducted both group and individual interviews so that boys who felt uncomfortable speaking openly during group sessions were afforded the opportunity to talk about their experiences on a one-on-one basis. Similarly, group interviews were very useful in that they afforded me the opportunity to observe and document these boys` collective behaviours and to draw a comparison with the individual encounters. Group interviews also helped to establish some type of rapport amongst us and helped to make the boys feel more comfortable when talking to me. What I found extremely useful about group interviews was that the accounts given by one person in the group were able to jog others` memories about similar or contrasting experiences, perceptions and events. I was also able observe the group dynamics, contradictions, and collective behaviours as opposed to individual behaviours.

I hoped that they would be less intimidated by me if they had the support of their peers. I also hoped that by the time I began the individual interviews, they would be comfortable enough to talk to me one on one. During the first group interview I asked non-threatening and non-intimidating questions like what school subjects they do, what they enjoy doing, their likes and dislikes, and so forth, in the interest of developing some kind of rapport with them (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005). Some boys, however, hardly uttered a word during the entire interview. I tried to draw them out but they would just answer yes or no. Two boys in particular were quite vociferous, and I welcomed this because some of the others sat quietly most of the time, and this made me a little uncomfortable. I did not anticipate this silence. I

approached the interview sessions with the preconceived notion that these boys were going to be uncontrollable, boisterous, and unmanageable. This was not the case. Actually, when some did become a bit rowdy, others would tell them to be quiet. There was an improvement during the second interview, but still they did not readily offer information.

When I asked them if all of them knew each other and if they were friends there was a mixture of responses. After listening carefully to their muffled answers and mumbling and ramblings, I became aware that there were members of different gangs within this group of boys. There was cynical laughter between the responses and some boys displayed a certain amount of discomfort, while here and there tension was etched on some boys` faces. Interestingly, their gang affiliations did not present a problem during the group interview sessions. There were no visible signs of hostility or evidence of brewing conflict during the interviews. All of my own fears and anxieties about interviewing adolescent boys began to wane. I was optimistic and looked forward to the rest of the interview sessions. Contrary to the many perceptions of them in the school, I found all of the boys to be relatively sincere and open about their views. Interviews were structured in a way that encouraged and facilitated boys` talking about and relating incidents, experiences and perceptions of the social context they inhabit. Essentially, this method of data collection `acknowledges that there is a crucial interactive relationship between individuals` lives, their perceptions and experiences, and historical and social contexts and events` (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

While I was interviewing the boys, I identified with the interviewer (in Frosh, et. al., 2005) who said he felt like a 'prying adult asking slightly stupid questions with obvious answers.' When the boys` responses were 'Ja, how' and 'of course' or 'How, you know' I really started getting the impression from them that some of the questions did not really require answers from them; that there were certain things they expected me to know. I tried my best

not to allow the interviews to develop into interrogation sessions because I had to keep on asking them to ` tell me more`, `go on` and `explain`. At times they even said, 'How, Miss, you asking too much' and 'How, Miss you should know'. I did feel that the questions were becoming intrusive and quite annoying to some boys and I had no idea how else to pursue my line of questioning in order to appear less obtuse.

All of the boys` articulations about girls were clear. They emphasized that they only disrespected girls if the girls disrespected them. Whether they thought that my opinions of them would change if they said that they treated girls badly or with disrespect was questionable. At the time I was convinced that they were being quite honest. However, the contradictions are evident when they talk about girls (see Chapter Five). Pattman`s experience was different. His respondent positioned Pattman as a fellow male to whom he could express grievances about girls. The boy in his study viewed the male interviewer as an ally with a common enemy, to whom he could really express his feelings about the opposite sex (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001). Whether or not the boys saw me as a `girl` and were mindful of appearing misogynistic is not clear.

On one occasion, I was talking to a group of boys and girls in the absence of the teacher. I was taken aback by a female voice coming from the next class, screaming at the rest of the learners: 'If your`ll don`t fucken shut up I`m gonna fuck your`ll all up!` I expressed my amazement, to which the boys responded, 'Miss, you don`t know some of these girls, they worse than the boys'. The violence embedded in the girl`s agitation illustrates the increasing concern about girls` violence and the performance of a `female masculinity` (Halberstam, 1998) (also in Chapter Seven).

While the focus of my study is boys, it is important to consider that they do not operate in isolation. Girls form part of the school population and are in

many ways a significant component of boys` lives. Even though I was at the school for a year, I did not observe rampant sexuality in action between boys and girls in the school. I draw on one of the incidents that I did document:

As the learners were leaving Mr M`s classroom, one of the boys turned around and touched a girl on her buttocks. I held my breath in expectation of a slap. This did not happen! I was stunned. On the contrary, she turned to the boy, affectionately and lightly brushed his shoulder, saying 'Hey, stop it'. They both laughed and continued to walk out the classroom. I thought that her reaction clearly signified the ways in which girls often uphold and encourage these kinds of boys` behaviours. There is a sense of entitlement and normality that endorses their disrespectful treatment of girls. The perception of girls as passive victims of boys` antics has been challenged (see Chapter Five).

In order to elicit the often personal and in-depth responses I required for this study I had to remain mindful of not appearing judgemental by avoiding expressions that displayed shock or distaste. However, at the outset I did inform the boys that I would be compelled to intervene in certain situations if the need arose. And this I did. This was when some of the participants engaged in unacceptable behaviour in my presence and in situations where I did not want to appear to be condoning bad behaviour. I was concerned that my passivity might have serious repercussions and ultimately jeopardise my reputation as a researcher in the school. On many occasions I had to send some of the boys back to class because they assumed that if they `bunked` classes, I would provide an alibi to the teacher. I made it very clear to them that I would not be complicit in any form of misconduct. I had to remain professional by all accounts. Despite my refusal to lie for them, I got the sense that they still felt that they could trust me, and that whatever transpired between us would remain confidential. This was proven when I did not inform a teacher that they were copying a test. They had managed to steal

copies of the test paper from the classroom, brought it to the interview room and copied the test. When I saw what they were doing, I advised them of the consequences of their actions and how it would ultimately disadvantage them in the grander scheme of things. The moral imperative would oblige me to report the matter to the teacher, but I realised that this would compromise my study and incur the wrath of these boys, who would be publicly humiliated by the school authorities and possibly suspended. I had assured the participants of the utmost confidentiality and trust before embarking on the interviews. I had to `protect` them.

As time progressed, and as we became more familiar with one another, the boys were insistent that their real names be included instead of pseudonyms (this was much later in the year) but I chose rather to maintain the anonymity of the participants as initially agreed upon, because they were still minors. At the end of the interviews I asked them how they felt about participating in the study, and if the interviews were as they expected. Among some of the responses was the statement that they did not feel anything. Some of them offered no comments while others, throughout the sessions, emphasised that nobody was prepared to listen to them and that they were and still are never afforded the opportunity to tell their sides of the story. They were visibly pleased that they were able to talk about their lives and the issues that affected them.

The nature of 'trouble': boys as experts

In attempting to provide a nuanced and three-dimensional picture of the lives of my participants, conducting loosely structured interviews with them was essential. The interviews were also structured in such a way as to address the boys as the experts in providing insider (emic) perspectives on the phenomenon of 'trouble'. I introduced the topic to the group and opened up the discussion to elicit their views and perceptions of the concept of being

`troublesome`. I emphasized to them the importance of their views in helping me to gain a better understanding of this subject. Also, as they related their experiences of being in 'trouble', their narratives became the primary form by which their human experiences were made meaningful for them (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005). This study makes no claim to learning any truths about the concept of 'trouble', but did in fact result in insight into these boys` perceptions of this phenomenon, that seems to pervade their school experiences.

<u>Teacher interviews</u>

Three teachers were interviewed, two males and a female. I had intended to interview another female teacher but this was not possible due to time constraints and the teacher's unavailability. These interviews were one-hour sessions. It was extremely difficult to get teachers to commit to a specific time for the interviews because of their additional duties during the breaks and after school. While I was determined to get teacher input, I was always mindful that the focus of my study was the boys. Trying to set up and conduct the interviews with the three teachers became a mammoth task. At any given time most of the teachers were marking, attending meetings, or doing field duty. I guarded against being a nuisance and tried very hard not to impose on them. I knew that I had to accommodate them whenever they were available. Nevertheless it became frustrating when we were constantly scheduling and rescheduling interview times. The teachers were interviewed for the purpose of gaining another perspective into the behaviour of the boys. Not using the life history method resulted in the constant modification of the methodology. The teacher interviews added to the richness of the data. Moreover, because the boys spoke at length about their problematic relationships with their teachers, I felt that it would be interesting to hear what the teachers had to say.

The female researcher: victim or agent?

In this study I came to experience the ways in which my own sexuality came under scrutiny while conducting my fieldwork in this school. I consciously examined and policed myself, my sexuality and the way I dressed each day. On the days that I went to the school, I struggled with what I would wear during my fieldwork. I realised that as I performed heterosexuality, my own sexuality was performed in particular ways in relation to these working-class boys. In the early stages I was advised by a male teacher not to wear anything that would expose my body too much and become a distraction to the male learners (the male gaze). This word of warning certainly lends credence to a particular belief that females who dress sexily encourage and provoke rampantly hypersexual behaviours in some men. I refer to the apparent justification of sexual harassment or even rape of women by men that has been attributed to this `provocation`. Thus in choosing to dress conservatively, I realise that I became complicit in perpetuating the normalisation of the male discourse that attempts to justify callous male behaviour. Interestingly, the propensity for school boys to act out their heterosexuality in relation to adult females is not a new occurrence. Walkerdine`s (1981) study shows how very young boys subverted a female teachers` authority by objectifying and sexualising her. She argues against the view of the teacher as uncomplicatedly in a position of power over the learners, who have relatively fewer rghts and freedoms (Walkerdine, ibid). Similarly, an Indian female researcher in Durban schools in South Africa found that as she roamed around the school older boys in particular would raise their pelvises, whistle, and speak in sexualised ways that objectified her (Bhana, 2002). I did, however, take the male teacher`s `advice` in the spirit I hoped it was intended, and proceeded to police the way I dressed each day. I also realised the extent of both the powerful and powerless positions that I occupied simultaneously. I was both a victim and an agent. My subject position as a victim ensured that I remain inhibited and anxious while I could

enact my agency in my ability to create desire in men (and boys). I had to contend with boys who would wolf-whistle and comment on how `pretty` or `lovely` I was in a bid to attract my attention. My discomfort and uneasiness as a result of this attention highlights the ways in which these boys are seen to have temporarily seized power, rendering me as a researcher powerless by their ability to draw on the discourse of sexuality which affords them supremacy (Burr, 2003). I often cringed and wondered if only they knew my age! In a bid to appear unaffected, I pretended not to notice them. It was difficult. Walking past and through large groups of boys who were intent on getting me to notice them was quite unsettling. I became quite inhibited. In Durban`s blisteringly hot and humid weather I ensured that I was suitably covered up, making certain that no flesh was exposed unnecessarily. This highlights how female sexuality is regulated, policed and under surveillance and how this stylisation of the self feeds into male hierarchy and male privilege. I assumed that if I dressed `conservatively` it would minimise the hypersexualised taunts of these boys. The intensely intimidating heterosexual male gaze in this school instead policed my attempts at being `me.` I acknowledge that I am not blameless because I proceeded to perform in ways that reproduced the discourse of male sexual power. This gaze was, however, not restricted to males but also came from females. I became aware of how the girls took an interest in me. Like the boys, I felt their eyes on me. They scrutinised me from head to toe and I heard their comments around their approval or disapproval of my style of dress from day to day. The heterosexual competition amongst these girls and me appeared to be inflected by class, in that I was able to wear what they desired to wear. My car, my clothes, my position as a doctoral student and my status as a former teacher made a head-on collision with some of those in the school almost inevitable, while I worked there.

As the research proceeded, I worked closely with a male teacher who assisted me in acquiring a venue for interviews, accessing boys from their classrooms,

and many other tasks. This, too, became a source of anxiety for me because some of the pupils `paired me off` with this male teacher and were intimating amongst themselves that there was some sort of deeper relationship between the two of us. This disturbed me immensely because I knew that these intimations could compromise my study and have serious repercussions if other teachers or the principal were to hear about this. I noticed that when I walked into this male teachers` classroom, learners would give each other `knowing` glances, smirk and even make certain sounds. This highlights the routine sexualisation of all male and female relations, and served to further inhibit my comings and goings in the school. As a result, I ensured that I maintained a relatively safe distance from this teacher and that I always addressed him in a very professional manner. Sadly, I was too wary even to join him for a cup of coffee during the breaks. I realized how I was limiting my agency but I knew that it was necessary to do so in order to complete my research. If I was unconcerned about what others in the school thought, it could have had dire consequences for both my research project as well as my reputation amongst the teachers and the learners. Had I simply gone ahead and been true to myself, my study might have been seriously compromised.

During the interviews, some of the boys used their bodies as a tool with which to execute their hypersexualised performances. Sitting slouched in their chairs, legs apart and occasionally giving me sideways glances were some of their bodily gestures. During an individual interview one of them, in my opinion, made deliberate attempts to appear seductive and appealing to me. He responded to me in extremely soft and hushed tones and looked `dreamily` at me. I imagined that he also attempted to create an aura of mystery around himself by not offering much information and only giving monosyllabic answers.

The interest that many boys showed in me was not only of a sexual nature, as the next sections illustrates.

Boys: Taking an interest in the life of the researcher

During the breaks, some of my participants came to chat with me. They enquired about my children, their school, whether I go to clubs and what I do for fun, among other things. Sharing this knowledge with them was important because this was their opportunity to get to know me. This made them more willing to share their own personal stories with me. Having a laugh with them eased much of the anxiety within me. What really benefited me was my knowledge of slang, irrespective of the evolving nature of this language. I was really surprised to hear the amount of new `vocabulary` with which I was not familiar. Those were shared moments which helped to establish some type of rapport with them and to get them to relax around me. Evidently, this was not an everyday occurrence for them. Being listened to and even more so having an adult female share stories with them was something they were not accustomed to. This occurrence resonates with Davies (1993) and Francis (1998), who argue that children enjoy respectful conversations when their views are taken seriously. This is certainly the intention of this study - to take their lives seriously.

As the research progressed, the boys became quite cooperative, respectful and helpful. In fact they were often better behaved than when they were with some of their teachers. They were obliging and assisted me with arranging the chairs for the interviews, locking and unlocking the doors, and occasionally getting me a cold drink from the tuck shop. I let my guard down a little and I relaxed around them, creating a suitably relaxed and casual atmosphere. It was not smooth sailing, but the negative stereotypical impression I had of these boys when I first entered the school was slowly being eroded.

Many feminist researchers and scholars are of the belief that we should be constantly aware of the power relations that exist in an interviewer-

interviewee relationship, especially if there are age, gender, race and class differences (Burr, 2004). The researcher/researched dichotomy represents power relations where the researcher can be both powerful and powerless in the research process. In this regard there are class, gender and age differences where as an adult middle-class female I was perceived by the boys as belonging to a privileged class. Where I live and the car I drive foregrounded the power differentials influential in the research process. Their speculation and presumptions had already predisposed their responses and reactions to me. The story that is told is `constructed within the research and interview context, rather than being a neutral account of a pre-existing reality` (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005:32).

During the first group interview there was a lot of curiosity about me and they bombarded me with questions about my personal life, which challenged the adult-child power relations often made explicit by feminist researchers. They immediately seized the opportunity and took control. I imagine that this was an attempt to see how much I was willing to divulge before they offered any information. I answered their questions as honestly as I could and told them I hoped that they would do the same when I needed to get their responses. The participants perceived me as somebody superior to or better than them. This was evident in their comments on the `posh` car that I drive and their observation that I live on `the hill`. In some way I represented all that they were not. It is for this reason that I concur that 'participants disclose certain kinds of information based on their assumptions about the researcher (social desirability effect)' (Truman, Mertens and Humphries, 2003:63). Commonalities and differences are interchangeable throughout the interview process. Markers of racial and sexual identity, such as language fluency, place of birth, school, background, or place of residence can be the basis for claims of either commonality or difference (Truman, Mertens & Humphries, ibid:63).

Collecting data: a heartrending experience (issues of hunger and pain)

Through their own research Hollway and Jefferson show how both the interviewer and interviewee are positioned as defended subjects where there is a need to defend themselves against feelings of anxiety (2005). They do this by showing how a subject of their study located himself in a particular discourse which legitimates and mitigates his childhood experiences of brutality. This he does, as a strategy to defend himself from these very bad experiences. This resonates in my research with the defensiveness which is evident when the boys refuse to acknowledge and admit to their deprivation, their poor socio-economic backgrounds. There is a compulsion to defend and reject any notion of poverty and deprivation. Most of them adamantly insisted that their financial positions at home were sound, yet some of them often approached me for money to buy something to eat. Moreover, their stories verified their financial deprivation. Their accounts are pockmarked with experiences of heartbreak and trauma, which are outlined in Chapter Seven. Like Rager (2005) I believe that what I was experiencing was directly related to being immersed in the process of collecting heartbreaking data and engaging both intellectually and emotionally with my participants. My preparation as a qualitative researcher, too, did not address the issues that arose in conducting emotionally laden research I felt myself overcome by sadness during some of the interview sessions but I was compelled to remain composed. We laughed together when the boys said something funny, and then at other times we would be serious when they were describing a traumatic or painful experience. Occasionally I felt close to tears, whereas in relating their accounts many of them appeared unperturbed by their own accounts. This sense of sadness followed me home on occasion, forcing me to confront how privileged and fortunate my own children were not to be exposed to extremely painful and traumatic experiences such as these boys had. It was not all doom and gloom, however, because on many occasions I also laughed aloud while driving away from the school, when I thought about

some of their funny quirks and expressions. If anyone had seen me at the time, they would have thought that I was insane. The mixture of emotions of happiness, sadness, laughter and anxiety contributed to this research being intriguing. Certainly, interviewers have a responsibility for their own feelings, and more crucially for the feelings they evoke in interviewees (Field, 2001:220). Furthermore, it is crucial for researchers to explore ways to interpret the feelings that people invest in their sense of self and identity as an integral part of the discursive movements of memory, myth and identity. The interpretations of the researcher are more likely to be accurate if he or she is both self-reflexive and open to listening to the emotions and emotional signals within themselves and the interviewee (Field, ibid).

I am aware that at times the interview sessions must have become quite intrusive, although I tried very hard to say very little and to listen without interrupting the speakers. This proved to be an enormous task. Initially I struggled to keep the momentum going. Especially daunting was the boys' inability to articulate their understanding of their Coloured identity, which compelled me to practice restraint while prompting and probing their own responses. In trying to get to their perceptions of the nature of being Coloured, I had to remain cautious not to impose my own perceptions of Colouredness on them. It was very obvious that they experienced great discomfort as a result of their difficulty in explaining what being Coloured means to them. Some of them appeared rather sheepish at the time. However, we made some progress eventually and I have been able to include a brief section on this theme in Chapter Seven.

On the days that I interviewed them some boys would ask me for money to buy lunch. It occurred to me that some of the learners in this school actually spend the entire day at school without having anything to eat. Poverty in Wentworth is an all too familiar feature. The reasons given for not having sandwiches included having no bread to not having anything to put on the

bread. This really troubled me so I started bringing sandwiches to school for my participants. Word got out that I was giving out sandwiches and soon other learners approached me for a sandwich. I realized just how serious the situation was. I simply could not ignore the plight of these children and I initiated a feeding scheme for all of the indigent learners in the school. Witnessing the joy on the faces of these learners when they collected their lunch pack was priceless. This sandwich scheme is still continuing two years later, with other donors also contributing to the upkeep of this much-needed programme.

As the sessions drew to an end, the boys requested that I take their photographs to include in the thesis. They seemed excited at the prospect of having their pictures on display. I decided not to use any photographs due to the personal nature of information as well as my assurance of confidentiality and anonymity to their parents. The boys became very comfortable with me in the latter stage of the research. How I wished that this had happened a lot sooner! They developed confidence in me and trust became the major factor that strengthened our relationship. We had reached a point which made them realise that I would not breach confidentiality and would do all in my power to ensure that no harm came to them. In so doing, I proved to my participants and to myself that I had in fact taken their lives seriously; something they so desperately desired.

Ethical considerations

First and foremost, it is mandatory to obtain an ethical clearance from the institution through which the study is being conducted (see Appendix H). My study examined human subjects and compelled me to get the informed consent of participants (Ulin et al., 2002). During the initial meeting I presented the outline of the research to the principal. Interviewing procedures and observation processes were negotiated throughout the

research process, with the teachers being informed of my presence in the school. In addition, I felt it was important to gain the boys` acceptance and consent, as I would be encroaching on their spaces and would be involved, even if only silently, in their classroom and outdoor activities.

In terms of the interviews, I also briefed the respondents and their parents, via letters of consent (see Appendix G), as to the nature and purpose of the interviews. I assured them of confidentiality and anonymity and what would happen to the data generated from the interviews. The appropriateness of the topic, design, methods, and guarantees of confidentiality, analysis and dissemination of findings were negotiated with relative openness, sensitivity, honesty, accuracy and scientific impartiality (Cohen and Manion, 2001). I obtained permission from all the participants to record the interviews. I informed them of their right to refuse to answer particular questions, as well as of their right to withdraw their consent or discontinue participation at any time.

Leaving the research site

Researchers need to reflect attitudes of compassion, respect, gratitude and common sense without being too effusive. Subjects clearly have a right to expect that the researchers with whom they are interacting have some concern for their welfare (Cohen and Manion, 2001). The nature of this research compelled me to take a keen interest in the welfare of my participants and to develop a trusting and caring relationship with them, which resulted in my obtaining the rich data that I was looking for.

Murphy and Dingwall (2001:340) caution that `participants may form close relationships with the observer and experience loss when the study is completed and the observer withdraws'. While I did form relatively close relationships with my participants, I had kept my relationship with them on

the level of a strictly professional, research relationship. I was ever mindful of the need not to allow my role as a researcher to become blurred with that of a social worker, counsellor or therapist. I do not agree with Reinharz (1983:95) in Truman, Mertens et al (2003) that researchers always 'intrude into their subject's privacy, disrupt their perceptions, utilise false pretences, manipulate the relationship and give little or nothing in return.' The relationship between me and my participants was a mutual sharing process where `balances shift between and during different interview situations` (Cotterrill, 1992:604 in Truman, Mertens et al. 2003).

Once the interview sessions were over, I felt a sense of loss and uneasiness about simply disappearing with the boys` stories. As with Jane Hollway, I found that I was close to the age of my respondents` mothers and this `structural feature of our identities precipitated the unconscious dynamics` of my unease about leaving the boys at the end of the interviews (2005:46). Despite the initial sexualised form of our relationship, I realised that in some way I began to see these boys as `sons`, partly because my own son is seventeen years old and the reality of how fortunate he is in comparison with my participants was overwhelming. On the other hand, they did not see me as a `mother` figure, because they viewed me as being much younger than I really am.

A description of the method of data analysis and data interpretation

The ontological framework

Human beings are active, reflective agents who construct their lives, and in turn, this assumption must systematically inform any method designed to study them. We enter the worlds of our participants to understand their thoughts, feelings and actions. However, these understandings are not unbiased or distant. Our direct involvement can alter our views about them

and produce sobering realisations about ourselves as well. My analysis necessitates viewing these individuals as inherently social actors who act in social worlds and live within human communities, no matter how diffuse or ephemeral (see Burr, 2003). Moreover, the interpretation of data places great emphasis on the language-driven (textual) and social nature of meaning-making and research-based knowledge. Therefore, the analysis of the data involves the interpretation of the meanings and functions of my participants and mainly takes the form of their verbal descriptions and explanations. The methodology employed in this study involves content analysis, examines the contradictions and ambiguities in the boys' discourse during the interviews, and seeks to challenge and destabilise, where evident, common taken-for-granted assumptions about my participants.

I collected a huge amount of data in the form of transcripts generated through recorded group and individual interviews as well as documented notes from participant observation. Transcriptions of all of the interviews as well as observation notes and log-books are the primary data set for analysis. The respondents` own words and phrases were used in order to `respect and retain the interviewee`s meaning-frames` (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005:36). Altogether, I engaged in about three hours of group interviews and approximately thirty hours of individual interviews. I personally transcribed all of the interviews for two reasons: firstly, so that I could become familiar with the data, and secondly, because some of the noise and interference, especially during group interviews, was problematic. It would have proved extremely difficult for anyone not familiar with the interview situation to decipher the transcripts. I chose not to follow the traditional approach in polishing the speech of participants, for example, omitting repetition and translating slang into Standard English, so that it reads more smoothly. Rather, I have chosen to retain the words of the participants intact so that their meanings are not distorted.

A large amount of data was generated during the fieldwork, and since it was impossible to utilise all of the transcripts, data reduction strategies were essential in the analysis (Krueger, 1994). What is included by way of description depended, to a large extent, on what my research questions were. It is regrettable that I had to omit a huge volume of data which I felt was important. Most importantly, I had to remain mindful that analysts who try to include everything risk losing their readers in the sheer volume of the presentation.

The impact of each boy on the interviewer and the process itself was documented for further analysis. This process facilitated the analysis of how the boys and I `co-constructed` various accounts in the interviews (Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix, 2002). In foregrounding my role as a researcher I have argued that my ethnographic work is a two-way process in which my participants and I are co-constructors of meanings.

Content and discourse analysis

I arranged all of the material in a similar format to help with the storage and sifting through of materials. All of the data was labelled with specific codes for reference purposes so that I could move backwards and forwards through the data (an iterative process).When I began the analysis by reading the transcripts and arranging the data into categories I, found myself reliving the actual interviews and became totally immersed in the material. I could still visualise each of the participants` facial expressions and postures, and hear his voice. The boys left an indelible mark on my memory mostly because their accounts describing events and traumatic experiences touched me in some way.

I categorised the selected material into themes and produced an analysis of how the various themes interweave. I began the content analysis as soon as

the research process started. It took the form of a preliminary analysis, which gave me an idea of how to redesign my questions if necessary and which central themes to focus on as I continued observing and interviewing. `Analysing and interpreting` should always accompany the research interviewing, since the accumulated data will give insights into new research problems and alert you to changing issues; and planning and preparation will inevitably be taking place constantly (Plummer, 2001). Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and links among descriptive dimensions. Once I obtained an overall grasp of the text and its design and found through content analysis what the text says, I proceeded to uncover another layer of meaning through discourse analysis. When people talk to each other, the world gets constructed. Our use of language can therefore be thought of as a form of action, where the "performative" role of language becomes the focus of interest.

In order to unravel the discourse on a specific theme I would refer to the transcriptions of what the boys had said and focus on overlaps and differences. I engaged in multiple readings of the transcribed data and then searched for discourse markers, e.g. words, phrases and metaphors, and highlighted those indicators which either supported or subverted conventional assumptions about the topic. The main themes from the thematic data analysis were aligned with the headings of the texts. In discourse analysis I have looked at the way language is used, the choice of words, and the `how` of what is said by the respondents. Thus, I interrogate critically what they said and how it was said in order to pick up the contradictions, inconsistencies, avoidances, silences and changes of emotional tone. Hollway and Jefferson (2005), writing of doing research with defensive subjects, say that there are reasons why people choose to take one view or position as opposed to another, a phenomenon I explore in the analysis. Wetherell calls for a synthesis of the two `versions` of discourse analysis,

arguing that we need to take account of the situated nature of accounts as well as the institutional practices and social structures within which they are constructed (in Burr, 2003:22). My data analysis theorises the different perspectives and views obtained through an intensive literature survey, gathers the data, and sifts out emerging themes, which in turn address my research questions.

In the beginning my respondents posed many questions to me, questions such as: 'Why do you want to speak to me?' and 'Who told you about me?' These questions certainly impacted upon the production of the text. This is in response to the recent literature on boys and young men, which focuses on the production of masculine subjectivities where a combination of psychoanalytic and social constructionist perspectives has become apparent (Frosh, et al., 2002).

In order to understand the why and how of what is said, you need a political, historical and social context, and it was only once I got a clear picture of the text that I was able to offer an interpretation of `how` the text means - that is, of how the patterned choices observable in the discourse produce meaning effects. It was important for me to remember that text is layered, that it contains multiple meanings, and that all of the layers are connected and influence one another. I constantly went backwards and forwards through the data the (iterative process) looking for meaning through linguistics. This entails attending to what participants say, how they say it, their body language, their tone, the sequencing of information, whethere they use the active or the passive voice, their choice of metaphors, and episodes that have certain characteristics (Janks, 1997). The discourse markers in the form of words, phrases and metaphors were highlighted and clustered. I then labelled the discourse markers that belonged together in discourse themes. An argument emanated from consideration of the themes generated, which was analysed with the particular socio-political context in mind. The context might

involve such factors as the participants, their roles, their purposes, and the properties of the setting, such as time and place. The properties of participants are also often relevant - properties such as gender, age, class and background. I interrogate the discourse which is my data by naming and showing the effects of gender relations and attempts at social redress in schools.

Data analysis is a particularly critical site for issues of reflexivity because this is a point where the voices and perspectives of the research respondents are especially vulnerable. They might be lost and subsumed in the views of the researcher (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). Feminist scholars have suggested that one strategy for keeping participants` voices alive is to involve participants in the data analysis, either during the interview itself or with the transcript of the interview, so that the analysis is more collaborative and meaning is negotiated (Crawford and Marecek, 1989; Lather, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). I tried to involve my participants in the data analysis during the interviews by constantly asking them to clarify what exactly they meant by certain statements, especially the slang words with which I was not familiar. My intention was also to involve the participants in the interpretation of the transcribed data, which would have given them a sense of involvement and ownership in how their accounts were represented. However, such a process is not without its difficulties and dilemmas. Ribbens and Edwards (1998) cautions that there are possible problems in taking this course of action as participants might not wish to become involved in the analysis and the time frame of the research does not necessarily render this possible. I had asked the participants if they would be willing but there was a lack of interest in this exercise. Moreover, when I returned to the school the following year in an effort to get them to read their transcripts with my comments, I discovered that at least four of them had dropped out of school. I then made the decision that if it was not possible to include all of the boys in the analysis and interpretation process, I would abandon the endeavour.

Finally, the data is presented in a thematic format with some biographical information (using pseudonyms) on each participant. The entire thesis is presented in terms of a series of chapters developed from the responses of the boys.

The emancipatory effects of the research

I have theorised some of the emancipatory and therapeutic effects of this research on my participants. I had an open-door policy to the boys while I was at the school. Some of the boys used it as an opportunity to talk freely; my room was a place to sit and relax. In some ways these interviews and casual chats became cathartic for the boys because, most importantly, they had the opportunity to `open up` without being judged. Once we had established a relatively comfortable relationship, the boys often came to see me during their breaks just to talk. Without my prompting at times, they would just start talking about various issues. On these occasions, I did not switch on the Dictaphone. I tried not to give them the impression that collecting information was all I wanted to do. I also wanted them to know that I had their best interests at heart.

Here are some examples of the intended or unintended emancipatory or positive effects of this research:

- I facilitated Evan`s return to class after he had asked me to do so. His teacher had sent him out of the class indefinitely and refused to allow him back. I spoke to the teacher on his behalf so that he could resume lessons and catch up on classwork and notes. Evan seemed genuinely remorseful and promised to try his best not to annoy his teacher again. The teacher agreed to take him back on condition that he apologised and promised to conduct himself in a manner that did not cause a

disruption to others in the class. Evan matriculated in 2008. He now works as a security officer in my husband`s company.

- John, who had recently lost his best friend in a car accident, related how distraught he was and said that he simply could not come to terms with it. He also said how averse he has become to speeding because it was through speeding that his friend died. He indicated that it was the first time that he had actually `opened up` about his feelings and his acute sense of loss.

- Brendon spoke about his situation at home and described how unhappy he was, living with a stepmother. He repeatedly said that he did not want to be at home. When I spoke to him during the second interview he said that the situation was a lot more bearable. He explained that his father and stepmother were curious to know what had transpired in the interviews, and `this was how the ice was broken.` He did tell his parents what we discussed, but he did not know if this was what influenced his parents` disposition towards him.

I did my best to ensure that no harm would come to these boys. The interviews did not appear to be traumatising for them. Their opening up to me was in no way harmful or traumatic, especially because it was done in a safe and familiar environment. In some ways it was therapeutic and reassuring for the participants to `open up.` They could come to the realisation that talking about their feelings, concerns and problems had its benefits and should not be viewed in a negative light. The gender stereotype regarding males' suppression of their feelings is challenged by these experiences, no matter to how slight a degree. These boys, at least, no know how harmless (yet emancipatory) speaking about their hopes, dreams, anxieties and problems can be. It was in understanding the subjective

experiences of these boys and allowing their voices to be heard and validated that value was achieved (Thorpe, 2002).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth discussion of the ethnographic process employed in this research project. The ethnographic methods used include participatory observation, group and individual interviews, as well the perusal of site documents such as log books.

It is evident that research on boys, particularly adolescents, is a complex process, as this research has demonstrated. The power relationship in which the researcher becomes the researched (or the observer becomes the object of observation) is an indication of the dynamic and fluid nature of this research relationship. The ways in which the power relations were reversed created much anxiety in the life of the researcher, who entered the field with a clear notion of what was to be done and how it was going to be carried out. This was a far cry from research of the sort where the researcher controls the research situation by asking questions and determining what is to be asked.

The accessing of the participants, ethical and sampling issues, a description of the research site, interviews, the researcher`s subjectivity and the methods of analysis and interpretation have been described and theorised in this chapter.

In the next set of chapters I use verbatim transcripts of participants` accounts to examine the behaviours and perceptions of these boys. These accounts provide the opportunity to analyse how the troublesome behaviours of my participants are located within complex and conflicting notions of masculinity. The next chapter focuses on the ways in which race and class intersect with the performance of a heterosexual masculinity.

CHAPTER 5

Race, class, gender and sexuality

Introduction

This chapter investigates the specific ways that race and class intersect with the performance of heterosexual masculinities through the `eyes` of a group of Coloured working-class boys.

Studies show that factors such as race and class are crucial in understanding the performances of male heterosexuality, since these factors present different experiences for boys (Connell, 1995; Morrell, 2001; Bhana, 2002). The paucity in studies of Coloured boys` sexuality compels interest in this area and more importantly, the centrality of their sexuality through `sex talk` lends credence to Silberschmidt`s (2005: 198) view that 'a man`s identity, self-confidence and social value are linked to his sexuality.' The chapter argues that the heterosexual performances of these males are intimately tied to their social context, and that this has particular effects in understanding how they experience their masculinities. Moreover, this study illustrates the ways in which sexuality has become an arena of contestation and accommodation in their relationships with other boys and girls.

While some boys in this study conform to the `typical` perception of Coloured males by engaging in `dirty talk` and `sex play`, usually framed within discourses of normative and maturing masculinities (Renold, 2005), the data suggests there are some boys who perform their heterosexuality differently. The data shows that `Coloured` working-class boys, in negotiating their masculinities against a backdrop of socio-economic deprivation in Wentworth, simultaneously exhibit hypersexualised, misogynistic and homophobic hegemonic masculinities, as well as loving and respectful

behaviours towards other girls and boys. These young men`s practices would support Connell`s (1987) view that male heterosexual ambivalence towards women (and girls) should not be read as an aberration, but rather as an intrinsic aspect of what constitutes hegemonic masculinity.

These elements, which consist of contradictory forms of compulsory heterosexuality, misogyny and homophobia, are marked by contextual ambivalence and contingency and illustrate how trouble is located within toxic forms of hegemonic masculinities. Importantly, the data will demonstrate that these are not simply callous boys but rather that their backgrounds offer spaces that make it possible for crude and callous masculinities to flourish. Their concern about their own lives and marginalised positions often result in their attempts to regain positions of power and control. Coloured boys in particular have been and still remain marginalised and weighed down by stereotypical images which tend to vilify them. These boys then look to other ways of negotiating their marginalised positions in the way of exhibiting sexual prowess and claiming numerous sexual conquests, and these attributes are strongly and explicitly endorsed by their peer group structures.

The first section of this chapter illustrates the more generic experiences of these boys that have strong resonance with those of other working-class boys and sexualities (Connell, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Renold, 2002; Barker, 2005). The significant part of young boys becoming `real men` from quite a young age is conforming to a hegemonic version of (hetero) sexuality (Hearn, 2005). In this instance such dominant heterosexuality includes the image of active male sexuality, having sex with multiple sexual partners, and misogyny. This section draws our attention to a more callous, misogynistic and homophobic version of some boys in this school. The ways in which the boys in this study construct male and female identities is often reflective of the cultural beliefs and ideological views in this community,

where male dominance and aggression become tools to regulate female behaviour when compliance is not forthcoming. The argument here is that working-class Coloured boys inhabit a masculine position not unfamiliar in the research into working-class boys and sexuality. Such positions objectify young girls sexually, and function to add status to boys in economic and social conditions where sexual conquests and the callous formation of masculinities around sexuality are upheld. The concern with the rampant hypersexualised performances of these boys ties in with the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS that has devastating effects, particularly on the youth of this community. Statistically, Wentworth has been and is rated as the township in KwaZulu-Natal with the highest prevalence of HIV/Aids infection pro rata. Of the population currently aged between 20 and 40 years in Kwazulu- Natal, it is expected that 80% will be dead from AIDS-related infections within ten years (.health-e-org.za/stats6). Disaggregated statistics on the rate of HIV/Aids infection in Wentworth unfortunately are not available. Using extracts from group and individual interviews it will be demonstrated in this section how heterosexual masculinity hinges on demonstrable sexual orientation, homophobia, callous misogyny and the objectification of girls – in other words, on a level of promiscuity that gives rise to the sort of statistics refer to above.

In the second section of this chapter I will draw attention to the ways in which these Coloured boys are portrayed in a more admirable and exemplary manner. Although this portrayal is rare, the fact of it highlights the multiplicity of the heterosexual identities as well as the capacity for shifting masculinities among Coloured boys in Wentworth. The multiple and competing nature of their accounts are illustrated in the ways in which some boys, given the opportunity, simultaneously negotiate both hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions. Non-hegemonic masculinities manifest in ways that advocate loving and respectful relationships with girls. Their resistance of the dominant heterosexual masculinity prevalent in this school and the

community at large demonstrates that these boys are not simply obedient and passive recipients of particular culturally exalted sexual behaviours in Wentworth. This part of the study brings to attention gentler and more respectful versions of masculinity in the attempt to move away from the pathological manner in which these and most working class `Coloured` boys are perceived, and in so doing sees both the representation and resistance of the dominant view of all Coloured boys as antagonistic and callous. This study will highlight the ways in which, by embracing softer, more caring forms of masculinity, these boys can facilitate and support gender equitable education for both girls and boys.

Interestingly, doing `boy` in non-hegemonic ways amongst these boys does not automatically involve inhabiting a marginalised and painful position within a system of gendered relations. This is evident in the group interviews, where many boys who spoke openly about their loving and respectful relationships with girls were not derogated by other boys in the group for their apparent deviation from a normative masculinity.

In exploring how this particular group of Coloured boys inhabits hegemonic and non-hegemonic positions around their sexual lives, this chapter focuses on the following key themes:

Crude and callous Coloured boys:

- Emotional disinvestment

- Sex, lies and videotape:
    Quickies
    Gang banging and blackmail

(Gay) sugar daddies: Cell C, clothes and cars

Porn star masculinity

Resisting dominant discourses of (hetero) sexuality

- Most girls I respect – I show them that I`m a better person

- Masculinity and love: poetry as a medium for expressing love

<u>**Crude and callous Coloured boys**</u>

<u>**Emotional disinvestment**</u>

Traumatic and painful experiences form a major backdrop against which many of these boys` lives are inscribed. Their Coloured working-class experiences have exposed them to extreme violence (inter-personal and domestic), gang violence and the loss of loved ones through episodes of violence and incarceration. The connection between their experiences of pain, loss and suffering and their (in) abilities to forge respectful and meaningful relationships with females and others is disconcerting. Some of the boys explicitly express their reluctance and apprehension to show love, for fear that it could render them susceptible or vulnerable to future painful encounters. It is in their quest to project a stoic image that some boys in this study demonstrate a version of themselves that is emotionally detached and callous. Their apparent backlash is a direct consequence of their individual biographies of tension and conflict.

In the following extract Neville feels that adopting a hard-line approach and not showing love limits his vulnerability and increases his chances of survival in a context of treachery and within a discourse of `survival of the fittest`. It is under these circumstances that many of these boys feel compelled to repress

their feelings and present themselves as emotionally detached. Their present struggles to protect a sense of self, especially when their masculinity is being challenged, compel them to present themselves as unfeeling and unemotional masculine subjects. The data shows that their volatile environments pressurise them into inhabiting particular forms of masculinity where their painful and traumatic lived experiences reduce their emotions.

Neville: *No even the people that I hang around with they said you mustn't trust no- one so me Miss like I don't trust no one obviously. And they said you mustn't show love and all that.*

Interviewer: And do you believe that? Do you think that's the way it must be?

Neville: *Yes Miss if you want to survive Miss you have to be.*

Interviewer: So how do you show your girlfriend love?

Neville: No Miss you don't show her love you don't tell her you love her nothing.

Interviewer: So how does she know that you care for her?

Neville: I don't care for her … how Miss I don't care for her.

Interviewer: So what is it, why do you have a girlfriend?

Neville: Just for other things.

Interviewer: Other things like what?

Neville: Ay … other things. Miss just for like sex and so on.

In this context, the expression of emotions is constructed as contradictory to the hegemonic ideal. During a one-on-one interview, becomes apparent that Neville is profoundly influenced by others in the community whose own

negative encounters and experiences appear to impact his own life and responses. These negative experiences appear to be central to their constructions of a stoic hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, certain `manly` performances that have been induced by trauma are firmly entrenched by the people he `hangs around` with. Neville`s perception is that open expressions of love symbolise weakness – an attribute which could render him susceptible to futher subterfuge, pain and trauma. This is reflected in his construction of a sexuality that does 'not show his girlfriend love'. The suggestion is that the experience of trauma in childhood reduces men`s ability to form emotionally intimate relationships with women and as a result they develop a preference for impersonal sex (Knight and Sims-Knight, 2003; Malmuth, 2003; Jewkes, 2007;). Neville`s account shows some evidence of a conscious attempt to emotionally detach himself in light of his traumatic experiences. When boys adopt this callous approach, girls become mere objects of boys` sexual gratification. The callousness of some boys in this study is further illustrated:

Evan: I don`t even kiss her.

The male sexual drive discourse is located within talk about their sexual encounters with girls, with no reference to intimacy. Evan emphasises the purely sexual nature of his sexual encounters. The act of kissing during sex implies a certain level of affection and intimacy, which is clearly contested in Evan`s account. Both Neville (in the previous scenario) and Evan see themselves as powerful and in control of their relationships, which centre on sexual gratification. However, the contradictions in Evan`s account are highlighted in the second part of this chapter, where he presents a more loving and endearing version of himself (see Masculinity and love: poetry as a medium for expressing love).

Many of these boys` crude and callous behaviour is not only restricted to the lack of intimacy but also manifests as hypersexualised and misogynistic

behaviour. Their misogynistic performances are intended as assertions of power over girls:

Interviewer: What else is it that you'll talk about these girls?

Shawn: Their bodies.

Interviewer: What about their bodies?

Shawn: How Miss, you asking too much Miss. We talk about their bums and breasts and all that there.

Interviewer: What is it about their breasts?

Shawn: Juicy.

Talking about girls` body parts provides both a collective source of entertainment and a source of fantasised sexual desire. According to Shawn there are boys who find some way to enforce their heterosexual dominance by resorting to the sexual objectification of girls. Dominating girls and subjecting them to gross humiliation is a way of re-establishing themselves and compensating for their positions of marginalisation, which is not to suggest that misogyny is the preserve of boys living in poverty. By drawing on cultural and patriarchal discourses that position the boys as dominant and girls as subordinate, legitimates the objectification of girls.

It is evident that most of the boys do not perceive sex as a two-way partnership between themselves and their `girlfriends`, but rather there is reference to what `we`ll or I `ll do to her`. In response to their low socio-economic status, like the Coloured men in Field (2001), Barker (2005) and Salo (2005a), some boys in this study seek to prove their sexual prowess and primarily see women (and girls) as objects for their sexual pleasure. Similarly, talking about their intended sexual conquests to their male peers leads to their

attaining popularity amongst them and is central to the construction of a hegemonic heterosexual masculine identity. This strongly resonates with Wolpe`s (1997) assertion that young men hold the belief that they have automatic rights to have sexual intercourse with girls and young women.

Interviewer: When you are sitting with your friends and talking about girls, what is it that you talk about these girls?

Shawn: What we'll do to them.

Interviewer: What you will do to them?

Shawn: If we sleep with them like ja.

Interviewer: Is this you talking about your girlfriend or you talking about girls in general?

Shawn: No you don't talk about your girlfriend like that. You talk about girls. Like if she's pretty as she walks past I say ay I'll give her all styles and all that there.

The `doer` and `receiver` dichotomy further emphasises the asymmetrical nature of the sexual relationships between these boys and their `girlfriends,` positioning girls as both objects and passive recipients of these boys` sexual desire. The dominance of (hetero)sexual identity and discursive practices that support an active male and a passive female sexuality are deeply embedded within social and political participation and are perceived as normative (Allen, 2003). The talk about what they will do to girls illustrates acute forms of misogyny and a rampant hypersexualised masculinity. The ways in which some boys openly and excitedly engage in sex talk includes talk about sexual conquests, girls` body (private) parts and about their fantasies of what they will do to girls. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies and desires (Makinwa-Adebusoye and Tiemoko,2007) and it is through fantasy and imagination that Nico takes up a position of power over girls in his attempts to articulate his planned sexual desires. This suggests that many

of them secure sexual power through heterosexualised storytelling, fantasizing and the sexualised harassment of girls. Even through fantasising, the 'hegemony of masculine definitions of sexual behaviour has become a problem for women… It is in men`s pleasure and under men`s control that the sexual act primarily occurs, and women, young and old, married and unmarried, often feel they have little to say' (Makinwa-Adebusoye and Tiemoko, 2007).

Interestingly, this `sex talk` amongst friends is restricted to `other` girls and does not include their girlfriends. Evidently, there exists an `agreement` amongst these boys which forbids speaking about their girlfriends in a derogatory way. Their girlfriends are perceived as worthy of respect, while `other` girls who are used for sex only are not. In this instance, there is a clear distinction being drawn between girlfriends and `other` girls. This suggests that girlfriends are positioned within patriarchal discourses of male protection and male respect, while `other` girls are objectified and perceived as mere objects of sexual pleasure and perverted sexual activities. The assumption is that girlfriends` reputations demand preservation and protection if they are to be considered prospective marriage material.

Kerwin: [T]his girl must be decent come from a nice decent place decent house everything `cos you can't just take any girl home, like that she must be decent and all, like what else now, um, she must just be a nice decent girl.

In Wentworth, taking a girl home signifies a sense of commitment and sincerity of that relationship. However, this gesture is restricted to girls who, in some boys` opinions, are perceived as `decent.` The discourse of respectability is strongly sanctioned by Kerwin, a fact which is evident in his emphasis on the word `decent` four times in his statement. This suggests that these boys constantly police girls` behaviour in the pursuit of potentially suitable marriage material. The ability to choose wisely has implications for

their sense of a successful heterosexuality. Moreover, as young men, these boys are acutely aware of the significance that home background has on the caliber of girl it produces. In this context, the ability to get as well as to marry a girl who is `pure` or a virgin, (as illustrated in the following vignette), is crucial for their acclaimed sense of hegemonic masculinity.

The data suggests that while the boys (and men) may have multiple simultaneous girlfriends and lovers, girls(and women) are expected to be pure, and with it emerges the old and familiar 'virgin-whore' dichotomy, which means that whilst men are promiscuous to a degree, women are not allowed to be 'impure'. Moreover, they feel entitled to seek satisfaction of their `needs`, which are often differentiated and divided between different girls.

Evan: Miss, if a girl`s not a virgin one month`s the most I`ll wait.

Interviewer: How would you know if she`s a virgin?

Evan: Hey you`ll know… you know like open while you chooning , while you talking normal, general, while you getting to know the cherrie and all you say ay … ask her if she … maybe she never, maybe she did whatever, you know what I`m saying. Too she knows only time will tell. If she`s bluffing, she`s not bluffing you, she`s bluffing herself (others laughing). `Cos you gonna see when you do get there in the gates there, you gonna open the gates and you gonna see now.(All laughing)

The distinctive character of gender, separating the `good` women from the `bad` is a 'hallmark of patriarchal societies wherein double standards of sexuality have been imagined and enforced' (Chancer and Watkins, 2006:73). As stated earlier, Evan constructs a girl as either good or bad based on whether she is a virgin or not. In his account, the analogy drawn between the girl`s vagina and `gates` suggests an opening and a closing mechanism - one that is mechanical and devoid of any feeling. This mechanical image further

enforces the objectification of girls and the disdain with which some boys view bad girls. Evan uses `sex slang` to paint a vivid picture of this girl`s sexual anatomy which clearly opposes it as a sexual organ of passion and feeling, but rather implies a sense of inanimacy, permitting and denying entry. The analogy he uses denotes and reinforces previous accounts of the ways in which these boys objectify girls` sexual anatomies. This scenario depicts the callous demonstration that boys inhabit in their endeavours to perform heterosexuality, particularly in relation to the `virgin-whore` dichotomy.

Moreover, Evan inflates his ego in suggesting that the girls are unable to fool him. He is driven by the compulsion to present himself as `not dizzy` (not stupid) in striving towards a masculinity that positions him as streetwise and not able to be deceived. In this and other scenarios in this study, together with the findings of other research in a low-income setting such as this one, it is evident that male-female relationships in many low-income, urban settings are fraught with mistrust and conflict (Barker, 2005). Evan`s graphic descriptions of his hypersexualised heterosexual performance is also for the benefit of his peers, who derive great pleasure from it. His words, 'cos you gonna see when you get there,' draws attention to a confident masculinity that suggests the inevitability of sex. In Wentworth, being the `first` with a virgin signifies heterosexual success and purchases much respect amongst peers. On the other hand, girls who `sleep around` are a source of much embarrassment for boys who attempt to secure their positions amongst a hierarchy of dominant males. This is evident in the following scenario:

Mark: Then your friends they coming they tell you ay …they been with her. Now I must be holding her hand when another five ous already been with her.

The boys in this study express themselves in ways that highlight their double standards around (hetero) sexuality and in so doing normalise the patriarchal

dividend from which they benefit. Their sexual relationships involving multiple partners are endorsed and legitimated while the heterosexual male gaze works to prejudice girls` sexual behaviours as they are constantly being policed. Boys construct girls who deviate from the normal `one man woman` relationship as bad. This feeds into the male entitlement discourse around promiscuity, which is prevalent in a community that legitimises men and boys` multiple sexual relationships.

Evan: The more the merrier.

Multiple sexual partners, by all accounts virtually universal among boys, was said to be an important defining feature of their sense of `being a man` (Wood and Jewkes, 2001). Additionally, Barker found that most young men do not believe that young women should enjoy the same sexual freedom that they enjoy(ed) (2005). Sexual prowess is central to their ability to demonstrate a manhood that is sexually virile and has sexual stamina.

It is evident that the pressures accompanying the acquisition of the dominant heterosexual male position that endorses multiple partners is in contention with and contradictory to Evan`s desire (as illustrated in the second section of this chapter, Masculinity and love) for one special girl.

Tevin further reinforces and perpetuates the double standards around sexuality and relationships that are prevalent in this community.

Interviewer: How many girls can you have?

Neville: Enough, the most you can have

Interviewer: Why do you think that is so?

Neville: How Miss it's just nice. Miss you get bored of one girl seeing the same face only.

Interviewer: Okay and do you think its okay for your girlfriend to have others ... boys?

Neville: No!

Interviewer: Why is it not okay?

Neville: Miss because she won't do it cos she knows what's gonna happen.

Interviewer: What will happen?

Neville: How, Miss, both of them will end up catching a hiding.

Neville justifies his promiscuity by reference to the popular saying that `variety is the spice of life`, while girls are coerced into conforming to the gendered expectation of their commitment to monogamous relationships. It is evident that girls` internalised subordinate and intimidated positions permit an oppressive and violent masculinity to flourish. The extract demonstrates that the threat of potential violence from Neville ensures compliance in which his girlfriend polices and regulates her own heterosexual behaviour. This lends credence to how `successful` masculinity was partially defined in terms of young men`s capacity for controlling their girlfriend`s (Wood and Jewkes, 2001). Furthermore, Neville`s marginal position as Coloured and working-class compels him to seek other ways of demonstrating a more dominant and powerful version of himself, and this manifests as exercising power over girls and other (subordinate) boys who pose a threat to his hypersexualised image. In this way, his oppressive and planned violent responses are considered legitimate means through which he is able to express his position of hegemony within a heterosexualised gender order. Moreover, as illustrated in Chapter Six, his sense of emasculation in the presence of a more powerful male coerces him to reclaim power over his life by imposing his dominance over girls and other less dominant males. Sexual conquest and sexual

gratification, together with dominance and power, are central in these boys`
lives, with girls` pleasure dismissed as irrelevant. Additionally, the violent
threat of masculinity subjects females to its abusive dominance. Many of the
boys in this study access the traditional patriarchal power positions by
`calling the shots` and exercising their practice of double standards around
sexuality. During the group interviews, all of the boys agreed that girls are
not allowed to have multiple partners and if they do, there is the ubiquitous
threat of violence, a mechanism for policing and regulating girls` behaviour. It
is apparent that girls have internalised their sense of subordination and are
complicit in self-regulatory behaviour owing to the risk of intended violent
retaliation by their boyfriends. The boys allude to their sense of entitlement, a
patriarchal benefit, which allows them to engage in polygamous
relationships. Many of these boys view the ability to control their girlfriends
as a reflection of their masculine privilege, a benefit of the `patriarchal
dividend` (Connell, 1995) that prevails in this community.

The callous masculine behaviours of these boys manifest in ways that suggest
deceit and planned misogynistic practices, as demonstrated in the next
section.

Sex, lies and videotape

Quick presses

Some boys in this study refer to their sexual encounters with girls as
`quickies`, which denotes a hurried act, devoid of any lingering intimacy. A
`press` is the slang term for sex.

Interviewer: Why do you call her your girlfriend?

*Neville: Just Miss, so she must know, she must think that ay no he likes me in the meantime
you know ay this is my quick press for the night and that therewa. That's how it`s going.*

Neville employs intentional and deliberate means of deception in his bid to acquire sex. He resorts to playing on this girl`s emotional needs for his purpose of sexual gratification. Evidently there is a lack of concern for girls` emotional investments in these relationships. Neville suggests that when girls feel a sense of `belonging`, it facilitates easier access to sex. This has strong resonance with other research that portrays females as being more interested in the aspects of physical intimacy (Renold, 2003; Frosh et al., 2005), where some girls draw on conventional readings of female sexuality by stressing the importance of emotional intimacy and love.

In his talk about this girl, Neville uses the word `press`, a derogatory (slang) term for sex. Males in Wentworth use this term predominantly and it is indicative of an oppressive force, which has the intended effect of depicting males in the dominant position over females. Misogyny thus becomes a clear indicator of a purely exploitative relationship between many of the boys in this study and the girls they encounter.

In their discussions, boys use sexist slang terms such as `pie` and `piece` when referring to the sexual anatomy of girls, further cementing the way in which girls` bodies are objectified. Boys` use of sexist slang as a means to construct girls in a crude manner works to subjugate girls further. Wood (1984) is doubts that the male usage of sexist terms can quite simply be linked to a patriarchal system. In this instance it is apparent that the use of derogatory terms for female parts of the body combined with the intent to assess girls in crude and superficial ways constitutes an attempt to dominate and dehumanise them.

Interviewer: Are you saying that if you find out a girl is sleeping around you will also sleep with her?

Mark: Not just sleeping around. You know maybe she just wants the boy to be kissing her for those three weeks and she thinks that the boy really likes her. He don`t really like her we all know that there. I`ll do that myself for that thing therewa.

This extract reinforces the belief that girls want love while boys want sex. As demonstrated earlier in this section, the act of kissing while having sex is demonstrative of the act being more than mere sexual pleasure. Kissing is constructed as a sign of `love`. In objectifying the girl`s sexual anatomy as a `thing` for her vagina, Mark demonstrates his callous lack of respect for girls.

Gangbanging and blackmail

There are boys in this study who describe their casual sexual encounters in which `gang-banging` or line-ups (sexual activities where many boys wait in line to have sex with a girl either through coercing the girl or of her own accord) is a frequent and accepted practice amongst them. These line-ups are quite commonplace amongst boys and girls in Wentworth, where it is not only boys who initiate these group sexual practices. Some boys have cited some girls as taking the lead roles in initiating sex. This section illustrates how boys construct certain girls as being openly promiscuous while others are described as cunning and pretend to be innocent. They describe girls who are openly promiscuous as those who bunk school to engage in gang banging sessions. Evan finds it even more disturbing that these girls discuss the gang-banging episodes afterwards.

Evan: They doing rude and all with every Tom Dick and Harry.

Interviewer: Are you talking about girls in this school?

Evan: Ja they bunk school and all, maybe one will come here with... and all that there, going there and the ou's bunking school and stuff like that.

Interviewer: They bunk school?

Evan: Ja, how. Ja they bunk school and do all these funny things with some boys.

Interviewer: And do they talk about it?

Evan: Ja, some of them talk about it.

According to Evan girls can be just as promiscuous as boys. Through his discourse he destabilizes the innocent girls and villainous boy`s dichotomy. It is also apparent that girls are complicit in maintaining and upholding a misogynistic masculinity by participating in acts that serve to reinforce the disdain and disrespect that some boys have for them. Their talk rejects the conventional discourses of (hetero) sexuality in which boys are positioned as initiators of sex. Girls are also described as initiating sex. Similarly, girls who engage in sex with multiple partners are responsible for destabilising boys` positions as the dominant sexual beings. In this scenario girls are positioned as also seeking and living out lustful relationships. On the other hand, those girls who are diligent, pretty and quiet are perceived as deceitful.

*Evan: Miss nowadays miss you don`t know who`s who miss. I`m telling you these quiet ones into their books those are the main ones miss. I`m telling you miss, the pretty, pretty ones and all one time in the books and passing and all miss. All those at home miss those are the worst ones. The ones always in the books, the bookworms and all that there. Those are the ones I`m telling you those are the ones the danger they doing funny, funny things. You thinking you innocent here you kissing here hey, one two days another ou is there. The ous waah they plaaring you how you kissing that thing? That thing`s a **scab** that thing.*

Evan attempts to exercise his dominance over girls by enforcing the distinctions between masculinity and femininity. Girls who are perceived to be engaging in typical `masculine` behaviour which Halberstam (1998) conceptualizes as `female masculinity`, are stigmatised by some boys who refer to them pejoratively using `scab` to describe their behaviour. It is a

means of maintaining order, the order of patriarchy, via the subordination of women and the exaltation of the maleness. Girls who are complicit and accepting of this degrading treatment by boys appear to reify and reinforce the toxic hegemonic masculinity prevalent amongst them. Evan labels girls whom he perceives to be promiscuous as `scabs` and this highlights the social processes by which young women who have multiple sexual partners are derogated, while young men in Wentworth who display similar behaviour are exalted and labelled `players'. This further emphasises the sexual double standards prevalent in this community.

Of course, my study deals with boys, but gauging from earlier evidence it is clear that girls are not simply passive recipients of boys` sexual antics. Like boys performing heterosexuality which intersects with their class and context, my main point here is not to present these boys as simply `Big Boys` and girls as pathetic victims. The nonchalant attitude of the girl in this scenario when Kerwin mentioned the existence of the sex tape confirms this.

Kerwin: Jason's in my class, the one class girl, he made a video with her.

Interviewer: So the girls knows about it?

Kerwin: She didn't know at the time and all but eventually she found out I showed her the video to say well its you … she didn't like …? Usually if a girl didn't want that she would react you know. She would make a noise and all maybe come with police and all, this girl is just like aw …? She just said like don't show anybody, but obviously all the boys that we sit with on the road had seen it. But Jason hadn't sent it to anybody, he said to me he wouldn't send it to anybody `cos he'd get into trouble.

The above extract illustrates how some girls are complicit in the defamation of their own reputations. This suggests that some girls are also responsible for the ways in which boys treat them.

Moreover, it is apparent that working-class Coloured girls themselves are locked into positions that enable and permit a form of femininity that is open to boys` reproduction of callous heterosexual masculinities. The oversimplification of girls as passive recipients of boys` antics needs consideration since many boys relate how girls willingly participate in oral sex and `gang banging` and occasionally initiate sexual escapades by enticing boys to bunk school with them. While gang banging (line-ups) appears to be part of the sexual lives of many boys, girls too at times are active and willing participants.

Evan: Maybe the bra`s bully`s not there, you say to the bra hey what kind? You say to the cherrie just give him a kiss just to make him happy, `cos you know you gonna do other things so you min about him. He`s only gonna get a kiss. You gonna make him dizzy you gonna say ja. Maybe she`s a vol cherrie. One two times maybe this is not your cherrie maybe this is the first time and you just coming to kiss but as you kissing her you gonna bang her whatever. Then your bras and these are vol cherries they on top of the same thing, you know what I`m saying.

Interviewer: No I don`t.

Evan: (Him and others laughing).

Neville: Line- ups and all.

Evan: They vol for line-ups and whatever.

Interviewer: And the girls are ok with this?

Evan: Ja, hele girls. (All laughing).

Neville: Say about six, ten of us.

Calculated and planned line-ups coerce girls into succumbing to many of these boys` demands for sex. Recording of the gang-banging sessions on their phones serve three purposes: public confirmation of their heterosexuality, sexual gratification, and intent to blackmail the girls into further submission. Recently there has been much furore around the `Mxit Slut List` in schools, which is initiated by both boys and girls. This involves messages that describe certain girls as 'sluts' and 'willing' being circulated by way of cellular phones. These lists tarnish the reputations of school-girls on Mxit, an instant messaging program for cellphones and computers. Usually the girls' addresses and telephone numbers and the names of their schools are shown on the list. Video clips of boys having sex with girls are often also circulated via cellular phones and internet sites - anall too familiar occurrence amongst some of these boys.

Mark`s account below demonstrates that while there are girls who willingly participate in and initiate these gang-banging sessions, there are occasions when girls are blackmailed or coerced into engaging in sexual activities with these boys. This is indicative of how these boys connive and plot to set girls up where girls are coerced to have sex with them against their will.

Evan: I`m gonna leave the door open whatever and he`s gonna catch me while I`m on the pie and he`s gonna come, 'Ja, what`s happening here? I`m combering. I`m gonna tell everyone. Ja, I`m gonna comber you. You record it on your phone`.
Mark: Then I ask her and tell her hey I caught you now and I`ll comber if you don`t give me a piece. If she tells me no I`ll take her clothes and make her walk out naked. I`ll tell her it`s entirely up to you. You either give me a piece or walk home …

The recurrent theme around the objectification and disrespect of girls is further reinforced in this account. `piece` in this sense symbolises something detached from the whole, which illustrates how boys do not view girls` vaginas as part of them, but rather as an object to be used and discarded. `Pie` suggests something to be eaten to satisfy hunger. This is indicative of

how boys see girls` `pies as satisfying their sexual appetites. The analogies drawn here are oppressive and derogatory means which the boys employ to dehumanize girls.

When girls do not comply, boys play on their sense of respectability in their endeavours to have sex with them, by threatening to publicise their sexual acts. In attempting to preserve their reputations, these girls find that they are further compromised. This scenario is evidence of the callous and malicious intent by boys to coerce girls into submitting to sex. Moreover, boys` publicised sexual escapades are viewed with much admiration, which guarantees them much status in the male hierarchy. On the other hand, with girls the consequences have far- reaching effects that result in their reputations being tarnished.

(Gay) sugar daddies: Cell C, clothes and cars

In this section, by drawing from boys` accounts, the race and class issue will be explored by looking at how economic asymmetries result in the `sugar daddy` and `gay sugar daddy` phenomenon. The stereotypical `sugar daddy` is an adult male who exchanges large amounts of money or gifts for sexual favours from a much younger woman (Le Clerc-Madladla, 1999; Lindegger and Maxwell, 2007) Some girls see ideals of masculinity in terms of the provision of material goods. In this study some boys struggle against the challenge of being marginalised by girls who choose to be with `sugar daddies`. Many young men in low-income settings complain that young women in their neighbourhoods are attracted to gang-involved young men, who have access to income and status (Barker, 2005). 'Socio-economic realities enable men to monopolise sources of income and give older men more social and economic power than young men. Boys attributed to girls the propensity to strike up relationships with boys as a way of accessing "car, cash and cell," while boys expected sex in return' (Thorpe, 2002:7).

During the group interviews it was clear from their expressions and tones that talking about girls who go for `sugar daddies` evoked feelings of resentment and disapproval in these boys. A possible explanation is the emasculating effect it has on the boys because of the rejection they face by certain girls. Their ability to get girls is pivotal in the performance of their heterosexual identities. Moreover, girls who go with `sugar daddies` draw attention to the financial inadequacies that plague many of these boys, who are unable to provide them with the material possessions they so strongly desire. Having economic wealth in this sense determines the success (or not) of their heterosexuality. Boys grudgingly relate how taxi drivers and conductors (`condyes`) (see Chapter Seven) are revered by some girls because they (the taxi drivers) provide them with free lifts to and from town. Pretty girls `throw` themselves at these men, who seize the opportunity to manipulate them and demand sexual favours.

This concurs with Hunter (2002), who posits that economic marginalisation closely corresponds to sexual marginalisation. The pursuit of money and free rides in taxis is a common occurrence in Wentworth, where girls in their pursuit of the good things in life exchange sex for money.

In a group interview the boys had the following to say:

David: There`s some who only go for those sugar daddies…. Even there`s some in this school. There`s a good couple of them.

Evan: Ja they bunk school and all, maybe one will come here with a car and help ous with cars and all that there, going there and the ous bunking school and stuff like that. They only go for men with cars and all. Only those men those ones with cars and nice jobs and men that have good times and all that.

The boys' constructions are fraught with confusion, contradictions and double standards. These include their condemnation of girls who have many sex partners and those who engage in `transactional sex` (Swidler and Cotts, 2007). In both instances, these boys condemn the immoral conduct exhibited by girls, but condone the same behaviour when exhibited by themselves and other boys. The patriarchal dividend prevalent in this community and particularly amongst the boys is constantly being reinforced through ambivalent, gendered expectations. This is clearly demonstrated through the contradiction between their disapproval of girls` relationships with `sugar daddies` as against their lack of condemnation of boys who exchange sex for gain, and engage in oral sex with gay boys for money, clothes, `dop` (slang for alcohol) and cell phones.

John: *Miss a friend of mine … has done that. Maybe all the ous there swak you checking right there`s a gay person he`ll go there he knows him, go there you shova, shova that`s how.*

Evan: Buying clothes, cars everything. Everything he wants, airtime and plus too they party animals, they like partying. There`s always dop, everyday it`s… always dop.

In the above vignette, Evan's words further accentuate that it is not only girls who want economic riches. Boys, too, are subjected to sexual exploitation in their bid to acquire money and possessions. Boys engage in `transactional sex` with `gay sugar daddies` in their endeavour to ease their positions of economic vulnerability in a context of poverty and deprivation. Many of these boys gave accounts of their drinking habits over the weekend and the large amounts of alcohol which they consumed. `Having a dop` was described as one of their favorite pastimes, and for some, the only pastime over the weekend. Limited or non-existent leisure facilities, the absence of structured youth activities and the lack of resources in this working-class community result in boredom, and the youngsters seek alternate ways of occupying their time. Drinking and partying on the weekends is an all too familiar occurrence. The incapacity to finance their weekend activities is a source of much

frustration and disillusionment for boys, rendering the `gay sugar daddy` proposition appealing. This scenario is indicative of the reality of the situation in which they find themselves, and they have to compromise themselves in ways they strongly abhor. In a community that places much emphasis on being fashionable by wearing name brands, being a `glamour boy` or a `player` (terms peculiar to Wentworth, which mean boys who dress fashionably and tastefully and are popular with girls) in Wentworth is one of the most culturally exalted forms of masculinity. This places an enormous amount of pressure on boys to dress in the latest fashion, including being able to wear expensive name brands, even if it is not financially possible because of the poverty plaguing many of them. Like many Black working-class boys, these Coloured boys negotiate their race and class disadvantages by drawing upon dress, style and sexuality to compensate for their monetary deficiency. Black boys often cope with their frustration, embitterment and alienation and social impotence by channelling their creative energies into the construction of unique, expressive and conspicuous styles of demeanour, speech, gesture, clothing, hairstyle, walk, stance and handshake (Frosh, et al., 2002). 'This common sense of culture becomes central to the making of masculinity when boys lack other resources or avenues for gaining prestige, respect or esteem' (Clark, 1996:8). It is in pursuit of this romanticised image that many of these boys compromise their hetero-sexuality and engage in sexual activities with homosexuals in exchange for material and monetary gain. Despite the intense homophobia expressed by boys during interviews, what emerges from the data is how some of them allude to sexual encounters with `gays` for money. This association is based on mutual benefit between them. Economic deprivation and the desire to have certain material possessions coerce heterosexual males to compromise their principles about `gays` by engaging in the very sexual acts they consider to be repulsive. It is within this group interview that the double standards in the exchange of sex for money is illustrated.

John: But the gay people Miss you act nice to them so you can get money and all that.

Interviewer: Who does this?

Evan: Most of the boys. All do it for the money. Most of these gay people they always togged, always got money so you just whatever, have your share on the side you make out?

Neville: So that`s how you are.

Evan: Miss I`ve seen that and all … Miss you just give them a blow

Boys: Aah! Aah! Aah!

Interviewer: What?

Evan: A blow, Miss. They give you money Miss. That`s how it goes, Miss. They take you shopping.

Interviewer: Have you done that, Craig?

Evan: No, Miss. I`ve seen it. I`ve seen it. I`ve never heard, I`ve seen it.

Neville: I stay right here by gay people.

Evan: This guy (pointing to Cash) hangs around with them.

David: Ho..ho..ho !(laughing)

Kerwin: When things are bad, Cash will go out with a gay ou.

David: No, not me! I got a girlfriend.(inaudible)

David draws on the idea of a compulsory heterosexuality in his attempt to distance himself from any association with homosexual boys. Any association

with gay boys could jeopardise or undermine his identity as a fully-fledged heterosexual. He retreats into a defensive mode in an attempt to defend his heterosexual masculinity by shouting out that he has a girlfriend. Having a girlfriend in his opinion exonerates him from any association with homosexuals.

Evan: Anything he wants they give, clothing it`s there but he must jol he must be going out with them.

Kerwin: But you don`t just go out…

Evan: You must be doing things together you must know that you going out with `her. `You entertain `her` everything whatever alright, you going out with her. Whatever you want, ay she`s gonna give you.

Interestingly, it is the same boys who label and derogate girls who date `sugar daddies` for monetary gain, yet when confronted with the same desire for material possessions, what ensues is a struggle between homophobia and the desperate desire for money. In this way, some boys place their positions of hegemony in jeopardy even though it is a purely exploitative and opportunistic encounter. Their compelling desire for economic wealth leads to a subversion in power relations between heterosexual and homosexual boys, even if it is only momentary. This is evident in the fact that homosexual boys dictate the conditions of these transactional relationships, conditions to which heterosexuals must comply in order to get whatever they want. The data suggests that these conditions include dating and entertaining homosexual boys as though they were girlfriends. Research conducted in South Africa suggests that young people`s sexual relationships are often underpinned by an economic exchange: gifts or favours for sex (Kaufman and Stavrou, 2004). Schoolgirls find `sugar daddies` to pay school fees (Van Haren, 1999), and the boys in this study, as the data illustrates in contexts of economic vulnerability, are desperate for cars, cellphones and clothes.

Porn star masculinity

This section further demonstrates how sex (uality) is pivotal in the lives of these adolescent boys. During interviews, Shawn uses his body in attempting to subvert the power relations between him and me. Clearly, through his body language and his sex talk it becomes evident that Shawn fancies himself as a `lady`s man`. During the interviews, he presents himself as seductive and sexy by sitting slouched in his seat, legs apart, glancing at me at an angle and speaking very softly.

Shawn takes on the subject position of `sex symbol` and attempts to use his sexuality as a tool to enact his sexual agency. His desire to be desired as well as to appear seductive is palpable in his repeated attempts to perform his (hetero) sexual performances on certain teachers and girls in the school. In this attempt to exhibit his sexual prowess, he loses sight of the clear boundaries that exist in a learner-teacher (and in my case adult-child) relationship. Softer versions of females are the targets against which Shawn positions himself as dominant, yet he appears less dominant in the company of a more powerful, alpha male teacher (see Chapter Six).

In the following vignette Shawn talks candidly about his desire to be a porn star. This lends credence to Kimmel`s claim that pornography is a vital part of men`s sexuality (Kimmel, 2005). The desire to engage in pornography is two-fold: it would be a means of employment, and for Shawn it has the appeal of visual attractiveness.

Interviewer: So what would you like to do when you leave school, Shawn?

Shawn: Be a porn star Miss.

Interviewer: Are you serious?

Shawn: I'm serious Miss.

Interviewer: Why would you want to be a porn star?

Shawn: Ay Miss it looks nice.

Voyeurism appears to feature strongly in the sex lives of some of these boys. Their heterosexual virility hinges on collective sexual escapades where some boys watch while others are having sex (as indicated earlier). Their rampant hypersexualised masculinity has a voyeuristic edge and sometimes culminates in sexual acts with older women (as illustrated later). Transactional sex features here too, when boys have sex with older women in exchange for watching free (porn) movies, the consequence of which is the `sugar mummy` phenomenon. Thus, not only do young girls seek older men for economic gain, but young boys too have sex with older women in exchange for free commodities.

Dane: I was shocked when David asked the lady there by the shop to put on a blue movie. It`s a old lady too. **(They are all chorusing and teasing him that it`s an old lady)**. Ja Mark took her in the back room. I don`t know what he done **(he smiles, others laugh).**

Interviewer: So did the lady put on the blue movie?

Dane: Yes. She watches with you.

(The boys laugh and tease one another about this lady and the blue movie)

Kerwin: The lady told us she made Mark sleep for two weeks (all laugh).

In the discussion around Mark`s encounter with an older woman, Dane is not explicit but alludes to a sexual encounter. In my opinion, Dane`s reluctance to be explicit about Mark`s `activities` with the older woman could be attributed

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to the fact that I, the researcher, am also an older female. Contradictions manifest in the tendency of some boys to present to me a version of themselves as being respectful of older females. This is evident in their omission of the graphic descriptions they use to illustrate their sexual encounters with young girls.

However, the contradictory and contentious nature of their (hetero) sexuality is illustrated in the way in which they are able, through these accounts, to subvert the adult-child power relationship by attributing actions like `took` and `done` to Mark, positioning him in a dominant role in relation to the older woman. This implies an act of dominance where `young` Mark is in control of the sexual encounter by conferring on him the role of the initiator of sex and on the older woman the role of a passive recipient.

On the other hand, this scenario also illustrates the subversion of male-female sexual potency. The older woman`s assertion that 'she made Mark sleep for two weeks' brings his sexual stamina into question. This is an apparent deconstruction of the assumption that men are much more sexually virile than women.

In this section I have explored the ways in which these boys understanding themselves as sexual beings in relation to the dominant discourses of (hetero) sexuality. Evidently, some boys are implicated in reproducing the dominant discourses of hegemonic masculinity that highlight crude and callous behaviours. While this is so, as will be illustrated in the next section, some of these boys take up subject positions that negotiate non-hegemonic masculinities.

Resisting dominant discourses of (hetero) sexuality: *"Most girls I respect – I show them that I`m a better person."*

This section explores how some boys resist the discursive construction of their sexual subjectivities as disrespectful of girls and women. The totalising stereotypical perception of boys and their relationships with girls suggests that they are largely misogynistic, callous and disrespectful towards girls. Similarly, much of the literature points to problematic relationships between girls and boys, a sense of rivalry, where masculinities are constructed in opposition to girls Skelton, 2001; Bhana, 2002; Connolly, 2004; Frosh, et al., 2005). This section demonstrates that in spite of these negative assumptions, there are boys in this study who express their commitment to respect members of the opposite sex.

Tony: Well I had a good relationship with say like 99% of them. Most of the girls in the school I used to get along really well with.

Throughout the interviews, many of the boys emphasised that they respect girls provided the girls reciprocate the gesture. While there is the commitment to respect girls, these boys state that respect of girls is not guaranteed by virtue of a person's being a girl. Rather, many boys subscribe to the discourse `give respect to get respect`.

Evan: I respect them, but if they don`t respect me maybe I won`t respect them again, maybe I`ll put them in their place.

The proclivity for some boys to challenge and reject the dominant masculine view, which advocates the disrespect of girls, is apparent. Upon examining many of these participants` uninhibited responses during the group interviews concerning this topic, it is clear that articulating their commitment to respect girls does not threaten their hegemonic positions amongst their peers. Speaking openly about their respect for girls (both in and out the school

environment), including girls outside of the school milieu, does not seem to constitute a problem for their heterosexual images.

Despite accounts of the crude and callous ways in which they treat certain girls, (as illustrated in the first section of this chapter), the same boys resolve never to hit or disrespect girls unless they are provoked or have no alternative. A female teacher who corroborates that the relationship between boys and girls in the school is not altogether problematic and pathological says:

"I wouldn`t say they [boys] have a problematic relationship with girls per se."

Furthermore, during the interviews many boys spoke openly about their preferences around friendships with girls. There exists a relatively good relationship between girls and boys and during the lunch breaks. I noticed many boys and girls standing together, talking and joking. During both the group and the individual interviews, boys spoke at length about female friends that they talk to and `hang out` with.

Evan: *I'm just like there for friends I talk to them, but I prefer girls than boys.*

Interviewer: *Why do you prefer to be friends with girls?*

Evan: *To be you know like less trouble and you know stuff like that ja.*

Evan gives the impression that boys act in ways that are more appropriate when they are with girls. By his own admission, he implies that being in the company of girls lessens the likelihood of their getting into trouble. Many of the boys in this study talk openly about their preferences for girls as friends. Ratele et al., (2005) found that boys who were seen to mix with girls as friends were liable to be denigrated as `moffies,` but that is not the case amongst these boys.

Interviewer: Do you tend to spend most of your time with girls/ boys?

Dane: With girls.

John: I do have girls as friends but I spend most of my time with boys.

Interviewer: And, you've got some girlfriends, girls as friends, do you spend time with girls? I'm not talking about your girlfriend now.

Mark: Ja, where we stand there is girls over therewa, even at home, we have conversations with them.

Interviewer: And do you talk about the same things that you speak to your boy friends about?

Mark: Ja she tells me everything …

Interviewer: And would you discuss everything about your life with her? Would you talk to her about the same things you talk to the boys?

Mark: Ja, me and her we have open conversations. If she wanna ask me anything, if you slept with this one I tell her ja.

While some boys indicate that they spend most of their time with other boys, there are those who spend more time with girls. The good relationships some boys have with girls extend beyond the school and into the community at large. These accounts suggest that these boys do not construct their masculinity in opposition to femininity, but rather that the boy-girl relationships are more congenial than illustrated in some research. Previous research undertaken predominantly in primary schools demonstrates that boys and girls construct their identities in opposition to each other (Thorne, 1993; Frosh, et al., 1998; Renold, 2005). It is apparent that some of these boys do not buy into the broader polarisation of masculinity and femininity. This is evident in their claims that they also see girls as friends, which appears to be a

quite natural and generally accepted phenomenon. In addition, these boys reveal that they embrace attributes that are predominantly associated with females. In this scenario, qualities such as honesty and openness appear to be valued by some boys, which is indicative of their willingness to engage in heart-to-heart talks while confiding in girls. This is a demonstration of the ways in which these boys are negotiating a non-hegemonic masculinity that encourages boys to talk about their emotions as well as their abilities to forge trusting friendships with girls.

Mark: Most girls I respect, most of them I respect. Even those ones that act away you know and all I show them that I`m a better person. I won`t show them that I`m raw and act away. I`ll just tell them.If you show them attention and swear them back it becomes a game and you start swearing each other.

Mark constructs himself as more reasonable and rational than girls and in so doing deconstructs the discourse that positions women and girls as more sensible. The perceptions of all Coloured males as being inherently `raw` is challenged and destabilised by his conscious choice to be a `better person`.

Evan: I see them as people who need to be respected; see I also have people in my family that's ladies.

In this extract Evan`s alternate positioning as someone who respects females (as opposed to his crude and callous attitude in the first section) derives from the realisation that the females in his family could also be subjected to the misogynistic attitudes of males. This has compelled him to rethink his position in terms of his view and treatment of girls, and in so doing he inhabits a more positive and respectful masculinity.

Masculinity and love: poetry as a medium for expressing love

The propensity for boys in this study to occupy both hegemonic and non-hegemonic heterosexual positions simultaneously is further demonstrated in this section. On Valentines Day this school arranges a fund-raising drive which provides learners with the opportunity to publish their Valentine`s Day devotions in a specially designed booklet. All learners can subscribe to this initiative at a minimal cost. One of my participants, Evan (who in the first section shows a callous version of himself), dedicated a poem to a girl whom I later discovered is (was) his girlfriend. To illustrate the contentious and contradictory nature of this boy`s heterosexuality, his responses on separate occasions were as follows:

Interviewer: Are you in a steady relationship at the moment?

Evan: No.

Interviewer: Are you dating any girl at the moment?

Evan: Er… no not really. No. Just one two friends like will come past whatever.Ja, like you know. I don`t know like now I just say like the more the merrier `cos I been with a lot of girls.

Evan`s multiple positions show how he both supports and resists the dominant ways of performing heterosexuality in Wentworth. It is evident in the above transcript that Evan denies having a single girlfriend and rather alludes to having multiple partners. However, his open and public display of affection and love (in the poem below), to which he appends his name, is contradictory to the way in which he has portrayed himself in both interviews, and also contradicts the way his teachers and others in the school perceive him. This is evidence of his resistance to the all too familiar male role expectations and illustrates his defiance of how others perceive him. The contradictions and inconsistencies in his accounts demonstrate both his desire

to have many partners as well as his desire to resist the discourse that privileges males in this patriarchal society and compels him to boast of his many partners.

 To Jane from Evan

1. I`ve liked many, I`ve loved very few
But no-one has ever been as sweet as you.
I`d stand and wait in the longest queue,
Just for the pleasure of one minute with you.

2. You`re my pillow when I can`t sleep
You`re the light when I can`t see
You`re the air when I can`t breathe,
That`s why you`re the girl I can`t leave.

Throughout the second part of the poem, Evan portrays a more vulnerable version of himself; one which signifies a level of dependency on his girlfriend. This is indicative of the subversion through poetry of 'powerful boys-powerless girls` stereotype. He constructs this girl as having the power to determine the `status of their relationship. These expressions of vulnerability and dependence (`can`t see, can`t breathe, can`t leave`) show that the portrayal of boys as merely seeking sex from girls is not totally apt. To some extent, there is an indication here that some men also seek truth, honesty and respect from heterosexual relationships (Allen, 2003).   Evan`s public declaration of love challenges and rejects his earlier rampant hyper-sexualised heterosexuality, which includes misogynistic behaviours and multiple partner relationships. In this instance he occupies the subject position which demonstrates his love and desire for one girl; one which strongly resonates with the boys in Allen`s (2003) study, which demonstrates how boys seek love and girls want sex. Not only does he demonstrate that he is capable of showing love, but he does so publicly. Even though learners who subscribe to

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the Valentine`s Day dedications have the choice of remaining anonymous, Evan discloses his identity while being aware of the possible implications this act has for his heterosexual image of being a `player` in this school. He knowingly and willingly exposes himself to being mocked and teased by his peers. By doing this, he negotiates non-hegemonic masculinity in resisting the gendered expectation that prevents men from openly expressing feelings of love and rather compels them to suppress their emotions.

One of Evan`s teacher`s says this about him:

Mrs W: He is very charming. I sometimes think that Evan likes to give the appearance of he`s a player. But I think when he finds that one special girl he will cherish her but he`s not going to let anybody know because it will tarnish his image of being a player.

Clearly, the teacher here reinforces the stereotypical male image that normalises boys` suppression of feelings. She also suggests that Evan will not want to tarnish his image of being a `player`, while simultaneously expressing her confidence in his ability to `cherish` a `special` girl. What emerges from this extract is the contradictory and contentious nature of Evan`s heterosexuality, with the teacher positioning him as occupying both hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculine behaviours. Her view is supported by his own accounts of his heterosexual performances. He is a promiscuous, misogynistic, callous and dominant male on the one hand, and a loving, respectful `one-woman man` on the other.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the experiences of being Coloured and working-class influence the masculine performances of these boys. This is reflected in the positions of power that many boys compel themselves to take up in their attempts to assert and reclaim their heterosexual positions of

dominance. These behaviours often manifest as crude and callous attitudes that are predominantly directed at girls. However, this chapter has also highlighted the ways in which some boys in this study simultaneously occupy multiple, opposed heterosexual positions. Two versions of my participants` negotiations of their masculine identities have emerged: cold and callous versus loving and respectful. This suggests that these Coloured boys are not simply crude and misogynistic but rather that their circumstances offer spaces for these masculinities to flourish. In addition, the data has shown that that there are boys who have good relationships with some girls, with some of them seeking and forging meaningful, close friendships with some girls. Interestingly, it has emerged that those boys who develop alternate masculine identities nevertheless retain a sense of themselves as acceptable males by the normative standards in this Wentworth community.

The next chapter investigates and examines the schooling experiences of these boys, focusing predominantly on their relationships with the school authorities and teachers, and their reactions to disciplinary interventions.

CHAPTER SIX

Coloured masculinity and teachers

Introduction

In Chapter Five the specific ways in which race and class intersect with the performance of Coloured boys` heterosexual masculinity was investigated. That chapter argues that the production of heterosexual performances is intimately tied to the social context and that this has particular effects in understanding how boys in this study experience their masculinities. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, these boys` experiences of schooling is also laced with race and class stereotypes, and the intersection of Coloured and working-class often results in the problematic essentialising presumption that the troublesome behaviour of boys in school is somehow an inevitable consequence of their background.

The primary concern in this chapter is to highlight ways in which the routine institutional practices of this working-class high school facilitate rather than prevent their taking the road to trouble. It is clear that their schooling experiences are affected by school policies as well as teacher attitudes and practices. This chapter considers the opinions and perceptions both of these boys and of their teachers on this issue, with special reference to how the relationship between their schooling and their masculinity is negotiated.

Evidently, the boys who do not passively accept the imposition of a strict or rigid disciplinary system and instead reject it by bucking authority are constructed as troublesome. Given the difficult school experiences of many of these boys, it is not surprising that these experiences invariably bring them into conflict with the school authorities. Connell (1994:9) notes that `masculinity may be constructed *against* the discipline system through defiance of authority` and that `the dialectic of masculinity and authority is

one of the dynamics producing drop-out` [sic]. Of the thirteen boys who participated in this study, only six remain at school. Seven of them have left school either due to expulsion or they have simply not returned to school after numerous altercations with school authorities.

Using the participants` voices, this chapter will demonstrate how they inhabit masculinities consistent with other research on masculinity and schooling (Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connell, 1995), which shows evidence of an anti-authority, anti-school culture and a poor work ethic, with consequences such as suspension, expulsion and high drop-out rates. It will be argued that many of the boys in this study construct a version of anti-school, anti-authoritarian and anti-academic masculinity, which is detrimental to their success in school. While it is argued that they reproduce a version of masculinity reflective of the broader community of Wentworth, some boys also express their desire to be academically successful in school and to ultimately improve their life chances. Unlike Willis` (1977) boys who do not aspire to obtaining middle-class employment, many of these boys aspire to obtaining highly skilled and professional employment. The legacy of oppression, marginalisation and stigmatisation, as described in Chapter Two, which for many decades has troubled generations of Coloured people, continues to shape, inform, influence and predict the trajectories of their young lives. This is a far cry from the belief that schools are meritocratic and that through them individuals, regardless of their social, economic or ethnic background are able to realise their potential and achieve economic and social mobility.

This study goes some way towards showing how this school is an arena of struggle for dominance between teachers and boys who strive for hegemony. Schooling itself is problematised for the boys by the ways in which they are victimised, made outsiders, and pigeon-holed as troublemakers. Exaggerated rituals, hierarchies and authority structures in the school often lead to

emasculation, loss of face and self-esteem, and in turn, prompt exaggerated responses from the boys to regain their self-esteem and save face. Boys openly challenge teacher authority, particularly for the benefit of their peers, in their refusal to do work.

This second part of this chapter argues that despite the hegemony of toxic forms of masculinities described above, the same boys, given the opportunity, strive for academic success and seek peaceful, mentoring relationships. This section highlights the contradictions evident in the totalising assumption around all troublesome boys as academic failures and essentially anti-authoritarian, and demonstrates that the same boys who show resistance to particular teachers cultivate more supportive and amicable responses to other teachers in the school. These findings suggest that boys are constantly in the process of positioning and repositioning themselves in relation to the person with whom they are interacting. This is indicative of the propensity for boys to modify their behaviour and to establish better relationships with authority figures. Some of these boys are not all simply passive recipients of existing Coloured ways of expressing masculinity, but rather they are active subjects in the creation of masculinities that are more `socially acceptable`.

However, in the context of Merewent High, teachers express great frustration, disillusionment and often indifference due to their overcrowded classrooms and unsuitable working conditions. There appears to be no resolve on the part of some teachers to establish the motivation behind the `troublesome` behaviours and social practices of these boys. As stated by Meyenn and Parker (2001:174) 'there is an imperative to control boys` misbehaviours as opposed to understanding the motivation behind such social practices of masculinity in the classroom'. The teachers are challenged daily in their endeavours to regulate and normalise learners` behaviour, and experience confrontation with boys in particular. Parental support is minimal. The result of this is increasing pressure upon the teachers, who are finding it more and

more difficult to cope. Additionally, the high rate of unemployment and extreme poverty in this community coerce many boys to leave school and seek employment (mostly low-paying, unskilled work) in an attempt to alleviate their deprived situations. Boys from this low-income and predominantly unemployed community are most likely to be failed by the education system which instead of catering for them appears to exacerbate the boys' already tenuous situation. Many of the boys in this school appear to be disillusioned and demotivated by their experiences with authority and school life in general. According to some of them, the school does not provide any incentives or motivation to keep them interested in life at school. They describe school as boring, where `*nothing interesting happens*`. This often leads to high exclusion rates with boys leaving school with little or no qualifications.

This chapter focuses on:

- Disciplinary interventions and their (in)effectiveness

- Teacher attitudes and practices towards troublesome boys as well as boys` responses

- Alternative versions of masculinity

- Caring teachers

Disciplinary interventions and their (in) effectiveness

'She`s telling us to kneel in the quad. She`s getting stupid.'

In the context of this Wentworth high school corporal punishment was predominantly used to discipline learners. The prohibition of corporal punishment (South African School`s Act of 1996) has left teachers with a sense

of powerlessness. As already stated, through various disciplinary intervention strategies, rules, conventions, practices and rituals, the school defines socially acceptable behaviour, and in so doing imposes what Martino and Chiarolli refer to as `normalising regimes` (2003) on boys. This section explores the effects of these institutionalised practices on these boys` social practices of masculinity, and how they serve to promote or limit their capacities to think seriously about these practices (Martino and Chiarolli, ibid). What is apparent in this research is that these boys are not simply resisting school. It is rather that they are resisting the authoritarian approaches of teachers, and that it is their resistance which gets them into trouble. Their troublesome behaviours, their anti-authority, anti-school and anti-academic stances, are located within complex and conflicting notions of hegemonic masculinity.

At Merewent High School the disciplinary strategies are predominantly suspension for a maximum of five days, and detention. When learners are suspended from school, they are allowed to return only if they are accompanied by their parents. However, contextual constraints, specifically economic deficiency and employment commitments, limit the ability of parents to provide support to their children.

Mark: My mother`s not coming to school. She says she can`t take off work all the time, `cos she won`t get paid.

In single parent households, most of which are headed by mothers, the securing of an income takes precedence over attending to their sons` schooling. The result of this is that these boys are out of school for indefinite periods of time. Evidently, suspending them often intensifies the problem because they are generally idle and often get themselves into all sorts of trouble. Both the participants and their teachers concede that the disciplinary strategies used in this school have adverse effects and are perceived as ineffective.

In response to the question of whether suspension changes his behaviour, John had this to say:

John: No Miss it don`t help you. No. Just like normal we sit at home Miss with friends and all that there. It makes you plus too when you at home it makes you think ay I should have been in school now and all that therewa.

Like most other boys, John views suspension as a futile disciplinary strategy. Being suspended from school, instead of being a corrective measure, becomes a cohesive factor which brings boys with behavioural problems together outside of the school environment. The term` we` is what Cameron (2001: 177) refers to as a discourse of `collectivism`, that is, the self is defined in relation to others within a larger collectivity, as opposed to individualism, in which the self is defined as unique and independent of any collectivity. The term `we` emphasises the collective response of the boys to suspension and their collective shared experiences and solidarity with one another in their exclusion from school. This goes some way to explain the high rate of suspension of boys in Merewent high school. Furthermore, younger and older males in the community who are unemployed or have dropped out of school provide a space for a meeting placeof these boys, where they are given support. For many of these school drop-outs and unemployed males, their own schooling was not perceived as a significant feature of their lives, and they therefore do not see the need to discourage these boys from jeopardising their school lives. While John suggests that suspension as a disciplinary measure is ineffective and certainly does not lead to behaviour modification, he does appreciate that he should be at school and not at home.

Moreover, some of these boys are explicit in their suggestion that many of them deliberately get into trouble if their friend(s) has/have been suspended so that they can `hang out` together. Resisting authority figures appears to

elicit the desired effect of suspension from school. In this case, suspension is not viewed as a disciplinary measure aimed at improving behaviour, but is rather seen as a `legitimate` reason for being absent from school.

John: Miss it`s like you know with your friends they like ay let`s do something. Then we all do it and then we get into trouble, the teacher sees you or something.

Similarly, of the four teachers interviewed all concede that the disciplinary strategies employed in this school are largely ineffective, because it is the same boys who are repeat offenders. There are boys who assert their masculinity against all disciplinary methods and according to a teacher, `they take whatever`s coming, but they don`t stop'.

According to one of the teachers, the same boys are being disciplined for the same transgressions over the years. These boys appear to be almost immune to whatever disciplinary measures are being implemented. However, all of the teachers expressed the opinion that the same disciplinary strategies are effective when used to discipline learners who only occasionally transgress. One of the main reasons given for the failure of the disciplinary strategies is the inconsistency in their implementation. And apparently the prolonged and postponed punishment of boys by teachers (putting them out of class) has the effect desired by the boys of giving them the necessary attention and visibility as boys who are bucking school authority.

Mr.G: Now what`s happening in our disciplinary procedures is the loop holes and these boys find where the loop holes are and that was one of them. Because everyone is so busy there`s no immediate erm …dealing with a problem sometimes they simply have to wait and that waiting is like a stripe on their shoulder because the others see them there and in the school it is understood that when you are waiting there, you are in trouble.

The dominant construction of hegemonic masculinity bestows high status on those who challenge adult authority. In this context, one which coerces these

boys to exert power, boys resist the teachers` attempts to discipline and punish them. Discipline by exclusion, that is putting boys out of the classroom, is otherwise ineffective (as described in Chapter Four).

Neville: Me and him (points to Denzil). She`s telling us we must kneel in the quad. Where we gonna kneel in the quad? (All laugh). She`s getting stupid. (More laughs).

In this extract Neville`s tone is defiant and challenging, illustrating the futility of using such disciplinary methods on these boys. His rhetorical question accentuates the absurdity of the teacher`s command and her expectation that they will comply. This is illustrated in Neville`s remark: 'Where we gonna kneel in the quad?' 'where' meaning not place but rather that there is no likelihood, which is a clear indication of his stance of non-compliance and resistance. Kneeling in the quad, a place that everyone can see, suggests extreme humiliation and defeat, one which implies that they have succumbed to the teacher`s power. This is certainly not the image they want to project to the rest of the school. Their refusal to comply with the teacher`s demand to kneel is an attempt to save face and bolster their reputations as boys who are willing to openly resist authority, regardless of the consequences. Embedded in their collective laugh is intense mockery of the teachers` implied stupidity and senility, a perception that the teachers` disciplinary strategies are unsuccessful, and that the teachers have still not come to that realisation. In his discourse Neville uses the metaphor `*stupid*` to express his opinion of the teacher. This is his attempt at subverting the existing power relations between himself and the teacher. In his discourse he is deconstructing her position as a knowledgeable figure in the face of his ignorance. The statement that she`s `getting stupid` resonates with the taken-for-granted assumption that teachers are `all-knowing` subjects.

Interviewer: So what do you do during this period?

Neville: I just walk around.

Interviewer: Don`t the teachers see you?

Neville: They see me. I make like I am sent and I put my bag in the bin over there.

Many inconsistencies are apparent in the boys` accounts of themselves. This is highlighted in the above transcript. The inclination to conceal that he has been put out of the class contradicts what Neville said in a previous interview. This scenario is in direct contrast to the typical unequivocal display of blatant anti-authoritarian masculine performance, where visibility is equivalent to currency which purchases great esteem amongst the rebel's peers. Blatant disregard for teacher authority is absent from this scenario. In the absence of peer support, the propensity for blatant insolence diminishes leading to the conclusion that collectively, increased support leads to increased antagonism against teachers.

Biased teachers: *'The teachers pick on us.'*

While conducting my observations, I encountered many demoralised and dejected boys who exemplified the effects of being publicly derided and belittled by their Coloured teachers.

While remaining mindful of the fact that these boys do present problems for teachers, it is evident that their behaviour is exacerbated by the way teachers react to them. Boys react against teachers whom they perceive as being unfair. This bolsters their opposition to teachers and intensifies teachers' reactions to them because of their disruption of classroom activities and their refusal to do work.

Dane: No. The teachers pick on us. Like the other day when the class was making a noise the teacher made us stand and the rest of the class sit.

Interviewer: Who`s us?

Dane: The naughty boys. Like also when Cash`s parents were called in for something he did. We weren`t even involved yet we were brought into this thing. We weren`t even at school but our names were mentioned. They always bring up old things.

The above transcript exemplifies how the discipline/punish and us/them hierarchical binaries lead to an escalation of student resistance. Clearly, boys view teachers as their adversaries in their repeated reference to `us` (naughty boys) and `they` (teachers). The distinction is also emphasized in `us` and `the rest of the class,` which has the effect of polarising bad boy groupings and cementing their association with one another. The construction of good and bad serves to further entrench their perceptions of themselves and others in the school. In the teachers` attempts to strengthen their own positions in the conflict with `naughty boys`, there is the propensity not to treat each problem on its own merit. Boys repeatedly voice their dissatisfaction with the way in which teachers 'always bring up old things`, a practice which has the effect of reifying the troublesome label. While many boys acknowledge that they do engage in troublesome behaviour, they emphasise that there are occasions when they are innocent of certain misdemeanors, but nonetheless are indicted. Through their accounts they articulate their unhappiness at the tendency of particular teachers to become personal and insulting. This practice is indicative of the prevalence to practise what could perhaps aptly be called horizontal oppression, where certain Coloured teachers have been known to pronounce that Coloured boys are 'useless' and will 'not amount to anyth*ing.'* This practice goes some way towards reifying the totalising and stereotypical perception of Coloureds as inferior and unworthy (see Chapter Two). School authority figures, in their practice of grouping by association, together with their continuous reference to boys` past transgressions, appear to further antagonise boys and intensify existing problematic learner-educator relationships. All of the boys state that some of their teachers` inconsistencies

and preferential treatment is blatant. They view such unfairness with much disdain.

David: They don`t like us. They only like the good children. When we wanna say something they say hey sshh….

The 'naughty boy' grouping is further emphasized in the good children/bad children binary to be observed in the way these boys are treated. When the boys are pigeonholed like this, they are made to feel like outsiders. David expresses how they are further marginalised by teachers who silence their attempts to speak. He refers to their not being entitled to talk to or question the teachers.

David: Miss if I'm naughty in the class Miss and then I'm in trouble for something I never do, let's just say … , alright, and they think its me and I know I never take it Miss, they'll take me to the office they'll never give me a chance to talk or something, they'll just say ja it was you they'll always say it's you … that's why you always guilty.

Interviewer: And how does that make you feel?

David: Miss me if they suspend me I won't take it, I'll bring my parents. Let them sort it out. I won't go.

This response shows that despite the fact that the school`s disciplinary system is designed to regulate learners` behaviour, it is in the nature of the system to incite boys to resist, which they do by openly defying the school`s code of conduct. Shawn`s resistance seems to be a call to be heard and to be taken seriously. Being condemned for something that he did not do and not being granted the right to articulate his side of the story incurs his enmity. Moreover, the constant reference by teachers to boys` past troublesome behaviours is a source of annoyance for them. In much the same way as Willis` (1977) working-class lads refuse to conform to the institutionalised

norms of schooling, many of the boys in this study take up an anti-establishment position.

Evan: Some of them like maybe sometimes you ask … maybe you not naughty or whatever you just a nice, decent question you know in an appropriate manner whatever, they give you the answer in a funny manner, you know hardegat (refer to glossary) or whatever. Or they won`t talk to you they just keep quiet and make as if they never heard you or whatever. They still keep things from the past, ja. Most of the teachers in fact that`s the way they are.

The teachers` perceived unfair treatment of these troublesome boys extends to the academic arena, which could have serious implications for their sense of inclusion in terms of classwork. The tendency for teachers to be cynical and to show this by responding to certain boys in a `funny manner` or ignoring them is problematic. This practice is a source of anger for these boys and could possibly impact upon their future desire to participate in lessons. The negative, unpleasant interaction between the teachers and the troublesome boys nullifies any efforts that the boys may make to redeem themselves. It appears that their reputations have the potential to influence their teachers` attitudes and responses towards them, whether on that particular occasion the responses are justified or not.

Evan: Oh ja well of course! Because like, how can I say? Like let me just use a small stupid example right. Maybe like maybe I`m the naughty boy in the class or whatever maybe assessment is due today and now I go and approach the teacher and ask the teacher ay miss ay can you give me a little more time ay. They tell you no it`s the deadline, either you give it to me today or you ay don`t give it in at all. But if … whereas with them [the good boys] they give them one more day `cos they know the work is gonna come out good or whatever ay they always good they don`t give no problems whatever let me give you more time. So that`s the way they`re treated.

Evan`s suggestion that the anticipation of exemplary work by good boys which prompts teachers to extend deadlines for them, implies that there are teachers who presume that troublesome boys will necessarily submit

substandard work. This presumption is the basis for not granting *them* extra time to complete their tasks. However, the assumption that all troublesome boys are incapable of adopting a positive work ethic and underperforming is challenged in section two of this chapter, where it is shown that Evan is a top achiever in his grade, despite the fact that he is perceived to be troublesome.

Interviewer: So do you think this is unfair?

*Evan: That **is** quite unfair I mean if the deadline is on that day everybody should give it on that day whether you are more intelligent than this one or whoever`s naughty it should be there. The deadline`s the deadline. If you giving him time then you should give me time too. He`s not any different from me. Only thing is aright is maybe his ways and stuff. But you can`t give the one and not give the others because of his ways or whatever. You can`t treat us differently.*

In addition, the powerlessness of some boys in these situations and the teachers' lack of respect for them are identified as sources of great frustration and anger where they are are often prompted to reciprocate in ways that are contemptuous. They say that there are teachers who do not respect them and this evokes discontent and resentment for the ways in which the assymetrical power relations between themselves and their teachers is imposed.

Evan: No! Sometimes it`s a rude way like however he responds to me I respond the same way to him. If he`s rude to me I`ll be rude to him.. But then it`s now you answering the teacher and then they log you but then the people they don`t wanna hear ay he said this to you or whatever you know what I`m saying. They don`t wanna hear your stories. The teacher`s always right.

Furthermore, teachers are presented as having the power to decide how these boys are punished. Evidently, the credibility of these boys has been eroded and the consequence thereof is being denied the opportunity to present their version of events, an unfair practice which they appear aggrieved about (see Chapter Four). The sarcasm embedded in his statement, `The teacher`s always

right`, implies that teachers, who by virtue of their profession, want to project the image that they are infallible.

Byron: Before Miss ay any small thing he used to get me suspended for. Now I once told him ay Sir look here I'm tryna change, I'm no more tryna be naughty and all that therewa, I wanna do my work, and now you suspending me I'm missing out on a whole lot of work, then when it comes to end of the term I don't have the work to study with, cos almost every week I'm getting suspended for one small petty thing. Once I got suspended the whole class was talking. I was also talking, and they only suspended me. She was telling me to keep quiet all the time. So I kept quiet then the whole class was making a noise so I carried on talking and I got suspended.

The power differentials are further demonstrated by teachers who appropriate their positions to control and regulate boys` behaviour. Warren articulates his opinion that boys who are typecast by teachers as troublesome struggle to redeem themselves even if they express the desire to do so. The data demonstrates that unfair teacher attitudes and practices of exclusion by suspending the boys serve to further hamper any will on their part to achieve academic success. Discrimination by teachers appears to further antagonise these boys, who feel that they are being victimised.

Byron: If I'm sitting straight in the desk, if my legs are like this herewa, she'll tell me Miss to put them down. If my legs are open I must close my legs. If I put my foot out the desk I must put my foot in the desk. She always had a problem with whatever I do.

The sense of unjust treatment is further expressed by Byron who reveals his frustration. He describes a `no-win situation` where teachers wield the power and are single-handedly able to determine what is acceptable or unacceptable classroom behavior. It is evident that on many occasions the boys respond negatively to the perceived unfairness of some teachers to them. This is illustrated in their accounts of the ways in which some teachers attempt to control and dominate them, as opposed to compromising and negotiating

acceptable classroom behaviours with them. This approach has the effect of exacerbating an already problematic situation.

The boys who participated in this study are typecast as troublesome or, as Collins et al (1996) describe it, as being 'caught in the narrower stereotype of what is appropriate for them'. The boys see their teachers as having power over them, especially when teachers exercise these powers though the threat of detention and suspension. The (in) effectiveness of these strategies is questionable since their response to the exercise of the teachers' power, authority and discipline is often insolence and resistance. They make reference to the power relationship that gives teachers an unfair advantage over them which further silences and marginalizes them.

Some teachers use their knowledge as a tool to subjugate boys, who react with insolence. In this scenario, Evan enacts his agency by attempting to subvert the teacher`s power by` making the teacher a fool`. He resists the discourse that serves to anchor the teacher`s power in the teacher's superior knowledge by refusing to portray ignorance, even at the expense of not knowing. Joe and Evan suggest that the teacher uses his ability to withhold information in order to deride them.

Evan: Ja, you know like they talking high words to us Miss we don`t understand what he`s saying. (The boys laugh and chorus in agreement).

Interviewer: What do you mean by high words?

Joe: Miss I don`t even know some of those words (laughing with others). I don`t know.

Interviewer: So what happens when the teacher speaks these high words?

Joe: It`s just one teacher miss, Mr.Gous. He makes you dizzy.

Evan: Miss you know he`s classing you with a style. `Cos he`s … and he won`t say. He`ll say the words and you don`t understand.

Interviewer: Do you ask him what the words mean?

Evan: No. (All speaking together) He won`t tell you. But I understand what he means I understand what he means. That`s why he won`t just say all this to me whatever. Most of the time I understand what he means.

Interviewer: So you boys won`t ask?

Evan: No we won`t ask. That`s the time he will laugh at you and me I make him a fool back.

In their struggle for dominance, the boys view their teachers` use of `high` words as an attempt to impose authority and simultaneously as a way to humiliate and expose their ignorance. The concept of `shame` is crucial to boys who are not prepared to demean themselves by seeking clarity from the teachers. During this group interview, the contradiction in Evan`s statement is apparent. At first Evan acknowledges that he often does not understand the meanings of the `high` words used by the teacher. Later he states that *he* understands the words, and in so doing, builds a distinction between himself and the rest of the class. He is attempting to construct himself as being on the same level as the teacher. In his opinion, it is only he and the teacher who `know'. This is his way of distinguishing himself from the rest of the class, whom, he implies, are not as bright as he is. In so doing, he constructs himself as more intelligent than the others in the class and it is for this reason, in his opinion, that the teacher treats him differently. Evan presents a challenge to the teacher and in his discourse he tries to erode the knowledgeable adult and ignorant child dichotomy that distinguishes him from the teacher. This is evident when he says that the teacher 'won`t just say all this to me' because 'most of the time I understand what he means'.

Fantasising about `getting even` with teachers

It is clear that the conflict between teachers and boys is a serious problem in this school. The power derived from these boys` visible resistance to teachers` authority earns rewards by way of acknowledgement from other learners. The boys' responses to teachers manifest in many ways, some of which have implications for them as well as for other learners in the school. Exclusion from classroom activities has the effect of separating the 'bad boys' from the others in the classroom, with the effect of increasing the collective antagonism of these boys towards the teacher.

Brendon: It was last week Wednesday me and Neville were suspended because we came to our class late. So now while we were suspended everyone got the worksheets and all that therewa. So now today me and him come and her she tells everyone to take out their activity books and we come to her 'ay miss we don`t have the activity books.' She starts vloeking us ay sit down and shouting at us sit down and don`t come to me. We never do nothing we sat down and kept quiet. Now she`s explaining the work to everyone now they`re doing the work and we got no work to do. We never said nothing so we were waiting for her to ask us where`s the work. We gonna vloek her.

Interviewer: Did you swear at her?

Brendon: No. Still gonna when she asks us where`s the work. (All the boys laugh loud).

Interviewer: When is this?

Brendon: Whenever, tomorrow, later on.

Brendon argues that the effect is that he will swear at the teacher but this is also qualified by 'whenever, tomorrow, later on'. In other words, while Brendon is able to tell me about his anger, resentment and frustration at being excluded from school activities, there is also recognition that swearing at the

teacher is not automatic. He displaces his desire to swear at her to another time.

The lumping together of 'bad boys' has the effect of reinforcing bad boy groupings. Mac an Ghaill (1994), for example, show how a group of working-class boys came together because of their negative responses to school and were regarded by the teachers as troublesome. This has strong resonance with these boys, who say that they are aware of how teachers are always suspicious of them and are always trying to set them up. In retaliation, they construct a form of hegemonic masculinity, which manifests as anti-authoritarian and as a rebellion against the teachers. Violent masculinities are intricately associated with an anti-authoritarian position (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connell, 1995; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Mills, 2001). There is the actual threat of retaliation by the boys, where the violence is inherent in their boisterous laughter. While a violent response to disagreement manifests as a natural approach to conflict resolution, the possibility that Brendon envisages the severe consequences of such exaggerated response is real.

The following transcript is a further demonstration of how in their discourse around getting back at authority figures in school, the boys fantasise about shooting the principal and teachers. Much eager anticipation and animation is exhibited in their demonstration and enactment of how they intend to enact this fantasy.

Despite stating that he brought the gun to school just for fun, the actual danger of the situation coupled with the nature of the boys' fantasy is disconcerting,, particularly in a climate of increased gun violence in schools worldwide. Embedded in the demonstration is a deeper desire in `You tell him hey, sit`. This scenario highlights Evan`s desire to exact revenge on the authority figures (in this instance, the principal) in the school.

Interviewer: So why did you bring it to school?

David: For the fun of bringing it.

Interviewer: For fun?

David: Miss, I wanted to shoot Mr. B (the principal) in his ear. (all laugh aloud).

Evan: (Excitedly) Maybe the teacher tries to lift you or something and something goes wrong you say chwaa (sound of a gun). You tell him hey, sit! You give him. Ayyy…, bra!

Through fantasy coupled with humour, David enacts his agency by subverting the power relationship between himself and authority figures by drawing on his power of having a gun. The demonstrative nature of this enactment illustrates his latent propensity for violence, together with the collective exhibition for the benefit of his peers in the group interview. Violence, even if merely contemplated, but driven by extreme contempt for teachers, is sufficient to give these boys much pleasure. This is evident in the transcript where all the boys laugh out aloud at the mere suggestion of getting even with their teachers.

Teacher masculinities: Indian, moffie, stupid or brutish?

The performative nature of these boys` masculinity is contingent upon their perceptions and experiences of different teachers. Through my observations it became apparent that the participants actively negotiate their positions in relation to particular teachers, almost on an hourly basis. The fluid and ever-changing nature of masculinity is lucid in their constructions of different teachers and how they negotiate their attitudes and behaviours accordingly.

Clearly some teachers were constructed by these boys as `soft` or pushovers against whom they could construct their masculine identities. Indian teachers

in particular are perceived as soft, and hence could be taken advantage of. This notion has its roots in the stereotypical perceptions that Coloureds and even other races have of Indian people, that they are scared, easily intimidated, and can be taken advantage of. Some of the boys in this study capitalise on this and feel that they can dominate and `run` the show in these particular teachers` classrooms.

Interviewer: What about the other male teacher?

Neville: Who? Mr. J? Everybody just walks in and walks out of his class. He don`t even teach. He teaches, he screams and nobody listens to him. `Cos he`s an Indian teacher.

Interviewer: Why do you say it`s because he`s an Indian teacher?

Neville: They take advantage of him. The class. Over there I don`t take advantage of him I just sit and we just talk. I don`t walk out of the class and in and out. I`m just cool.

Interviewer: Do you think it`s because he`s an Indian teacher that they take advantage of him?

Neville: That`s why they take advantage. It`s because an Indian is like a person that's scared of everything. Mostly they are scared of everything. They know he`s not going to hit them back. So they rather joyila him.

Many boys view Indian teachers as pushovers against whom they can express their masculinity. This scenario strongly suggests that it is not only the troublesome boys who undermine the Indian teacher`s authority in the classroom, but rather all of the learners. The extent of the ill-discipline appears to limit actual constructive teaching, because it obstructs the teacher from performing his duties. This scenario also provides an image of a powerless and vulnerable educator in a frustrating and unmanageable situation.

Neville distances himself from the rest of the learners who `take advantage` of the teacher, although he does acknowledge that he sits and talks to others while the teacher is trying to get order. In his view, sitting and talking as opposed to walking in and out of the classroom and being disruptive does not constitute a problem. By repeatedly referring to `they` he attempts to create a clear boundary between himself and the rest of the learners in the class. In his discourse he attempts to present a version of himself that is neither racist nor discriminatory. Neville draws on this Indian male teachers` fear of Coloureds which, in his opinion, rationalises the teacher`s apprehension in dealing with troublesome behaviour. He is adamant that by mere virtue of being an Indian the teacher is predisposed to experiencing behavioural problems which ultimately hampers disciplinary intervention and further exacerbates troublesome behaviours.

While race is significant in boys` perceptions and responses to teachers, it is not the absolute signifier of their resistance. It is evident that not all boys capitalise on the perceived `softness` of Indian teachers. This goes some way towards deconstructing the simplistic view that just because they are Indian, these teachers will necessarily be challenged by troublesome boys.

Neville says this about a Coloured male teacher:

Neville: Mr. A is a moffie. He`s a moffie. He`s not a man.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Neville: Just the way he acts. And he can only hit the other children in the class. He don`t hit me, Denzil and Jovay.

Interviewer: Why?

Neville: `Cos he`s scared.

Interviewer: Scared of what?

Neville: He always thinks that we will hit him back if he hits us that`s why he`s scared.

Homophobia, as indicated in Chapter Five, extends beyond relationships between learners only. Evidently male teachers who exhibit effeminate tendencies are also the victims of homophobic boys. Derogatory terms like `moffie,` used to refer to male teachers who are perceived to be gay, indicate the contempt with which they are treated. Neville`s reference to his teacher as a `moffie` is a pejorative label synonymous with being soft, and implies the teachers` inability to discipline troublesome boys in particular. Moreover, Neville associates `moffie` with femininity rendering `moffies' predisposed to be controlled and dominated by `real` men. Anything that is considered effeminate is treated with disdain and is therefore susceptible to physical retaliation. The ever-present threat of violence towards this teacher leads to the subversion of the usual power relations, and the teacher`s vulnerabilities become a source of power for some boys.

In the following scenario it is clear that there is a strong rejection and disdain for anyone, including teachers, who exhibit ` stupid` behaviour. This has its roots in the boys' context of struggle and the fight for survival, which compels them to be perpetually aware of their surroundings and the people with whom they come into contact (see Chapter Seven). In their view, being `dizzy` (stupid) predisposes such people to being targeted or having their lives endangered. Kerwin has this to say about Mr. J:

Kerwin: Uh no one takes him serious and all, he shouts and all plus he's a new teacher he don't know like how it's waaing and all , stupid he's ay he's, know like things that nobody would do that in Mr Green's class. Mr Green will kill you.

Interviewer: Do you think maybe it`s because he's Indian?

Kerwin: *No, he can be Indian he can be whatever but then he's showing the people he's a stupid man he shouts and all like this like that, see like Mr G he's a cool man he don't shout he just walks into the class, its like when you walk into the class just see us silent don't hear nothing just hear silence.*

Being new in the school, together with being `stupid`, are two of this teacher`s attributes that ultimately exacerbate the disciplinary problems with these boys. Kerwin does not believe that the teacher`s race is the cause of this bad behaviour, but rather attributes it to the teacher not knowing how 'it`s waaing'. This implies ignorance on the teacher`s part, which predisposes him not to be taken seriously. The dominant form of hegemonic masculinity in this instance operates only in relation to teachers whom boys perceive as effeminate or afraid.

This has strong resonance with and gives credence to Mills (2001) who states that particular forms of masculinity acquire hegemonic status only in certain situations. The subject position from which the boys in this study operate depends on whom they are interacting with. Moreover, the paradox in Kerwin`s description of Mr. G as being `a cool man` yet emphatically alluding to violence, specifically that he `will kill you`, demonstrates how this teacher`s violent disposition and reputation have been instrumental in conditioning learners to conduct themselves in more appropriate ways which no longer warrant shouting. Violence or the ubiquitous threat thereof by the teacher is sufficient to guarantee compliance from many of these boys. This is also reflective of their school environment, which normalises violence as an acceptedmeans to resolve conflict and to coerce cooperation. It is these masculinised attributes that are demonstrative of a masculinity which normalises the association of masculinity with violence.

Neville: *I go to his class and I do my work in his class.*

Interviewer: Why is it that you do Mr G's work?

Neville: Because he is gonna hit me of course.

Interviewer: Are you scared of him?

Neville: Yes. He hit me before that`s why I`m scared of him.

In the above scenario Neville also refers to Mr. G`s threats of violence. His reference to his fear of this teacher is based on a palpable threat of violence to which he has previously been subjected. In this context violence is a familiar and everyday phenomenon and often guarantees cooperation from boys.

Interviewer: Haven`t the other teachers also hit you?

Neville: No. They`ll never hit me. I walk out the classroom. The last time I took Mr. C`s stick and threw it over the balcony. He never hit me. He left a mark over herewa on Denzil. But Mr. G I`m scared of him that`s why I go to his class and I do his work.

Accepting physical punishment from one teacher and rejecting it from another illustrates the contradictory and performative nature of masculinity in action. Constructing particular teachers as `soft` by asserting a more aggressive masculinity against them, while simultaneously being aware that certain teachers are afraid of them, is a source of power and incentive to perform in a way that connotes threat. Boys occupying in one instance the subject position of a victim and in the next the position of an aggressor, demonstrating that power is fluid, flowing this way and that from lesson to lesson. Only certain teachers wield absolute power and this is illustrated in Neville`s response to Mr. G.

Mr. G says this about Shawn:

He will respect the authority of some males and others he won`t... Now with me he`s going to be the little boy because that`s the only person I`ll allow him to be. I`ll have a physical confrontation with anybody who thinks that they can behave in a manner that they decide ... it won`t be tolerated. Yes I can threaten, maybe the language I use is not the language that most teachers would use but there`s no misunderstandings. They know!

I witnessed Shawn`s interaction with various teachers, particularly the ways in which he positioned and repositioned himself in these relationships. Clearly, Mr. G assumes the dominant position in class, a fact which is evident in Shawn`s body language. In his discourse, Mr. G alludes to his use of both verbal and physical violence in regulating these boys` behaviour. The violence implicit in the words `they know` suggests that they have accepted and internalised this teacher`s violent disciplinary interventions. He approaches Mr. G with sunken shoulders and head bowed. His subordinate position is lucid in the presence of this male teacher who clearly exerts his authority using aggression and violence to assert control. Conversely, in the very next period Shawn struts into another teacher`s class in a commanding, confident and forceful manner, thereby assuming the dominant position in that relationship. Clearly, the boys are docile and cooperative in one setting while aggressive and uncooperative in another.

Alternative discourses around attitudes to school: boys and academic success

As with the hegemonic positioning of anti-school, anti-authoritarian attitudes, these boys also provided a rationale for assuming the alternative masculine positioning. There is evidence to illustrate that some of these boys have a positive orientation to the academic curriculum. They resist pressure to conform to more popular ways of being boys in this school not only by doing school work but also by saying how much they enjoy doing the work.

The following individual interview provides an example of John`s resistance to the power of his friends, who try to negatively influence his positive orientation to his school work. He acknowledges the benefits of education and recognises that education holds the key to economic and social upward mobility.

Evan: No Miss, I came to school Miss to get a education so in the future I know not just stand in the corners, I'm enjoying my schooling while at the same time I'm doing my work, I'm not just with the friends, I'm doing my work.

The way some of these boys express their masculinity is compatible with gaining educational qualifications even though the affirmative action policy in South Africa (see Chapter Two) still marginalises them. They are not necessarily mere recipients of an education system that is failing them, but are capable of a sense of agency directed towards breaking the cycle of their deprivation.

Even though Evan is aware of the benefits of having an education, he acknowledges the ubiquitous nature of peer influence and that the fear of succumbing thereto has detrimental consequences. In his discourse he resists the familiar trajectory of many Coloured Wentworth males who are afflicted by unemployment and boredom. This phenomenon is often linked to early school drop-outs and the subsequent lack of opportunities. He expresses his determination to improve his life`s chances and not `stand in the corner,` an everyday and all too familiar occurrence he witnesses amongst young and older men in this community. In so doing, he rejects the form of masculinity, dominant in his community, which rationalizes an anti-school attitude and a poor work ethic. John is emphatic in his statement that he is `doing [his] work` and in this way he exemplifies an alternate masculinity in which he negotiates his difficult context : one that predisposes him to inhabiting a more optimistic outlook on school.

Evan: Ja. `cos my marks and stuff like that. Maybe if I`m in another class I`ll concentrate more whatever if we separated. Ja, because some of them are a big influence on me whatever.

Interviewr: Are you happy to be with your friends in class?

Evan: Ja. I`m kind of, ja. Well not happy `cos like there`s a lot of my friends and stuff that`s why I am not too happy but I`m happy in a way too `cos we joke and laugh so. But when it comes to the work it becomes a bit of a problem.

Evan demonstrates ambivalence around his feelings of being in the same class with all of his friends. He admits that the advantage of being in the same class with his friends is the ability to have a laugh. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman describe this phenomenon as 'part of the policing of boys by other boys [which] involves the policing of classroom practices (2002). Evan sees his friends in the class as obstructions to his pursuit of academic success. This confirms the power friends have over one another and the resultant negative effect such friendship has for their academic successes. Having a laugh in class is one of the salient ways in which they assert their masculinity.

Evan: Other students ja like they know I know my work. They see me do my work. My naughtiness aright, my jokes, ja my … past… ja my anger and stuff like that.

In this scenario it is evident that Evan locates himself somewhere in the middle between being troublesome and getting his work done, and this goes some way towards highlighting the multiple subjective positions that Evan occupies, namely, troublesome, anti-authoritarian, hardworking and achieving academic success. He manages to negotiate a position that is able to embrace both getting into trouble as well as achieving academic success. It is apparent through both accounts (above and earlier) that he values schooling. The contradictory nature of his masculinity illustrates that he is not simply a troublesome boy who lacks vision but rather one who is an active agent who

is determined to improve his life`s chances using education as a vehicle. He publicly acknowledges the ways in which he is troublesome, which include making others laugh in the class, but interestingly refers to it as a thing of the past. The alternative positions that are being negotiated in relation to school and schoolwork are signs that some adolescent boys in school can provide positive examples of masculinities in a community that does not place very much emphasis on academic excellence and commitment to school life.

Interviewer: So do you think being a hard worker at school and doing academic work is associated with girls?

Evan: No. `Cos at the end of the day you not here for people. You are here for what you wanna become in life and stuff. You here for your dreams. To make something out of your life.

Much of the literature on boys and masculinity suggests that boys equate academic success with femininity. However, in this scenario Evan rejects the equation of academic success with femininity. He sees in education what Simpson et al., (2001) refer to as `a gateway to opportunity rather than a pathway to further oppression'.

This resonates with John`s assertion that:

John: You get those girls that did three years in eight. Ja. There`s girls in my class that failed last year. They just as lazy as us. There`s no difference. School work`s different. At home a girl can clean a house a boy can`t clean a house. But in school we all the same.

The assumption that girls necessarily and always out-perform boys in the academic sphere is deconstructed when John says that there are girls who repeat grades as a result of their poor school work ethic. In so doing, he fractures the gendered expectations associated with the perception that girls are necessarily hard working and boys necessarily have a poor work ethic. John is emphatic that the diligent girl/lazy boy dichotomy is not a true

reflection of what happens in this school, but he simultaneously positions girls as being essentially different from boys in that they have a special ability to do housework. This has implications which normalise and further entrench the gendered stereotypes which position women and girls as domestic beings and men and boys as being more inclined to the public domain. What it also suggests is that the status quo in a patriarchal society, in terms of the association of domestic duties with women and girls cannot be deconstructed or subverted. It presupposes that that is just the way it is and always will be - unlike the way in which the stereotype that equates academic success with femininity has been subverted in this scenario.

Boys and teachers: Nurturing, Caring and respectful relationships

Mutually respectful relationships do exist between boys and some of their teachers. Seemingly, teachers who take a personal interest in the learners` general well-being both in and out of school are the ones who evoke more respectful and cooperative relationships with them. During my field work I attended one of many group support sessions for learners with alcohol and drug addictions, hosted by a teacher. This male teacher gives up his breaks and offers his classroom as a venue for the awareness and rehabilitation programmes to be conducted. This initiative, TADA, Teenagers against drugs and alcohol, boasts a number of boys who have been rehabilitated and offers assistance and support to others who struggle with addictions.

 Similarly, while all of the teachers are grouped as a collective against whom the boys negotiate their behaviour, teachers who show respect also receive respect from boys.

Mrs W: I found Paul to be ok when he was in my class but from the previous year I heard that he had had a bit of violent behaviour. But I found him fine. I..I...found that Lluwayne er.. from the minute I got him into my class I spoke to him I spoke about respect. I spoke to him and I

made him realise that I`m here just like your mother would be here and I did not have a problem.

Approaching boys with preconceived ideas about them serves to disadvantage them. The female teacher in this scenario realises that affording boys the opportunity and granting them a fair chance opens up possibilities for respectful relationships to flourish. The discourse of respect is not one that adults should automatically expect to receive from children, but rather that it is a reciprocal and cultivated relationship reliant on mutual respect. Evidently, adopting maternal sentiments is useful for teachers in inculcating respectful attitudes of boys towards them.

Mrs W: I've actually found him[Paul] to be so helpful when I would want the class to settle down … he would see that I am battling to get them to settle down and then he would even help and say no no no hey you'll better stop.

Interestingly, this respectful relationship between the teacher and Paul extends beyond mere cooperation but also has the potential to help restore and maintain order in the class. Instead of Paul's engaging in the routine troublesome behaviour to which teachers are accustomed, he uses his status to assist the teacher by bringing the rest of the class to order.

Interviewer: Why do you think you behave in his (Mr. B`s) class?

Byron: Miss `cos he don't see the naughty side of me, he tells me I'm a good boy and all that therewa Miss, but before I used to be naughty in his class Miss, then the once I saw him when I walked out the school yard Miss and then since that day. He never used to like try and hit me or anything like that. He talks or something, now he's cool with me Miss, but I behave in his class now, I do my work.

This extract illustrates that teachers who reaffirm and reinforce positive qualities in these boys are instrumental in the modification of troublesome

behaviour. Of the thirteen boys, only three have fathers living with them. Mr. B in some way presents a fatherly figure and this is related to his capacity to treat the boys in a respectful, caring and non-violent or aggressive way. Mr. B`s popularity and ability to get cooperation from the boys derives not from a hegemonic masculinist demeanour but rather from projecting a more caring, non-coercive, non-aggressive fatherly image; one that evidently earns cooperation and respect from many boys. Such pedagogies as demonstrated by Mr. B are described by many boys as being conducive to effectively and productively managing boys` behaviour and engaging them in learning at school (Martino and Chiarolli, 2003:229). Boys spoke with adoration about Mr. B, who has since left the school. His leaving appears to have evoked feelings of loss and longing which are apparent in these boys` accounts.

Byron displays fervor in his attempt to live up to Mr. B`s expectations of him as a `good boy`. The self-fulfilling prophecy seems to be effective, as Byron does not want to present a troublesome version of himself to this teacher, who chooses not see the `naughty side` of him. He is also explicit in acknowledging that he was `naughty` and by saying `now` he suggests that he has adopted a more positive attitude to both his teacher and his schoolwork. Encouragement from teachers, as opposed to disdain has the effect of positively modifying some boys` behaviour.

John: Ms M cos know Miss sitting minding your own business and she'll tell the class right keep quiet, no long stories, get out, no screaming, swearing Miss, know, those they not making noise, and the children will see ay no, the lady here she don't treat us badly and all that there, she's alright, we just sit down and do our work, every time we go there, cos that lady she's a nice lady Miss, (inaudible) … whatever, Miss she'll tell you right, it was a test or something … you ask her nicely she'll give you. No these other teachers here they telling me hey I'm not worried about you me I'm finished school long time and all that there I'm no more … just telling me her own thing.

Their investment in the discourse of respect demonstrates these boys` desire to be respected. Behaviours that are perceived as disrespectful by teachers include swearing, screaming at learners and chasing them out the classroom. In the absence of disrespectful treatment by teachers, compliance and cooperation from boys is often forthcoming. John constructs Mrs M as a `lady`, which is indicative of the respect with which he perceives her. She conforms to the gendered expectations of a `lady`, which includes qualities such as not being loud (not screaming) and not swearing. This in turn warrants and necessitates reciprocating the respect with which she regards them when they just sit down and get on with their work. This resonates with the previous scenario which demonstrates that boys react to teachers in accordance with the way teachers treat them, and that compliance and cooperation are contingent upon teachers` attitudes and practices. The distinct change in John`s tone where he speaks of other teachers by beginning with `No` implies resistance and antagonism in the way he constructs other teachers in opposition to Mrs M. He draws a distinction between this teacher, who is a `nice lady`, and `other teachers`, who are `not worried about you`. He suggests that `other` teachers` lack of concern for the boys' well-being has the propensity to provoke negative responses from them.

The findings also illustrate the positive impact sport, particularly soccer, has on the relationships between these boys and some teachers. When they interact with teachers on a more personal level, with teachers demonstrating care and concern, the propensity for increased harmonious relationships in the classroom is evident. This suggests that the prevalence of common interests translates into good academic working relationships. Soccer offers a cohesive ingredient to the formation of better, more respectful relationships between these boys and their teachers.

Evan: I have like a good relationship with Mr G. When we at soccer we talk on another level. We don`t only see him like one way. I also talk about other things to him. We get to know

teachers in another way and those teachers like who go with us on tour or something we have
a better relationship with.

The teacher concurs with Evan`s assertion in terms of the ability to communicate on `another level`. Despite Mr. G`s brutish disposition with the boys (as described earlier, and by his own admission), soccer provides both the opportunity and a safe space to develop good relationships with some boys. More importantly, the assumption that boys do not `talk` is subverted. This reveals that male teachers can be instrumental in nurturing the alternative masculinities which encourage boys to talk.

Mr. G: Erm ... I get on well with those and there are a number of them who play soccer and I
am involved in soccer and it gives me an opportunity to relate to them on a far greater level
than I would just in the classroom. I get to know them I get to talk to them and they talk to me.
I am not the most, I must admit approachable person, I am not the most approachable teacher
but the boys and I, those that are involved in sport, we get on pretty well. Guys like Evan,
guys that give lots of problems to other teachers but we can talk.

Similarly, with this female teacher, the allusion to new and improved relationships brought about by soccer is evident. Soccer is constructed as a key unifying factor which has the propensity to develop respectful and amicable relationships between some boys and their teachers. Soccer is also an alternative subculture in Wentworth (Chari, 2005) for boys who are seeking a sense of belonging.

Mrs W: And er... possibly with Evan because he sees my involvement with sport. I went with
them to Swaziland with the soccer and er...obviously I was there in my capacity to help with
medication or pulled muscles but when we came back from that trip you know I`ve realized
that sport, I think that because of our interaction through soccer, through sport that Evan
now is really respectful and things like that.

Evidently soccer is a positive and cohesive factor which has the propensity to create and promote good relationships not only between these boys and their

male teachers but also between some boys and and female teachers. The female teacher who nurses Evan`s injuries plays a motherly role which helps to cement a respectful and healthy relationship between them.

Conclusion

The data has demonstrated that these boys are not simply bad, but rather that their problematic backgrounds offer spaces that make it possible for anti–school, anti-authoritarian and anti-academic masculinities to flourish. In this context of economic deprivation and severe social problems, little emphasis is placed on academic achievement and schooling on the whole. Furthermore, the data suggests that there is a problematic relationship between many of these boys and their teachers. The findings highlight the subject positions around dominance and subordination which these boys negotiate in relation to their teachers. Using discourse analysis, this study has demonstrated how these boys contest, negotiate and resist all too familiar notions of Coloured masculinity, and in so doing provide a rationale for the alternative positioning. This is evident in the mutually respectful relationships that exist between some of the boys and their teachers, as well as the positive orientation that some of them have towards the academic curriculum. When teachers interact with these boys on a more informal, yet personal level, that is, with soccer, there is the potential for new and improved classroom relationships to develop. Soccer also provides the opportunity for teachers to demonstrate another side to themselves, a side that is not disciplinarian and authoritative but rather caring. This also indicates that these boys are not just simply troublesome, but rather that they are open to developing more amicable relationships with their teachers and in so doing, can demonstrate their agency as active subjects in the making of more harmonious masculinities.

The next chapter examines the formation of both violent and alternate masculinities amongst these boys.

CHAPTER 7

Violence, Coloured boys and gangs

Introduction

In this chapter the violent culture of Wentworth described in Chapter Two provides an important backdrop to understanding the formation of masculinities that gravitate towards gangsterism and violent masculine cultures. The agency of many of these boys is highlighted with respect to their social positions within a marginalised and disempowering context characterised by high levels of interpersonal conflict, violent crime and gangsterism. The negative stereotyping of Coloured as being predisposed to violent behaviour also constitutes a problem for some of these boys. What does this mean for the making of Coloured boys in Wentworth? These harmful stereotypes and perceptions contribute to the ways in which some of them construct violent masculine identities and have implications for troublesome behaviour. What is important is that the chapter will also show that these boys are not instrumentally inserted into violent cultures. They often paradoxically occupy subject positions of both victim and perpetrator in negotiating their violent context. While incidents of interpersonal violence amongst the boys in this study are discussed, it is chiefly violence located within gang cultures that forms the bulk of this discussion.

The first section of this chapter delineates the extent to which these boys` traumatic and violent contexts contribute to the potential for interpersonal violence. It is evident that their determination to reclaim power over their lives is compelling and in their attempts to do so, they often demonstrate callous and extremely violent versions of themselves. The violent hegemonic masculinity in Wentworth is constructed and reproduced through retaliatory behaviour in this way. This section also briefly draws attention to the ways in

which toxic representations of Coloureds have the potential to encourage violent behaviours.

The second section illustrates the ambiguous positions that these boys occupy and this reflects how they both accommodate and reject gang affiliation and violence more broadly. The long history and prevalence of gangs in Wentworth compel many of these boys into some form of affiliation to this subculture, where gangs provide them with a sense of protection and friendship as well as a sense of belonging. However, there is evidence to show that the gang culture, although still prevalent, appears to be waning in the wake of other more salient masculine forms. The ambiguous responses of the boys to this situation highlight the ambivalences and uncertainties that plague the lives of many of these boys in the wake of a waning gang culture.

The last section of this chapter illustrates how some of these boys, in their attempts to renounce gang affiliation and violence and to turn their lives around, look to religion as a way out of their tumultuous circumstances (see Chapter Two). Clearly, the findings show that the boys whose masculinities are shaped by particular vulnerabilities and violence seek subsequent coping mechanisms in their endeavour to ameliorate their lives.

This chapter investigates the disposition and responses of boys in this study to various issues around violence in Wentworth by focusing on the following:

❖ Pain and trauma

❖ Reclaiming power: extreme violence and retaliation

❖ Ambiguities around gang affiliation

❖ Renouncing violence

Pain and trauma

Interpersonal, domestic, criminal and gang-related violence plague the lives of members of this Wentworth community. Wentworth is a township plagued by extreme incidents of violence, which appears to have given rise to the normalisation of extremely violent and anti-social behaviours. This section shows the detrimental effects that growing up in a poor, violent community has on the early experiences of these young men. Drawing on the painful accounts of some of them, it will become apparent that the influence of the early encounters they are exposed to strongly determines the paths their lives take. In order to understand the shape of school masculinities, it is critical that due recognition is given to early life experiences of violence (Bhana, 2002).

Neville: *Miss, the last time when I was small I broke both my arms at the same time and I wasn`t crying. I just went home and said I broke both my arms.*

Interviewer: *You didn`t cry? Wasn`t it sore?*

Neville: I didn`t cry. It was sore, Miss and they put it in plaster of Paris. I was like in shock and I just went home. And I was keeping quiet and I didn`t tell my mother. `Cos I knew if I told my mother ay she was going to hit me some more so I rather just keep quiet. Then she found out and she took me to hospital.

It is apparent from the data that from an early age, Neville has understood the types of behaviours expected of boys. Even in the face of severe pain, Neville is compelled to occupy a hegemonic masculinity that endorses qualities of bravado, the ability to endure pain and conceal emotions. The culturally exalted ways of being a boy (or a man) in this community place much emphasis on these qualities, which Neville is striving to accomplish. In attempting to project a stoic image, his physical well-being becomes of secondary importance. I draw on the Foucauldian idea that identities are

produced by the various discourses that are taken up in the surrounding context (Foucault, 1979) and this is evident in Neville`s determination to achieve these qualities by inhabiting a masculinity that feeds into the discourse, `Boys don`t cry`. As Connell (2002:84) puts it: `whatever ideology prevails in the gender order, children grow up in its shadow`.

In describing his painful experience, Nevilles`s words 'I just went home and said' indicate that this is a mechanical account, devoid of emotion. Neville`s fear extends beyond mere physical pain and includes fear of being seen as `soft`. In this instance, the source of his fear is his mother. The assumption that positions mothers as nurturing, protective beings who provide a source of comfort to their children is contested and is replaced by the vision of a mother who is a threat and has the potential to inflict further pain and violence. One would expect Neville's account to reveal that he expects his mother to provide comfort to him in his time of distress and pain, but this is a far cry from his actual expectation. His fear in the face of his anticipation of corporal punishment compels him to suppress and conceal his pain. Clearly Neville has to endure not only physical pain but emotional pain as well - a consequence of his mother`s unsympathetic and apparently uncaring response to his plight. His experiences of hardness and lack of affection are palpable and play a role in prescribing how Neville responds to his everyday encounters with conflict and his attempts at reclaiming power over his life (as demonstrated later in this section).

In the next extract, Tony, who is clearly contemptuous of the callous and brutal murder of his father, expresses his intention to exact revenge on the perpetrators. He says that his father`s murder was drug related, the result of a dispute between his father and fellow gang members over the allotted territories in which they plied their trade. As discussed in the second part of this chapter, drug trafficking has played a pivotal role in the diminishing

perception of gangster masculinity as the most salient form of masculine identity construction in Wentworth.

Tony: I was in Ireland and I returned in April and my father was killed in July. I watched my dad being killed. I was very angry.

Interviewer: Talk about how you felt.

Tony: I dislike my father`s friends because they set him up. I hate those who shot him. They also tried to get me. One of them hit me with a bottle. I felt sad and helpless. I would like to hurt them then I`ll feel better. I fear for my mother and my sister… I have to be there ….if one of them [his father`s murderers] does something…

This scenario is indicative of extreme violence, betrayal and murder in the life of this young man. His father`s violent death has serious effects for him as a young man in Wentworth. Moreover, his view of friendship has been tainted with emotions that suggest betrayal and subterfuge. Tony`s hate speech indicates the desire to avenge his father`s murder. His incomplete sentences, hesitations and silences have implied violent undertones. In his incomplete sentence `*If one of them does something…*`, there is a sense of planned retaliation and the very real threat of violence. Tony`s desire for restorative and retributive justice is fuelled by feelings of helplessness in his inability to defend his father and ultimately prevent his death. Besides the traumatic, emotional and psychological consequences this experience has for him, he assumes the responsibility of ensuring the continued safety of his mother and sister, in the absence of his father. His masculinity now centres on providing protection to his family. In his view, he is the only `male` left in the family, a fact which compels him to assume his father`s role. The heroic masculine discourse at work here positions his mother and sister as being vulnerable and in need of his protection. Interestingly, Tony does not include his brother either as being a male in this sense or as needing his protection.

Tony: My brother`s not like me. He`s quiet and he stays in the house. My sister`s like me… we like to be outside, by the shop.

By excluding his brother from his protective `net`, Tony suggests that it is only the females in the family who qualify for this protection. This is a far cry from the overall pledge and commitment of the boys who live in the same area, to defend each other. He constructs his brother in opposition to himself in their choice of lifestyle. This understanding emanantes from the way Tony constructs his brother as `soft` and unlike himself who has the potential to be violent. In this way he positions his brother as existing outside of the fraternity of camaraderie – a sense of brotherhood that compels boys who are not soft to `have each others` backs` (to defend one another).

Reclaiming power: extreme violence and fighting back

Reclaiming their sense of masculinity through violent measures provides a powerful was in which some of these boys can source a sense that they are in control over their own lives. The hegemony of violence in Wentworth compels them to use this resource as a way to negate any form of intimidation, bullying and violent threats.

As the following transcript demonstrates, many of Neville`s memories are rooted in violence, particularly gun violence.

Neville: My mother had friends in like Kwa-Mashu[9] and I was still small and we went there. Now those men over there stole a car, I don`t know them. So now we all sitting in the car and the people`s shooting and everything and they driving and there`s shooting.

Interviewer: How did you feel?

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[9] Durban's oldest township, Kwa Mashu, was created during the apartheid era to accommodate the mass resettlement of Africans from the Indian township of Cato Manor in 1958. It is the largest of 3 townships in the area, and home to well over 500 000 people.

Neville: I was still small I didn`t know what was happening. All I know was these people were trying to kill us like. I knew what it was `cos right I`m growing up in the flats now you know these things over here so I was scared. But now I`m no more scared of guns.

Neville had near-death experiences during his early childhood and he juxtaposes his ignorance and innocence as a `small` boy, when he states that he `didn`t know what was happening`, to his recent knowledge of the ways of the world. In retrospect, now that he is older, he acknowledges that the violent context of his life in a block of flats in Wentworth predisposes him to a certain level of awareness of potential danger. He alludes to life in the flats as a naturally perilous and violent one that exposes him to danger from a very young age, and in so doing, deconstructs the discourse of childhood innocence. This discourse is contested in a context which invariably coerces boys into `knowing these things` from a young age. With increased knowledge and exposure comes an increased sense of anticipation and fear.

Neville: Only time Miss I was really scared is when I was in town Miss and the TDK`s[10] put a gun in my mouth that's the only time I was scared … (Others commenting and he says, 'What kind ek se?' He is annoyed that they are interrupting him).

Neville`s sense of masculinity as a result of his experience of intimidation and fear derives from his two encounters with gun violence, both of which placed him in near-death situations. Here he says that this was the `only time I was scared`, yet in the previous transcript he also says that he was scared. The contradictions and inconsistencies in his two accounts demonstrate his attempts to deny his position of vulnerability.

It is evident that his past encounters with violence, particularly gun violence, are responsible for his present disposition and his struggle for dominance.

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[10] TDK`s is an abbreviation for one of the Wentworth gangs known as The Duchene Kids.

Neville`s response to his position of vulnerability compels him to construct a masculinity that supports his instinct for survival. Clearly, having access to guns or actually possessing one lays claim to power and respectability in Wentworth. Neville, now an adolescent, states that he is ` no more scared of guns` (in the first of his two statements). He can say this in the confidence of the power he confers upon himself through the fantasy of owning a gun (see below). This section illustrates how Neville rejects the subject position of being a victim in the face of gun violence, and looks for ways of securing his world by taking charge and resisting the subject position of `victim` even if it is through discourse or fantasy (as demonstrated later in this section). This is evidence of how his experiences appear to determine his future coping mechanisms. In the following scenario he demonstrates his awareness of the power that derives from possessing a gun. Having a gun commands respect and creates fear. This concurs with Cock`s (2001:48) assertion that the gun combines two contradictory images: it is a means both of order and of violence, and paradoxically it is believed to provide protection from violence through the retaliatory threat of violence.

Interviewer: You got a fire-arm?

Neville: Yes, for protection.

Interviewer: Have you used it?

Neville: Not to shoot anybody but to make them scared ja. Miss like because nobody can touch me. No-one can hit me `cos I got fire power.

Neville needs to have a gun for the purpose of instilling fear, in much the same way that it had been done to him. Owning a gun guarantees a powerful position even in the absence of any real intention to use it. In his discourse, Neville subverts a power relationship that positioned him as a victim of the very same `gun power` of which he is now a perpetrator. His ability to instill

fear in others wins him much power in Wentworth and a sense of self-importance where he seeks to earn respect and ultimately a position of dominance. In providing him with a source of protection, the gun simultaneously guarantees diminished vulnerability. The gun becomes a signal of status and power. Historically, South Africans of all ethnic groups have claimed a right to a weapon, usually a gun, as a symbol of their masculinity and power (Dempster, 2002).

The fantasy around his concoction and fabrication becomes evident in the second interview when he speaks about `his gun`. The inconsistencies and contradictions in Neville`s accounts (below) are palpable and serve to highlight how he negotiates a masculinity that is strengthened by power (deriving from the fictive gun) in his attempt to regain control of his life. This goes some way towards showing that Neville is not a mere victim of his violent context but rather searches for resources and ways of surviving in it.

Interviewer: *You got a fire-arm?*

Tevin: *Not yet.*

Interviewer: *Why do you say not yet?*

Tevin: *Miss I'm gonna get one.*

Interviewer: *When?*

Tevin: *Now Christmas time …I'll organise something … there is in the flats there.*

This claim demonstrates the impact his early life experiences of being a victim of gun violence have had on him, together with the embedded power associated with possessing a gun. There is a deliberate and conscious attempt

by Neville to negate his vulnerabilities by arming himself against any future intimidation and threat.

Evan, too, in the following extract, shows how he has retaliated against the subject position of victim.

Evan: No one will just come and take me on. But it`s always been like that from when I was small. I been always like I can say victimised like. Ja, In groups. Never one by one. Always. Even the older guys would always try but after that they know they must run `cos I`m gonna take anything and come in their house and all. From when I was small I was like that there. I think maybe that`s why I am the way I am now too. They were like my age now (16)and I was like about ten and I broke one two of their hands and stuff like that but that time they were already stabbing and killing people that time. I broke one or two of their hands.

Evan alludes to the difficulties and challenges of growing up in Wentworth. Having to defend himself in a violent environment is responsible for his present challenging and daring personality. This results in the shift in his subject position from victim to perpetrator. His display of risk-taking behaviour and his refusal to concede in the face of adversity is indicative of the dominant masculinising processes that compel these boys to engage in violent behaviour that compromises them too. Regardless of the consequences of such violent encounters, the boys compel themselves to be daring and engage in risk-taking behaviour in order to earn the respect of their peers and friends and save face. The popular and culturally specific ways in which [these] boys position themselves place great emphasis on the propensity for `action` (Frosh, Pattman and Phoenix, 2002), even if it is harmful or detrimental.

Evan: I went to court. It`s all older guys in their twenties and stuff. Ay I don`t know. Big and stupid. Let me put it to you like that. `Cos they want to show ay they the … `cos they killed one two people, shot one two people now they think…They were with their guns and all in the group and I chopped the one guy…. So then I saw ay one two were coming and stuff

but when they saw what I was doing, I grabbed him and started hitting him with the cleaver, a blunt cleaver and he had a big knife. I grabbed his hand and I started chopping him. Everybody they all ran with their guns.

The hegemonic discourse that sanctions extremely violent behaviour reinforces discourses around Coloured boys and men in Wentworth as monsters, as seen in the above extract. The graphic image reinforces the notion of a cold, brutal and unfeeling human being. Evidently, Evan`s violent masculinity has led to criminally liable misdemeanours and hence encounters with the law. The tragic paradox for him is his compulsion to defend himself against violence, and in so doing, he ultimately criminalises himself. The idealisation of bravery and the compulsion to protect themselves is potentially destructive and places many of these boys in perilous positions from which they may not always be able to emerge safely. This vivid description and his attention to detail (in his reconstruction of events) suggests Evan`s macabre sense of excitement emanating from his violent encounter. This derives from a masculinity that promotes risk-taking behaviour in the pursuit of hegemony. Evan uses the young/old dichotomy to determine that these older men as behaving badly. In his view, it is acceptable only for younger boys to be engaging in such violence. Being able to instill fear in and defend himself against `murderers` gains him much respect and acclaim in this community. In his account Evan subverts his subject position as a victim and positions himself as a perpetrator by challenging the dominant and extremely violent older males in the community. These risk-taking and bold masculine attributes guarantee compliance and submission from others, regardless of their age and experience. Similarly, Neville expresses his lack of fear:

Neville: *Like you know you not scared to poke the person you not scared to do nothing, like that there, if they think you soft, if you keep quiet the people around you take advantage of you. That's why you must tell them hey, this is where I draw the line you know you can't **vat** me no more that's why, tell you most of the time you have big enemies.*

Interviewer: *And how did you feel after that, after you've stabbed the person?*

Neville: *Say like your friends will come to you ja. 'Ou T's you the main ou eksê …'*

Interviewer: *Do you feel like you're the main ou?*

Neville: *Ja, of course, nobody's just got pluck to poke somebody that's all.*

By buying into the `survival of the fittest` discourse, Neville reinforces a masculinity that is brutal and callous and in so doing resists being seen as `soft`. Moreover, affirmation from friends and acknowledgement of callous behaviour has rewards that secure prominence in their peer hierarchy.

In addition to the violent and extremely traumatic episodes in their lives, there are some boys who accommodate and reify the negative stereotype of Coloureds as heavy drinkers who become violent when inebriated. Being Coloured is tied to being `raw` and consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, which often results in violent episodes. Moreover, the association made between Coloured in Wentworth and the `hotnot` lifestyle (as described in Chapter Two) highlights the historical effects through which their identity is described in a way which still permeates some of their thinking.

We do what Coloureds do: drink, get drunk and fight

The stigma that has plagued the Coloured community goes back to the `tot system` where Coloured farm labourers in the Cape were in part paid in wine. This ensured that the workers were kept partially drunk and therefore more tractable (Western, 1981). The general tendency towards drunkenness amongst Coloureds as a homogeneous group remains to this day, with the consequence that there is a totalising view of all Coloureds as excessive drinkers. The notion of Coloureds as an abnormal, negative group (Erasmus,

2001) has largely been justified by Coloureds themselves, as demonstrated in this extract:

Mark: I know that I'm a Coloured, I do what Coloureds do.

Interviewer: What do you do, what is this that Coloureds do?

Mark: I know I'm a Coloured boy on a weekend we drink, you know, every Coloureds do what Coloureds do on weekends and all that, we do the same, most Coloureds dress the same, you know, you know, they always fighting, that kind of stuff.

Mark`s reference is indicative of a Coloured masculinity that is molded around characteristics of drinking and fighting. He implies that there are essential Coloured behaviours, by drawing on the racial discourse that reinforces negative stereotypes, thereby positioning Coloureds as inherently predisposed to violence. The next scenario reinforces the ways in which Coloureds themselves are implicated in perpetuating and normalising an extremely problematic and violent image of drinking, getting drunk and fighting.

Interviewer: How would you describe Coloureds?

John: Normal.

Interviewer: Normal? What do you mean by normal?

John: Normal how people that are … killing, robbing, smoking all doing the wrong things, maybe some say, ja.

John normalises problematic behaviour by reinforcing the discourse that stereotypes Coloured as pathologically deviant and complicit in criminally liable behaviours. His response draws on the dominant discourse that portrays Coloureds as inherently having something wrong with them. He

alludes to Coloured identity as an aberration that gives credence to the stereotypical perception that the South African Coloured male`s body is associated with criminal behaviour (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2005). It is in conforming to these `typical` Coloured behaviours that some of these boys get into trouble, engage in violent behaviours and ultimately get into trouble with the law. Moreover, another problematic stereotype associated with the Coloured identity that pressurises many boys in this study to engage in violence is the ubiquitous gang subculture in Wentworth. The ways in which these boys both accommodate and resist gangster masculinity is discussed in the next section.

Coloured boys and gangs

Many boys in Wentworth establish a bond with their environment and their peers and develop a sense of identity based on their common sense of territoriality. In working-class contexts particularly, this 'masculine affiliation and a lived appropriation of urban space work together to make street gangs cohere' (Chari, 2005: 13). The gangs of youths, which have proliferated over the past few years, provide a concrete index of marginalisation, as they are a response to these political, economic and social constraints (Vogelman and Lewis, 1993). South African gangs usually form in communities that are characterised by limited economic activity, inadequate infrastructure, poor education and high rates of illiteracy and unemployment (Chari, 2005) and these are social problems that plague this Wentworth community. Indeed, gangs become attractive in such settings, precisely when families and other social institutions have little relevance to young men`s lives or are not able to help them fulfill what they perceive as the mandates of manhood, namely to acquire an income and status and attract women (Barker, 2005).

One of the primary stereotypes about Wentworth is that it is a place of gangs and violence. It is against this backdrop of Coloureds as being notorious for

gang cultures that this section has been written. While there is an assumption that growing up in a Coloured working-class environment automatically predisposes these young men to becoming gangsters, there is evidence in this study to strongly suggest that many boys reject the title `gangster` as well as any association with the label. This rejection proves to be an enormous challenge to them because of their experience of the circumstances that compel them towards gang affiliation at one time or another.

Unlike in the 1980s, when structured and planned combat was organised between the gangs, particularly on the weekends, gangs today are not dutiful groups of violent, anti–social boys, but rather boys who offer each other support and stand up for one another in the face of adversity. Gangs in Wentworth have evolved into organisations that offer protection and a sense of belonging rather than groups that nurture and promote violent behaviours. The data illustrates that the presence of gangs in Wentworth constitutes a problem at one time or another for boys and men in Wentworth. The potential to be enticed into gang life is ubiquitous. In the 1960s and 1970s gangs were part of a cool and violent male subculture (Chari, 2005). Today many of these boys say that they have little or no choice, and in fact, that they are compelled to show allegiance to a particular gang. The gangs in Wentworth at the moment are `The Destroyers`, `The Italian Town Boys` (ITBs), `F-Section`, `The Ogle Road Boys` (OGBs) and `The Trucks`.

Most of these boys have had to confront the choice of joining a gang or defending themselves and having no one to stand up for them. Knowing that when they are in trouble someone `got your back` is reassuring and creates for them a sense of what they term `bra-skap` (brotherhood). Many of these boys appear to be struggling to construct a space where they are guaranteed some type of protection while simultaneously rejecting being labelled a `gangster`. In their struggles they are seen to develop particular tactics in which they try to occupy positions both of difference and of belonging. The

discursive practices within which they construct their identities allow them a degree of agency, while they remain victims as well.

Interviewer :So would you consider yourself a gangster?

Dane: Who? (Laughs) You can call that I`m a gangster. My friends stand up for me, they will protect me. Gangs are important because people respect you… you can`t just interfere with us. There`s only four of us from our gang in this school and yet they are scared of us.

Dane uses the words `friends` and `gangs` interchangeably, thus blurring the distinction between these two concepts. There is the suggestion that gangs provide spaces where boys can get together and talk as friends, as well as having a sense of belonging and a feeling of protection. More importantly, Dane justifies his participation in and affiliation to gangs in order to earn respect. By joining a gang, these boys are able to instill fear and wield power. Having someone to `stand up for me` is appealing and provides some sense of security and solidarity, upon which they place great value.

Dane`s immediate response, his laughing, suggested to me that he was uncomfortable with the question. He does not give a direct response but rather answers, '**You** can call that I`m a gangster'. This indicates that he does not want to implicate himself by openly admitting or denying his affiliation to gangs. However, the contradiction becomes apparent when Dane draws on his and three other boys` (in this study) formidable reputations as gangsters. He suggests that the fact that they are feared although there are `only four of us` shows that they are a force to be reckoned with and that power does not reside in numbers. The data reveal the ambivalences and inconsistencies in the discourse of boys who talk about gang affiliation. This is indicative of the extent to which their young lives are filled with uncertainty and confusion. The contentious and contradictory nature of gang affiliation is indicative of the tensions that exist in negotiating their (imposed) subject positions as `gangsters`.

Neville also alludes to the reputation of a gangster in the distinction he draws between `wannabe` and `real` gangsters. In talking about those gangsters who perceive themselves as `real` gangsters, he makes reference to stoic and callous qualities.

Neville: *I don't know they are `wannabe gangsters`.*

Interviewer: *Why do you say they're `wannabe gangsters`?*

Neville: *`Cos they want to be… they think they're gangsters but they not gangsters.*

Interviewer: *So you don't think they are gangsters?*

Neville: No.

Interviewer: Why don't you think they're gangsters?

Neville: To me to be a gangster you have to kill someone and they never kill no- one. Who they killed ?They cardboard gangsters. They just wanna act tough...

Interviewer: So you think it`s important for them to first kill someone to be called a gangster?

Neville: Yes, so people can fear you.

Particular constructs of gangster suggest qualities that reinforce the dichotomy between hard and soft. Gangsters who display toughness and the propensity for extremely violent behaviours are `real` gangsters, whereas those who attempt to portray toughness, yet have not demonstrated this, are `cardboard` gangsters. `Real` gangster masculinity hinges on and requires the ultimate form of violence; that is, committing murder. This is indicative of

how brutality earns respect. The more brutal and daring the crime, the more respect and fear the criminals earn in the gang and in the wider community.

Mark: Me I hang with all Jason and them.People class us as gangsters but I don't see myself as a gangster.

What gangs offer in the form of protection and a sense of belonging is desirable but it is evident that many of these boys are seeking some type of middle ground in negotiating a way around gang life, where they receive these `benefits`, but are not labeled `gangsters`. Teachers often related how some of the fights in school, which are spin-offs of gang fights, become so violent and dangerous that teachers are forced to accompany some boys home from school for fear of reprisals or continued attacks. Living in Wentworth means that boys are obliged through coercion and intimidation to engage in gang fights. They talk about defending themselves rather than what are commonly termed `gang fights`.

 The `automatic` affiliation is challenged in many boys` resistance and rejection of gang affiliation. The data illustrates that not all of these boys conform to the noxious gangster model. To understand this I have looked briefly at some of the participants` biographies, to establish how their life stories relate to the question of their investment in gang discourses. The investment of boys in a gang discourse allows for different perspectives on this social phenomenon. Hollway (1984:238) argues that any description of the formation of subjectivities `requires an account of the investment that a person has in taking up one position rather than another in a different discourse`. The natural and assumed perception of the Coloured boys` affiliation to gangs is the focus of inquiry. This investigation opens up the possibility for challenging stereotypes about Coloured boys` automatic involvement in gangs. It is demonstrated that while gangs are a ubiquitous

feature in Wentworth, gang membership is not necessarily what many of these boys embody or seek as a defining feature of their masculinity.

David: Ay, miss I live in Panax Place and they call them the ITBs so I am known as an ITB. If I don`t dallah what the ITB`s dallah then maybe if the ITB boys are fighting with the OGBs and I`m in the crew of the ITBs so when the Ogle Road boys see me they gonna hit me that`s why I have to stand with the ITBs. That`s it.

One of the reasons why some boys stay in gangs is that despite their reluctance to engage in fights they still become targets of other gangs. Gang membership offers to a certain extent a sense of belonging and group identity, and boys who do not want to be isolated `have to stand` with other gang members.

Interviewer: So if you are at a particular place and boys are fighting, you`ll fight?

*Byron: No, it`s different. No, it`s not right. If you go to a certain place (**One of the other boys chips in to say something**) wait there ek sê. If you going to a certain place and you going to fight then you wanna be a gangster. But if you there and the fight breaks out at that time you not a gangster. You defending yourself.*

This transcript further demonstrates the ambiguities in these boys' accounts, and reveals how some of them identify with the violence that they simultaneously try to reject. In their attempts to defend themselves, they accommodate violent responses simply not to be seen as scared. While it is evident that Byron is not naturally violent, he seeks to justify his violent responses by referring to his context, which offers spaces for violent masculinities to flourish. Defending oneself is crucial where the consequences of the inability to do so predispose one to becoming a victim or target.

Byron tries hard to make his point clear and appears determined to defend his claim that he is not in a gang. This is apparent when one of the other boys

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tries to intervene. He tells him to give him a chance to explain what he is trying to say.

Fighting here is confined to self-defence, which is a pivotal aspect of masculinity where cowardice is regarded with contempt.

Byron constructs fighting and defending oneself as a normal and natural part of boys` lives. This demonstrates the ways in which violence has become associated with `normal` forms of masculinity. He is adamant that there is a distinction between consciously choosing to be a gangster as opposed to being in the wrong place at the wrong time. This suggests that acts of violence occur around premeditated gang conflicts or around the compulsion to defend oneself when confronted with violence. Not fleeing in the face of adversity and conflict is an admirable quality and is crucial in order to earn the respect of both friends and opponents. Cowardice is offensive, and all of these boys are inclined to act with bravado. In their attempt to maintain the awe-inspiring quality of standing for [their] friends, they are prepared to fight. It is in this way that they get into `trouble` in school and ultimately with the law.

Byron: I am not in a gang but I`ll tell you something people that sit with me they do wrong and I also do wrong. So if I`m with them that time you can say I`m a gangster when I`m fighting. But now as I`m sitting here I`m not a gangster.

Being a gangster, according to Byron, is momentary and circumstantial and molds a multiple and fluid masculine identity. He fluctuates between being and not being a gangster and this depends heavily on where he is and with whom. In negotiating his masculine self, the contradictory positions he inhabits illustrate the struggle to simultaneously distance himself from and be seen to identify with a gang. This is indicative of his agency in negotiating and straddling these subject positions. This indicates that even if they do not accept this gangster version of manhood, `gangs are nevertheless a powerful

source of norms and identity that nearly all [of these] young men have to contend with, even if only to reject` (Barker, 2005).

 Similarly, with Tony:

Tony: I`m not in a gang. But when there`s a fight like us all the boys from this area will like stick up for one another. So when it goes like that the boys that side will stand up for one another. It ends up becoming like a gang-related thing.

Tony vehemently rejects any notion that he may belong to a gang. His investment in the gang discourse is possibly linked to his father`s brutal murder by gang members (reflected in the first section of this chapter). His denunciation of gang affiliation is reflected in his own traumatic and painful experience of gang treachery.

His words illustrate both affiliation to and resistance against gangs as he carefully tries to position himself as outside the gangs but simultaneously being compelled to take part in fights. Fights that involve boys from different areas are automatically assumed to be gang–related, even if they are more interpersonal or one-on-one disputes. However, the contradictions that emerge from Tony`s accounts highlight how his identification with and affiliation to gangs legitimate certain violent responses.

In seeking revenge, these boys turn this school into a violent space, placing themselves and others at risk. The school is constructed as an ideal venue for `getting even`, minus the risk of being outnumbered and overpowered by boys from rival gangs.

While I was walking around the school, I overheard one of my participants (Mark), who appeared visibly upset, ranting to others that he `was not going to let *them* get away with it`. When I approached him and asked him what the

problem was, he told me that he had been attacked on his way from school by `F Section` (a gang in Wentworth) Boys. He said one of the boys slapped, hit and humiliated him while the other gang members circled him to prevent him from getting away. He also said that his friends 'couldn't do anything'.

Like the boys in the Cape Flats, Mark related the challenges faced on the way to and from school to gangsterism (Ratele, et al., 2007). The social forces at work in this context predispose boys to constant risk on a daily basis. It is for this reason that many of them confront the choice of either joining a gang or protecting themselves, with no one to stand up for them. They often said that they were secure in the knowledge that their friends got their backs, which provides a sense of `bra-skap` (brotherhood). When I asked Mark why his friends did not stand up for him, he defended them, stating that they were outnumbered and they were in `F Section` territory. Despite the inability of his friends to come to his defence, Kieran retains a masculinity that hinges on loyalty. This absurd sense of loyalty opens up possibilities for these boys to rethink the common assumption that being in a gang automatically guarantees protection. In the face of extreme adversity the potential for harm is great despite the presence of fellow gang members.

Evan I`m coming from there right just another name for the road whatever Destroyer Land you know the people they know where it is. Ja, but me I`m on top of my own thing. You know how you say if the fight`s there it`s there. You must see what they fighting with `cos why at the end of the day it`s my bras. I must stand for them.

The recurrent theme that occurs throughout strongly illustrates the compulsion to `stand up for one another` and `to have each others` backs`. However, Evan too, like the other boys, rejects being labelled a gangster but expresses his commitment to defending his `bras`. Evan`s use of the word `must` suggests a sense of compulsion to get involved when there is a fight.

Changing Forms of Masculinity: *'There`s always like changes. You get the condyes then the gangsters and then the soccer players then the naughty boys'.*

In the past, being a gangster in Wentworth conferred much honour and popularity on the subject. But being a gangster in Wentworth is increasingly losing its popularity, and it no longer appears to be the form of masculinity most desired, as it was in the 1970s and 1980s. The impact of changing economic circumstances and global recession upon the economic situation in Wentworth is reflected in the subsequent coping strategies and the masculinities that have emerged. These include surviving by selling drugs and cigarettes, and gambling. This desire for financial gain is also reflected in the increase in drug peddling in Wentworth. The drug trade appears to have taken precedence over gang affiliation and gang culture. Despite the fact that issues around territoriality persist, the contention is that the territoriality relates primarily to the protection of trading areas rather than to gang turf wars. It is through defending demarcated drug `zones` that boys are being bred into violence. It is for this reason that being a gangster is not necessarily an authentic way of surviving their difficult socio-economic circumstances. Rather, being able to defend themselves and not being scared (`stand for your thing`) is awe-inspiring and an admirable quality among these boys, because it is not all boys who can demonstrate these qualities.

There is an indication that gangs have evolved and diminished in their power in Wentworth. Many gangsters in Wentworth in the 1970s and 1980s were ruthless serial murderers and rapists. They were incarcerated and came out of jail much older men and much more placid. By then their respective gangs had fragmented and this ultimately led to the breakup of many gangs. This is confirmed by Chari`s assertion that 'There were important shifts in Wentworth`s gang culture…in the 1960s, men coming out of circuits of gang and artisanal labour began investing more… in fancy cars, and occasionally in guns, and a growing drug trade' (2005:14).

The boys in this study are adamant that they are not gangsters, but suggest that the gangster label is forced upon them because of where they live. They construct their masculinity around a sense of obligatory loyalty and not necessarily in pursuit of a `desirable` gangster image. This data is significant in that it illustrates the changing forms of masculinity and provides possible explanations for the waning of gang cultures in this community. The choices open to these boys appear not to be fundamental shifts to different masculinities, but rather they seem to be choices within a hegemonic masculinity. Although there is some evidence of changing masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa (Morrell, 2001; 2005), change has been uneven and the continuing economic disparities may both hinder change and exacerbate violence (Morrell, 2001; Bhana, 2005). Similarly, in illustrating the changing forms of masculinity the data also provides possible explanations for these boys` disinvestment in the gang discourse and the waning of gang cultures in this community. This fluctuation of target masculinities has economic implications, as can be seen in the upsurge in the popularity of the 'condyes' (a word derived from 'conductors,' as in 'bus conductors') in the taxi industry. `Condyes` are predominantly young men and boys, mostly early school drop-outs who earn a living by collecting fares in taxis. Their lack of suitable educational qualifications limits their ability to procure more gainful means of employment and compels them to eke out a living in this way. They gain popularity with many girls by allowing them free rides to and from town, which they often do in exchange for sex. This situation of financial deprivation and need in some way accounts for the changing nature of masculinity in Wentworth.

Interviewer: Are boys who are in gangs popular?

Evan: Ja. Well you know there`s always like changes and things like that. You get maybe like one time the condyes will be popular all the women just want them and then the gangsters and then the soccer players then the naughty boys you`ll see they`ll be onto them like. Then

*afterwards ay you won`t hear about the naughty boys so much then you hear about the gangsters and the girls are running dizzy over them or whatever. Ja.As I said all those types of people they all like popular just that there`s like periods or whatever (**laughs**). You know what I`m trying to say. Ja, it`s just for a certain period then it dies out, then the next group whatever. It will stay like but it won`t be as much as before you know.*

In this extract, Evan highlights the ephemeral nature and continuously changing forms of masculinity in Wentworth. He constructs popularity as a short-lived and fashionable phenomenon. Women and girls appear to be instrumental in establishing and determining the `in` masculinity at any given time, which makes it important for boys who aspire to being popular to negotiate these multiple and unstable identities. This scenario also demonstrates how central girls' and women's power becomes in regulating and dictating these boys` occupations in terms of the fashionable positions. This illustrates that even though gangster masculinity is still recognised in this community, it is not always tenable and not the only masculinity that acquires hegemonic status. Besides the unstable nature of gang masculinities in Wentworth due to the changing nature of fashion, the data strongly suggests that gangsters on the whole have lost a certain amount of allure with girls. It is evident that while girls are attracted to boys who can defend themselves, many are inclined to keep away from boys who are affiliated to gangs. In the past, many girls in Wentworth aspired to dating these notorious gangsters, either because they were guaranteed protection and respect in the community or because powerful and violent gang members coerced them. This has resonance with the numerous ways in which women are abused and exploited, either through rape and other forms of sexual assault, or in the violent relationships they are frequently coerced into by male gang members (Vetten, 2000).

Interviewer: *Do you think girls are attracted to boys in gangs?*

Tony: Ay not many of them ha not many of them you get like one two but most of them don`t. I think they like they like… boys that you know… that can handle themselves but that don`t look for fights and stuff like that you know. Boys that dress nice and stuff they like that there.

Tony`s '*Ay*' signifies his sense of disappointment, which indicates that the prestige that hinged around being a gangster is no longer as great as it was. This is possibly one of the explanations for many boys` disinvestment in the gang discourse. Their sexuality and sexual prowess is a key defining aspect of their masculinity and if the label `gangster` jeopardises their chances with girls, then there is reason to reject the label.

Kerwin: If people know that they've been fighting they'll be doing this doing that if they been fighting they hit this person poke this person or something like that, then people are scared of them so they …? You like this like that.

Interviewer: You think girls like those type of boys?

Kerwin: You do get girls that like those boys, but there's also some girls that don't like you know, you usually get the girls that like those type of boys are mostly the girls that are running away from school with the boys, but then you get those other girls, the quiet type you know that don't like them.

Kerwin draws a distinction between the good (quiet) and bad (run-away-from-school) girls (which distinction is also discussed in Chapter Five). He suggests that good girls are attracted to good boys, while bad girls are attracted to bad boys.

It is evident that Kerwin views violent behaviour and belonging to a gang as an obstacle to getting a good girl. In their attempts at regulating their behaviour by buying into the discourse around respectability, these boys believe that they have earned the right to have a `quiet` girl-friend (as demonstrated in Chapter Five).

The complicity of some girls in gangster masculinity is illustrated and further established that they are also implicated in the violent behaviour of boys in school.

Interviewer: How do the boys get weapons into school, because I see a security guy at the gate. Doesn`t he search all the learners?

Evan: No, they only search the boys. Miss ay you don`t know some girls…

John: Miss, some of these girls too, they keep the weapons, the knives or what for the boys and come into school then give it back to their boyfriends.

The discourse that positions boys as being predisposed to violent behaviour is suggested here. The assumption is that the boys are the ones who carry weapons, which justifies their being searched before they enter the school premises. Similarly, the discourse that positions girls as innocent and non-violent beings is challenged in this scenario. The fact that these girls are prepared to be 'mules' for their boyfriends by keeping and concealing their weapons for planned violent attacks in school shows how some girls are complicit in male violence. The girls are identified as `status seekers` who are said to gain prestige from being a gangster's girlfriend (Vetten, 2000). This has strong resonance with how some women view their main role as couriering drugs or firearms (Vetten, ibid) for gang members.

Renouncing violence: *'I think God might help me'*

This section demonstrates the parallels between some of the boys in this study and previously notorious gangsters in Wentworth. It shows a common trajectory in the lives of many men who were desperate to turn their lives around by renouncing gang life and violence. Some of the gangsters who terrorised the community were incarcerated and eventually released from

prison, and looked to religion as the key to a new, better and more peaceful existence. One such person was Magadien Wentzel, an ex-gangster from the Cape Flats, who joined a 'born-again' Christian group in his struggle to live a normal life when he came out of prison (Steinberg, 2004; Jensen, 2008). Many of the men in Wentworth who became `born again` Christians improved their lives by living more righteously, and some experienced a newfound upward mobility. This has led many to believe that the power of God ultimately will bring about a positive change in their lives. Furthermore, the existence of an overwhelming number of churches in Wentworth (as outlined in Chapter Two) provides some type of `hope` in a community plagued with social problems such as extreme forms of violence, promiscuity, senseless and untimely deaths, domestic abuse and crime.

Neville: *Maybe I`m gonna change.*

Interviewer: *Would you like to change?*

Neville: *Yes I`ve got a feeling I`m gonna change.*

Interviewer: *What is going to make you change?*

Neville: *I`ve started going to church now. On Sunday I went to church. So I think I`m coming right. I think God might help because before I never used to go to church I never used to worry about nothing. Now I`m starting to go to church.*

As the data illustrates, church and more specifically God are viewed as powerful ways to keep boys out of trouble (This also is discussed in Chapter Two). Neville positions the solution to his problematic behaviour within the religious discourse that promises redemption. God-fearing church-goers are expected to evince a wide range of morally and socially acceptable behaviours. It is within these parameters that Tevin locates himself, believing that this may be instrumental in helping him to regulate his behaviour. He

attributes his problematic behaviour as a direct consequence of not going to church, and draws on the religious (good) and secular (evil) dichotomy to explain this. Church, or more specifically God, is portrayed as the change agent in facilitating his move away from evil. The data shows that these boys are not simply the pathetic products of the absence of their fathers, violent contexts and social and economic deprivation, but actively negotiate their circumstances by drawing for instance on religion as a possible way out of their difficult situations. Like many others in the community (see Chapter Two), some boys use religion to redress their social vulnerabilities and search for resources to lift themselves out of lives of pain and trauma.

Dane: I`m not so into gangs anymore. I`m gone a bit quiet.

Interviewer: Explain.

Dane: Miss, I try to be good. I go with my parents to church… to Interfellowship church. I try not to get into trouble anymore. But my parents don`t believe me. They rather believe others.

Interviewer: Why do you think they did not believe you?

Dane: Because one time I never told them I was involved in a robbery. I stole someone`s watch. Then after a long time I told them. That`s why they don`t believe anything I tell them. I also spent a few hours in jail for MI to P [malicious injury to property] for smashing up in the building next to Grosvenor Hotel. I`m not so into gangs anymore. I`m gone a bit quiet. Miss, I wanna go to church on Sunday in the night. [He says this twice]

Dane`s account further reinforces how `going to church` is synonymous with being good. Despite his efforts, Dane still has to convince others (his parents in particular) of the righteousness and sincerity of his intentions. His commitment to non-violence and the renunciation of gang life have to be proven and cannot simply be achieved by attending church. It is evident that

having deceived his parents, he will have to work hard in order to restore their trust in him.

Dane`s desire to leave the gang is further reflected during a one-on-one interview where he refers to a book, `The Cross and the Switchblade` (Wilkerson, et al., 1963). This book outlines the violent wars between two rival gangs in the US. It devolves on a priest to convert the members of the gangs and ultimately work at their redemption. He succeeds in helping them to turn their lives around by their choosing to renounce violence and gang life. Dane identifies strongly with the events and characters in the book, which resonate powerfully with his own life as a gang member. Dane is explicit about the way in which the gangsters in the story mirror his own life, as he sees his own life being played out. As illustrated earlier, he views religion as a `tool` which could be instrumental in his ability to leave gangs. The parallels he draws between himself and the characters permit a degree of reflection, which is favorable for nurturing and encouraging alternative masculinities and coming to the realisation that there is a way out of gang life, no matter how difficult it may seem.

Dane: I don`t really read. The only book that I read … I`ve been reading for a long time now I read a paragraph now and then like one page in a month. The book is `The Cross and the Switchblade`.

Interviewer: What do you enjoy about this book?

Dane: I can see myself in this book. It`s about gangs and how a preacher tries to stop the gangs and gang fights. The book helps me to see myself.

The title of the book, *The Cross and the Switchblade,* is representative of the contestation between godliness, symbolised by the Cross, and violence, symbolised by the switchblade. The test is to determine which path the protagonists' lives will take. Will they surrender to the power of God or to the

power of the criminal community that seduces them into the hegemonic masculinity of violence? Dane perceives religion as some form of social capital with the ability and power to influence his position and how he is perceived in this community.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the lives of these Coloured boys, whose childhoods are pockmarked with episodes of violence and trauma. The data suggests that these boys are not automatically predisposed to violent behaviour but rather that their violent context offers spaces for violent masculinities to flourish. Their early experiences of callousness and brutality compel them to conjure up subsequent coping mechanisms in order to survive in a violent environment.

Many boys construct themselves as `real men` not by belonging to any gang but rather by being fearless and possessing the capability to `stand up` for each other. Being brave and willing to `stand up for one another` are salient masculine qualities sought after by these boys. Cowardice is unacceptable to them and they are not inclined to relinquish their bravado and the status it earns them. It is in their attempts to maintain an awe-inspiring quality of `standing` for their friends that they engage in gang fights. It is in this way that they get into trouble at school, and ultimately with the law.

However, their disinvestment in a gang discourse reveals how many boys resist violence at least at the level of its being a cultural ideal. Some boys who demonstrate masculinities that are more peaceful show potential for the construction of more positive discourses on boys and men in Wentworth and on Coloured men as a whole. More importantly, the unstable nature of masculinities in Wentworth, which are subject to the fickleness of fashion, paves the way for challenging and deconstructing negative, totalising

stereotypes of Coloured men and boys in terms of their violent behaviour and gang culture. The opportunity to relate accounts of their lives has afforded these 'troublesome' and presumably troubled boys the chance to simultaneously reflect on their behaviour as well as to demonstrate their sense of agency in drawing on religion as a resource to turn away from violence. Religion offers alternative and more peaceful modes of behaviour for boys who want to renounce violence.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Introduction

'How do we provide young men with alternatives to the violent, sexualised masculinity if we do not understand how masculinities are constructed in various contexts?' (Moolman, 2004:111).

Working with young men in the working-class context of Wentworth, this study has examined the constructions of Coloured masculinities and provided the contextual specificity needed to explore the development of alternatives to anti-school attitudes, violence and hypersexuality. I have argued that these boys, in the context of Wentworth, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, largely inhabit troublesome masculinities that are harmful to themselves and to others. As illustrated in the analysis chapters, toxic hegemonic masculinities pose a significant problem for these boys as well as for other boys, girls and teachers in the school. However, the variegated masculine performances of this group of Coloured boys illustrate the multiple ways in which some of them negotiate their problematic context by simultaneously accommodating and resisting ways of being males and suggest that some boys, even if they are in the minority, inhabit alternative masculinities.

In concluding this thesis, I will provide a synopsis of what each chapter has sought to accomplish.

Chapter One set the scene for the study by introducing the participants in the form of a biographical sketch of each boy. In addition, this chapter introduced the Wentworth community from which my sample was drawn. I outlined the rationale and motivation for the research, in detail. To do this I had to introduce the multiple masculinities approach adopted by the study and to

provide a preliminary introduction to the theoretical perspectives that this study has drawn on to further the argument put forward.

Chapter Two provided some insight into Coloureds in South Africa, highlighting their heterogeneity in terms of historical, cultural and physical differences. The focus was largely on Coloureds in KwaZulu-Natal and more specifically Wentworth, around whom the study is centred. This made it possible for the reader to form a mental picture of a context plagued by extreme poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, violence and promiscuity. More importantly, in presenting this detailed synopsis, the impact that this problematic context has on the lives of these boys is crucial in understanding the making of harmful masculinities.

Chapter Three provided an examination of relevant international and South African scholarship, ranging from the politics of boys as victims to the multiple masculinities approach. The scholarship focused on the three key areas that emerged in the analysis. They are:

- Masculinity and schooling

- Race, class, masculinity and sexuality

- Masculinity and violence

In Chapter Four I described the methodological process I engaged in to collect data. Using ethnographic methods which included extracting biographic data, perusing site documents, conducting interviews and engaging in participant observation, the extracted information (the data) was used to provide a glimpse into the lives of these boys. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews provided the opportunity for these boys to articulate and demonstrate their agency in ways that illustrate their negotiation of their

difficult contexts. During this ethnographic process I examined and theorised my own subjectivity as a middle-class Coloured female researcher and the power relations implicated in the relationship between me and my participants. I also documented and problematised the ethical implications and the difficult choices I had to make between intervention and the risk of potentially compromising my study.

In Chapters Five, Six and Seven (Analysis and Interpretation), my approach was to examine the participants` constructions of masculinity and the meanings these constructions have for their lives. The study draws on the particular constructions that inform their concerns, struggles and relationships, occasions of being both powerful and powerless and their apparent vulnerabilities. This thesis has argued that this group of working-class Coloured boys inhabits a masculinity that is not unfamiliar in other research relating to working-class boys (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Connell, 1994; Sewell, 1997 Renold, 2002; Barker, 2005). The findings illustrate that for these boys the dominant and therefore more desirable patterns of conduct include being violent, misogynistic, homophobic, anti-authoritarian and anti-academic.

To present these findings I focus on the following key issues that have emerged as being closely intertwined in the lives of these boys:

- Race and class

- Socio-economic conditions

- Unemployment

- Teachers

- Discipline

- Violence and rampant hypersexuality

In the last section of this chapter I offer ways of working with boys and teachers. These suggestions are attempts to highlight the plight of these boys both in school as well as in the community of Wentworth. These suggestions centre predominantly on the ways in which the broader political, social and economic policies of South Africa are also involved in the perpetuation of their marginal Coloured identity and the effects these policies have on this group of Coloured boys in Wentworth. Attention is drawn to roles that teachers play in the school lives of the boys, and how the teachers' attitudes and practices have a long-term effect, often of a negative nature, on these boys. It is to be hoped that this research has far-reaching implications for the framing of policy, particularly relating to teacher development, and the ability of teachers to cater for boys who are experiencing difficulties in school. Further, the conclusions indicate the need for more research with boys and girls in this Coloured working-class context, and perhaps for research that explores and examines constructions of femininity in the same context.

Coloured: Wentworth and marginal

i) Race and class

The historical and continuing rooting of racial categorisation in South Africa and the concomitant marginalisation of various groups of South Africans is exemplified in Wentworth, where it has deep consequences for the formation of Coloured masculinities. My approach was to consider the common assumptions and perceptions that Coloured masculinity is anti-academic, anti-authoritarian, callous and violent. The ways in which race and class intersect with gender to produce callous and violent versions of masculinities

amongst these boys is glaringly obvious. Despite the high prevalence of toxic masculinities, there are some boys in Wentworth who negotiate their masculinities in ways that contest the unthinking assumptions around Coloured boys by placing value on academic success, fostering more mentoring and respectful relationships with their teachers, and forging respectful and loving relationships with girls. The simultaneous occupation of toxic hegemonic and more exemplary alternative masculinities challenges the reductionist and simplistic explanation that their behaviour is simply an effect of their Colouredness. It is apparent that they are reinventing and reconstructing particular ways of being males against a backdrop of marginalisation and structural inequalities. These difficulties are reflected in the way they negotiate their masculinities around `survival of the fittest` discourse which often gets them into `trouble`: `trouble` in school and trouble with the law.

At the heart of these boys` problems are the huge socio-economic inequalities in South Africa. Despite the dissolution of apartheid and the advent of democracy in South Africa, it is apparent that the effects of apartheid continue to disadvantage Coloureds. Their historically marginalised position is perpetuated in the new dispensation and worsens the struggle they face in a fast-changing political, economic and social South Africa. Their `not white enough` position during apartheid and `not black enough` position in democratic South Africa, exacerbates their deprived socio-economic status of unemployment and poverty. In response, many boys challenge authority, use violence, and engage in rampantly hypersexual behaviour to cope with their sense of social exclusion. The thesis argues that this behaviour is detrimental to the schooling experiences of these boys and ultimately limits their opportunities to improve their life chances. Social circumstances have particular effects in influencing the behaviour of these Coloured boys in a context of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, gangsterism and violence. Many of them use their lived experiences as learning curves,

guiding their actions and affiliations in their struggles amidst their extremely violent and economically deprived context. However, their behaviour cannot be understood in simplistic terms as resulting from their being Coloured boys in a Coloured school in a Coloured community. This thesis does not posit or attempt to reduce their behaviour to being a product of their Colouredness. Rather, their behaviour manifests in ways that suggest a determination to survive their difficulties.

ii) Unemployment

Despite the glorification of affirmative action (see Chapter Two) - the provision of increasing access to jobs and educational opportunities for those previously disadvantaged by the historical imbalances of the apartheid regime - there remains a lack of gainful employment opportunities for these boys, who are predisposed to becoming early school dropouts. Research has demonstrated that multiple routes to secure employment for previously disadvantaged learners who dropped out of school were being secured (Wolpe, et al., 1997). Yet this is not evident in the Coloured community, where unemployment rates have soared. Looking at changes that have taken place since 1994, unemployment has increased only 19% in the Black community as compared with 35% in the Coloured community (Leggett, 2004). Thus, relative to their accustomed standard of living, the Coloured community has experienced more detrimental change since 1994 than the Black community. These statistics coupled with the research results in this study provide sufficient motivation for national government to develop a strategy for dealing with the socio-economic problem presented here. This is not to say, however, that the blame rests solely with the long-term effects of an apartheid regime, but also that the persistence of the current global economic crisis that is impacting upon the economic situation in South Africa does not help to ameliorate the present marginal position of working-class Coloured men. Despite their sophisticated sense of their difficult social circumstances, many

of these boys express the desire to ameliorate the poverty of their lives, to drive flashy cars and to live in `a house` rather than in blocks of flats (see Chapter Two). The situation of equal social and economic opportunities anticipated with the advent of democracy has not materialised. The disintegration of the apartheid system has not resulted in the disintegration of their struggles. Race and class continue to circumscribe the lives of these boys. 'South Africa is trying to address the wider structural anomalies. [However] change is not easy and does not occur with dramatic speed (Bhana, 2002:291).

iii) Violence

Wentworth has a history of violence that has largely been gang-related. However, the findings suggest that many of these boys are not automatically predisposed to violent behaviour but rather that it is their context that often compels them to engage in violent behaviour at one time or another. Often when they do engage in violence, it is not because they are naturally violent, but rather that their violence derives from their sense of the need to defend their honour or to protect their friends. In addition, their attempts to reclaim power over their lives often results in retaliatory behaviour that is violent. Moreover, their desire to survive a violent context by having others stand up for them coerces many of them to affiliate to or associate with gangs. The prevalence of disinvestment in gangs articulated by many of the boys is strongly related to a waning gang culture in Wentworth, which is being replaced on an ongoing basis by other popular masculinities. In their desire to attain the prevailing hegemonic status, these boys appear compelled to adapt to the changing nature of masculinities in Wentworth. In so doing, they resist violent masculinities that have no apparent benefits for them.

This study is based only on a random sample of thirteen boys in one school where these boys are categorised as being troublesome. This demands that we

ask the question: how many other boys are there in this school or in other schools and in other communities who are in the same situation?

The findings illustrate that the troublesome behaviour of many of these boys extends beyond mere petty offences in school, and show these boys becoming involved in criminally liable misdemeanours which have resulted in their being compelled to attend counseling seesions at NICRO (see Chapter Two) or face prison sentences. If the problems that the boys experience in school were adequately addressed there could be a ripple effect which could lessen the rate of incarceration of adult Coloured males. Official figures suggest that Coloured people are twice as likely as any other ethnic group to be murdered and twice as likely to be incarcerated (Leggett, 2004). Coloured people are also over-represented in the nation's prisons according to the Department of Correctional Services (Leggett, ibid). Coloured people represent only 9% of the national population, but they make up 18% of the national prison population. Presently, there are 2488 Coloured females and 128 609 Coloured males in South African prisons. These figures are alarming and highlight the plight of Coloured males in particular in South Africa.

iv) Rampant hypersexuality

All of the evidence points to a relationship between the problematic context with which these boys have to cope and their rampant, hypersexual behaviours. The socio-economic context of poverty and deprivation permits the formation of callous, misogynistic and homophobic masculinities in Wentworth. Despite the callous and misogynistic masculinities that prevail in this community, the findings have illustrated that there are boys who show love and respect for girls and, interestingly, it is the same boys who are crude and callous. The contradictory positions taken up by some boys highlight the possibility of nurturing and promoting the alternative ways of being male in Wentworth. The data has shown that those boys who develop alternate

masculine identities nevertheless retain a sense of themselves as acceptable males by the normative standards in this Wentworth community. This was evident during the group interviews, where those boys who articulated the importance of meaningful, close and respectful relationships with some girls were not ridiculed by the others. Instead, most of the other boys were adamant that they respect girls, especially if the girls were equally respectful of them.

The findings also suggest that in their attempts at acquiring financial or economic possessions some of these boys compromise their homophobic `principles` by having relationships with homosexuals. This is illustrative of their double standards and the patriarchal dividend that endorses transactional sexual relationships by boys and not girls. Girls who have `sugar daddy` relationships are treated with contempt by these boys, who articulate their own sense of emasculation in being marginalised by girls who reject them in their desire for and pursuit of possessions and money.

v) Teachers

At the center of their schooling experiences are the authority figures, teachers - in particular those whom the boys encounter on a daily basis. The practices and attitudes of some teachers are implicated in perpetuating and producing retaliatory and defiant behaviour. Teachers, too, can be a source of contradictions, when some care and others do not, and it is the caring teachers to whom boys are drawn positively.

The anti-academic, anti-school and anti-authoritarian stance that these boys take up appears to seriously disadvantage them in terms of attaining optimal academic qualifications, and hence predisposes them to dropping out of school prematurely. This further limits their ability to procure gainful employment and improve their life chances. The problematic relationship

between these boys and some of their teachers has been instrumental in the premature suspension or the conclusion of the school lives of some of them. Of the thirteen boys who participated in this study in 2006, only six were still at school in 2008 and completed Grade twelve. The findings suggest that teachers' attitudes and practices exacerbate the stresses in these boys' experiences at school. The teachers' disciplinary interventions appear to worsen the problematic behaviour of many of these boys in their attempts to save face amongst their peers. Moreover, these boys` constructions of masculinity tend not to align with the formal demands of schooling. Inhabiting a poor work ethic by refusing to do school work, non-conformist attitudes to school rules, resisting teacher authority and regular absenteeism from school are ways in which they buck the system and ultimately get themselves into `trouble`.

vi) Discipline

The disciplinary strategies used in this school are mostly detention and suspension, which both the teachers and the boys believe are highly unsuccessful and ineffective. Instead of regulating their behaviour, these strategies provoke extreme resistance, insolence and non-compliance. It has become convenient in some policy-making circles in parts of the world to isolate problematic behaviour and to get troublesome boys out of the public arena. Attention should be given to the fact that the boys excluded from school in terms of the above disciplinary strategies find themselves in all sorts of trouble when they are not at school.

The findings show that there are teachers who use brute force to discipline boys. While it appears to work for those teachers who say that `it is the only language that these boys understand`, the use of violence by teachers could serve to normalise and legitimate the use of violence by boys in resolving issues in their own lives.

Attempts are being made by the school to include parents in the disciplinary process relating to their sons, but financial constraints limit parental input and interest in the schooling experiences of these boys. Some teachers have expressed their disillusionment and frustration when parents do not respond to requests from the school to discuss the suspension of their boys. The parents of these boys, who are mostly single mothers, are unable to take time off from work because they run the risk of losing their day's pay, which they can little afford. Financial constraints appear to be at the root of the inability of many parents to attend to the schooling woes of their sons.

vii) Working with teachers and boys: caring not swearing

How can teachers work with the specific constructions of working-class Coloured masculinities amongst this group of boys in Wentworth?

As indicated earlier, the relationships that these boys have with their teachers have a profound impact on their attitudes to school and their school work ethic.

This study in no way attempts to vilify teachers but proposes the need for teachers to interrogate themselves in order for them to be able to understand `trouble.` As said in the Preface in relation to the case of my own son, the tendency for teachers to label boys as having ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder) or as being troublesome is common. It is suggested that teachers should look rather for ways of reacting that derive from a greater appreciation of ways of working with troublesome boys. When boys engage in unacceptable behaviour teachers, particularly in this school, do not attempt to determine if there are underlying factors that cause this behaviour. Allowing boys to speak about their difficulties and the ways in which they respond to these challenges would open up spaces for them (the boys) to

reflect on their behaviour. This would be a useful practice. Teachers should be provided with an opportunity to undergo specific courses and training in this regard, to the mutual benefit of both the teachers and the learners. Policy should be developed to assist teachers in their daily struggles with boys, where teachers are frustrated and simply suspend or expel the learners. Their challenges and difficulties are exacerbated by having large numbers in their classes. This in itself gives rise to disciplinary problems, as a result of which they find it much easier and less stressful to get rid of the problematic children. Since teachers are not sufficiently equipped and trained to deal with these problems in their initial qualifications, expert advice and training could be incorporated into teacher professional development by the South African Council for Educators (SACE), where teachers are compelled to attend such training courses. One of the functions of this teacher body is to offer and provide development and training workshops to teachers. 'It is also vital that teachers are prepared through in-service programmes that enable them to reflect on their own values and beliefs about gender and the ways this impact on how they relate to male and female students…'(Wolpe, et al.,1997:109). As stated by Meyenn and Parker (2001:174), 'there is an imperative to control boys` misbehaviours as opposed to understanding the motivation behind such social practices of masculinity in the classroom.' Meyenn and Parker suggest further that what is required is an active interrogation and problematisation of the ways in which certain forms of power are mobilised by the students to mount a challenge to the teachers` authority in the classroom. This study has demonstrated that teachers who are in positions of power often wield authority in such a way as to humiliate these boys. The boys feel that their masculinity is being challenged and they respond by asserting dominant masculine behaviours. This sense of emasculation compels them to seek alternate ways of reclaiming power. Those problematic teacher attitudes and practices that serve to label and condemn boys, as well as to treat them as incorrigible, need to be examined. Teachers need to examine their own prejudices and remain open to possibilities for change and

to treat each misdemeanour on its own merit. Since a positive self-concept leads to students` success in school, exclusion and humiliation as punishment often have negative effects on their schooling experiences. It has been said in this study that teachers cope better with their classes if certain boys are not there, so instead of seeking ways of dealing with the boys' problems, teachers opt to suspend or expel them. Measures such as suspension and expulsion in this school, as opposed to reinsertion measures, are unhelpful and serve to further exclude and alienate boys from school. The Department of Education needs to give serious attention to disciplinary policies that offer teachers alternative disciplinary strategies to effectively deal with problematic behaviour. Also, using demerits and sending students to the office reinforces a hierarchical system of power and threat, instead of encouraging students to take responsibility for their own behaviour (Meyenn and Parker, 2001).

The use of brute force in the form of pushing, punching and foul language by some teachers is in contravention of the School's Act of 1996 that has outlawed the use of corporal punishment in schools. Teachers who state that aggressive and violent behaviour is the only language that these boys understand often incite increased antagonism in these boys. However, there are boys who regulate their behaviour in accordance with teachers who are more aggressive. Rough and tough dispositions convey messages to the boys that serve to normalise aggressive responses. This is illustrative of the 'gender regimes of some schools [that] legitimate and perpetuate forms of violence, even though schools are generally conceived of as vehicles for emancipatory and democratic values' (Morrell, et al., 2009: 38). It is arguably impossible to encourage boys to resist violent behaviour without challenging the dominant constructions of brutish teacher masculinities. Teachers need to develop a new language that requires letting go of harmful practices that only serve to intensify the troublesome behaviour of boys. Harmful practices are certainly not in the interest of encouraging and nurturing more exemplary forms of masculinity that favour and produce healthy relationships with others. This is

indicative of how corporal punishment is still administered in a masked manner and in ways that continue to intimidate these boys. This demonstrates how discipline is underpinned fundamentally by forms of violence. Violence is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in the lives of these boys. Rather, the evidence highlights how the early experiences of many boys are laced with extreme violence and trauma of which teachers are often unaware. It is for this reason that there is a need for teachers to be more sensitive to the plight of these boys by showing an interest in their lives not only in terms of school achievements but on a more personal level. There is an indication that there are some teachers who are doing this. This is evident in what Bhana et al (2006) refer to as the `Hidden Work of Caring`, where some teachers take a personal interest, well beyond the scope of their professional duties, in the well-being of their learners. In this school there are male teachers who demonstrate caring and `fatherly` versions of masculinity, and are sensitive to the plight of the boys. It is with these teachers that the participants in this study are more inclined to experience respectful and peaceful mentoring relationships. This shows that teachers can be exemplary role models for boys to emulate by showing these boys that it is not unusual for males to be gentle and caring. The interrogation of the self by teachers has the potential to develop caring attitudes towards their charges, when they try to understand ways that are alternate to the current logic and not detrimental to the life chances of these boys.

Within the context of the literature that seeks to make learning more relevant and connected to boys, calls for more `masculine` curriculum content and resources are familiar (Keddie and Mills, 2007). These authors suggest that teachers should attempt to connect with the real-world interests and preferences of boys beyond the classroom (Lingard, et al., 2002: Alloway, et al., 2002). These interests could take the form of sport, popular culture, or other issues that concern them. During the interviews there were boys and teachers who commented on the respectful and cordial relationships they

developed with each other as a result of being involved in soccer and going on soccer tours together. Soccer offers the opportunity for them to connect on a different level and, more importantly, the opportunity to `talk`. This was volunteered by both teachers and boys. There is no question that soccer is an essential tool for promoting and encouraging more respectful and amicable relationships between these boys and their teachers. It has been proven (see Chapter Two) that soccer has been a cohesive force in this community and has been instrumental in providing a form of entertainment for the residents of Wentworth. With this in mind, it is imperative that significant investment in soccer is prioritized and the development of this sport in this community is given much attention.

A good example of teacher intervention in this school is one that assists learners with drug and alcohol addictions. The formation of TADA (see Chapter Five) by a teacher in this school has been instrumental in rehabilitating and offering assistance to learners who are struggling with these addictions. Wentworth and its problematic social circumstances offer conditions for these addictions to flourish. This initiative boasts a number of boys who have been rehabilitated and offers assistance and support to others who struggle with addictions. It is teachers like Mr. S who give these learners hope for a better life without drugs and alcohol, despite the increasing drug trade in Wentworth.

Parents also have a key role to play in helping to regulate and modify their sons` behaviours. It has been established that when parents are keen to work with teachers in the interest of their sons, the teachers in these schools are more inclined to `go the extra mile`. However, not much provision is made by the school authorities to accommodate parents, of which there are many, who are unable to meet with teachers during school hours to discuss the problems. Many parents cannot take time off from work and if they do, they run the risk of losing the day's pay, which they cannot afford to do. The school needs to

accommodate these parents by making provision for them to meet at a time more convenient for them or during the weekend when parents are not working. It does not make sense to request parents to come to school with the full knowledge that it is probably not going to happen. The practice that allows boys back into school on condition that they are accompanied by their parent(s) in my opinion serves to legitimate the exclusion of boys and makes life easier for teachers who do not have to or want to deal with them. Due recognition needs to be given to how masculine identities link with education trends and practices such as high levels of exclusion (Keddie and Mills, 2007). These interact with other factors including poor employment opportunities, family relationships, health and pervasive violence. School authorities can help to keep boys in school by not suspending them and by dealing with their issues instead. It is the production of early school drop-outs that feeds this cycle of leaving school prematurely and thus being ill equipped to secure gainful employment. By encouraging and promoting the importance of completing their schooling, as well as trying to make schooling more desirable, the teachers and the school authorities can work with these boys to make their schooling experiences better.

viii) Nurturing alternative masculinities

'There is nothing inevitable about young men becoming violent' (Morrell and Makhaye, 2007: 154). Research in South Africa must also look at boys as active agents who choose to inhabit alternative masculinities. This study has demonstrated that there are boys who are willing to speak out against violence and misogyny. These boys should be included in initiatives and programmes designed to inculcate and promote non-violent and respectful masculinities amongst other boys in ways that orient the move towards a capacity for respect and caring. Macnaughton (2000) suggests that teachers offer support to boys who occupy alternative non-violent, respectful spaces by encouraging and nurturing these masculinities. Such support provides an

opportunity for boys to challenge the dominant ways of being by emphasising the value of respect, and by working towards promoting more equitable relationships between girls and boys, boys and boys, and boys and educators. It is in these safe spaces where boys who demonstrate alternative masculinities that embrace non-oppressive, non-sexist and peaceful ways of being males can be nurtured, encouraged and supported.

My advocation of nurturing and encouraging the alternative masculinities is not necessarily idealistic. The non-violent and respectful masculine attributes that some of these Coloured boys have assumed to themselves, have emanated from their very own accounts and go some way towards demonstrating that this is not simply an ideal but a practical proposal offering increasing possibilities for interrogating masculinities and providing more `positive and constructive models of masculine behaviour` (Morrell and Makhaye, 2007). This resonates with the assertion that an essential part of any programme is to engage with hegemonic masculinity and to allow for alternate masculinities to develop (Morrell, 1998).

Boy-centered research highlights possibilities for successful strategies for gender-equal schooling, where boys have the opportunity to be reflexive and provide explanations and understanding for their own behaviours. By being able to reflect on their own early experiences of trauma and violence, together with their violent retaliatory actions, these boys can confront the destructive nature of their violent behaviour and the negative consequences it has for them as well as for others. These reflections provide the potential for them to explore ways of avoiding violent encounters and dealing with conflict situations in non-violent ways. In order to achieve this, it is essential to challenge and deconstruct the binary divide and the insensitive, violent monolithic male stereotype which is harmful to these boys and to others with whom they come into contact.

Steinem (1999) and Mills (2001) propose that without challenging the assumptions on which masculinity is based, the numbers of violent perpetrators, from bullies to killers, will not be reduced.

Challenging and addressing gang-banging and blackmail practices by boys requires a revision of the value systems upon which these boys base their masculine identities. Redress has to happen at a social level. The perceptions of girls as insensate objects of boys` sexual desire and use need to be deconstructed and more respectful ways of viewing and treating girls should be promoted and encouraged. The processes of male gender socialisation need to move away from the imperative of privileging the masculine and allow boys to stay in touch with their feminine qualities (Reay, 2002). Opportunities for mixed groups of boys and girls to talk about their perceptions and feelings should be created. This can provide spaces for boys to reflect on and examine toxic harmful masculinities that operate to degrade and derogate girls. There is a dire need to rebuild and reshape the social fabric of this community by instilling values that promote respect for women and girls. This redress should also include older men in the community who perpetuate and inhabit misogynistic practices. Despite the numerous community organisations that work in Wentworth to uplift the economic and social fabric of this community, none of them seem to focus on the gendered dimension of violence. Using schools as a platform, these community organisations could work to deconstruct and challenge dominant notions of masculinity that sanction violence, particularly sexual violence. In addition, the yearly Youth Day Festivals and Church-Based Community Organisation rallies held in Wentworth could provide opportunities to spearhead the fight against men's and boys` callous and misogynistic practices against women and girls. However, merely inculcating a respect for girls in boys will not in itself alleviate the problem, since girls are not passive recipients of boys` callous and crude sexual antics, but are actively involved in initiating sex and upholding callous and crude masculinities. This highlights the need to work

with girls and to examine their particular experiences, perceptions and behaviours. Although the focus of this study is not on girls, these findings demonstrate the need to examine the notion of girls as simply passive recipients of boys` antics and to investigate their constructions of their gender. This paves the way for future research in challenging the dominant assumption that boys want sex and girls want love. Those interventions that seek to transform ideas of masculinity that privilege heterosexual success, the denigration of women and girls, and the exercising of control over women and girls can be effective in combating misogynistic practices towards and against them. It is apparent that the common gendered perceptions and assumptions continue to play a central role in shaping the sexual behaviours, roles, and responsibilities of these boys. The prevalent rampantly hypersexualised masculinity that affords high status to multiple sexual conquests is cause for concern amongst this group of boys, particularly at a time when HIV and AIDS have a devastating impact on the community in Wentworth. In order to address these sexual health needs and to highlight the severity of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, including the prevention thereof, educators and health care workers must address the close connection between gender norms and sexual behaviour in sex and sexuality education in schools.

It is essential for all stakeholders, namely principals, teachers, learners, parents and community workers, to provide and present a united front in dealing with the scourge of toxic masculinities by offering and encouraging alternative, more positive modes of social interaction. Soccer is one such activity which could be useful here. Besides its ability to promote more harmonious relationships between these boys and their teachers, the community, as stated in Chapter Two, places great value on soccer skills and strongly supports this sport. Soccer has been and still is a very cohesive factor in this community. From my experience, soccer tournaments in this community have been extremely well suported, with players and supporters often giving up their entire weekends to be involved in the games.

I do not suggest that the recommendations and suggestions I have put forward are a panacea for this complex problem and neither am I underestimating the multiple social forces at work that militate against rethinking and remaking what it means for these Coloured boys to be `real men`. My hope lies in these boys' potential for resistance, which hope I derive from the evidence they have presented that proves they are capable of rejecting the stereotyped vision of what it is to be a working-class Coloured boy. In demonstrating their ability to remake and reconstitute alternative masculine identities, and their aptitude for nonconformity, illustrates genuine potential for working with these boys. In the Preface I expressed the hope that I have for Coloured boys, and this has strong resonance with the belief that we should strive towards 'making hope practical, rather than despair convincing' (Lingard, 2007: x). The long-term benefits we seek for boys will be achieved by changing many of their behaviours and attitudes from *within* masculinity. Men and boys have a significant role to play in addressing gender inequalities – a role which actively engages them in challenging existing stereotypes and practices and stereotypical understandings of masculinity (Longlands, 2008).

In closing I refer to Connell`s statement, with which I concur: `The notion of constructed masculinities is not simply a matter of intellectual debate, it is clearly central to understanding not only policy making in intellectual debate, but also in the health services, violence prevention, policing and social services` (2000:5).

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GLOSSARY

act away	*being nasty or anti-social*
aright	*ok/alright*
bang the cherrie	*have sex with the girl*
blow	*oral sex (blow job)*
bluffing	*lying*
bras	*friends*
bully	*old man*
catching a hiding	*getting hit*
Checking	*looking/observing/noticing*
cherrie	*girl/girlfriend*
Classing you with a style	*making a fool of you*
combering	*blame/tell on him*
chooning	*talking*
dallah	*interfere*
dizzy	*stupid*
dop	*drink/alcohol*
gates	*girl`s vagina*
get a cut	*get some money for work done*

glamour boy	*boy who is popular with girls*
gonna	*going to*
graft	*work*
having a jol	*having a good time*
heavies	*difficult*
hele	*a whole lot (many)*
hitting	*having sex*
hit up with a luck	*get something for less than it`s worth*
joyila	*interfere with/mess about*
main ou	*main man*
min	*not worried/ not interested*
nip	*stop it (nip in the bud)*
one two times	*a few times*
on the pie	*having sex with the girl*
on top of the same thing	*understand each other*
ous	*men*
party animals	*those who love parties and good times*
piece	*girl`s vagina*

plaaring	*teasing*
playa	*boy who is popular with girls*
plus	*also*
put them in their place	*give a tongue-lashing*
scab	*slut or bitch*
shova	*hustle (ing)*
snaai	*stupid*
sny	*give bad/dirty looks*
swak	*bad, no money ;`out of pocket`*
therewa	*there*
throw her up	*try to convince her to have a relationship/sex*
togged	*dressed up*
tryna	*trying to*
vol cherrie	*girl who knows what is happening*
vol for line ups	*ok to be part of gang banging*
Vloek (ing)	*swear (ing)*
know how it`s waaing	*know how things happen around here*
what kind?	*what is going on?*

what kind ek se?	*what are you doing/ what is going on? (referring to another*
	male)

APPENDIX A – MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA (Taken from Bhana, 2002 PH.D thesis)
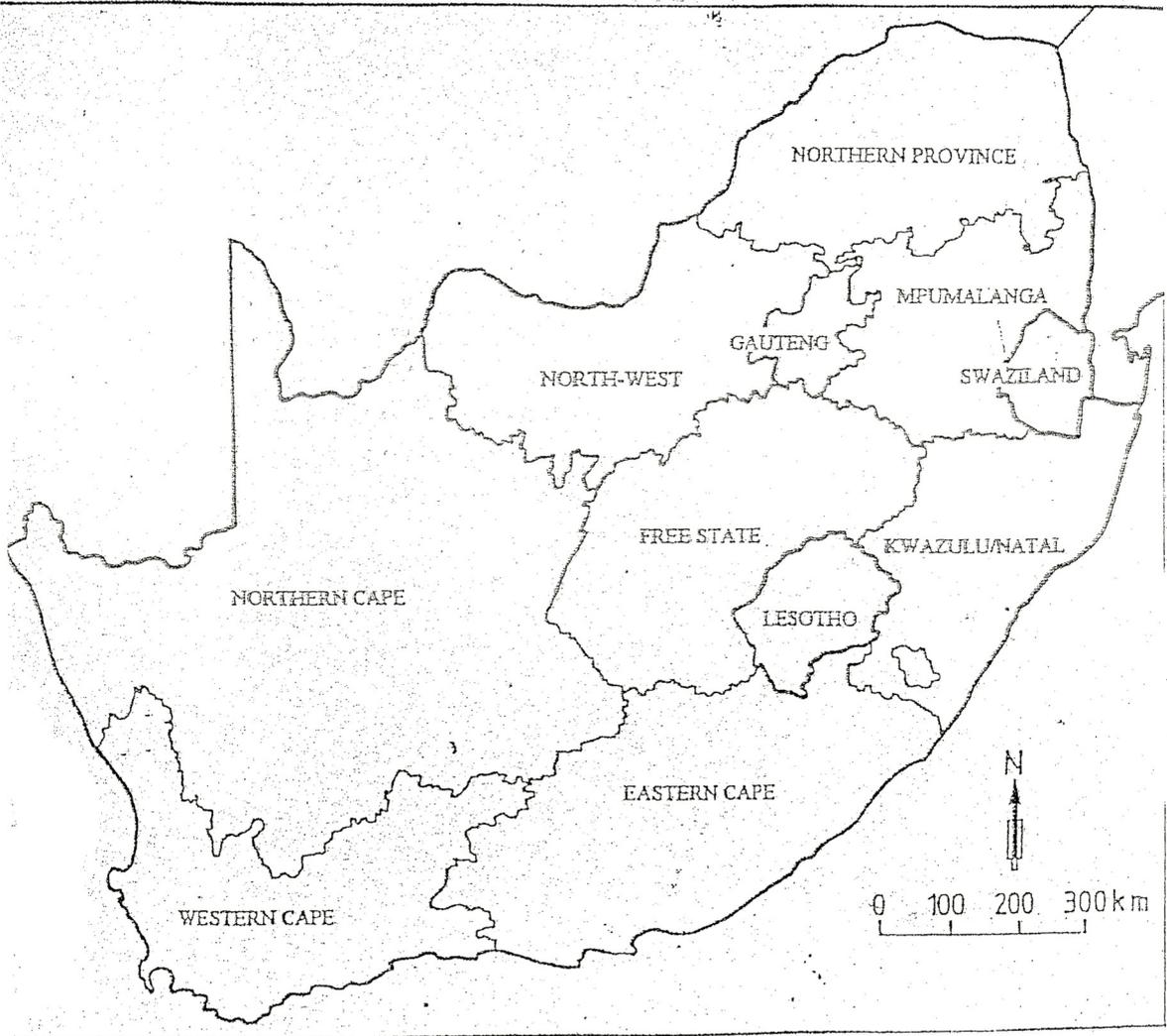
APPENDIX B – LOCATION MAP OF FIVE FORMER COLOURED GROUP AREAS OF KWAZULU-NATAL (taken from Jones, 1998 Masters Thesis)

LEGEND
- Former White Areas
- Former Coloured Areas
- Former Indian Areas
- Former African Areas
- Industrial Areas

Newlands East

Greenwood Park

Sydenham

Mariannridge

Wentworth

N

0   2   4
Kilometres

Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA   Durban

Cape Town   Study area

INDIAN OCEAN

C: Treasure Beach

N

ENGEN

B: Wentworth

A: Austerville

JACOBS
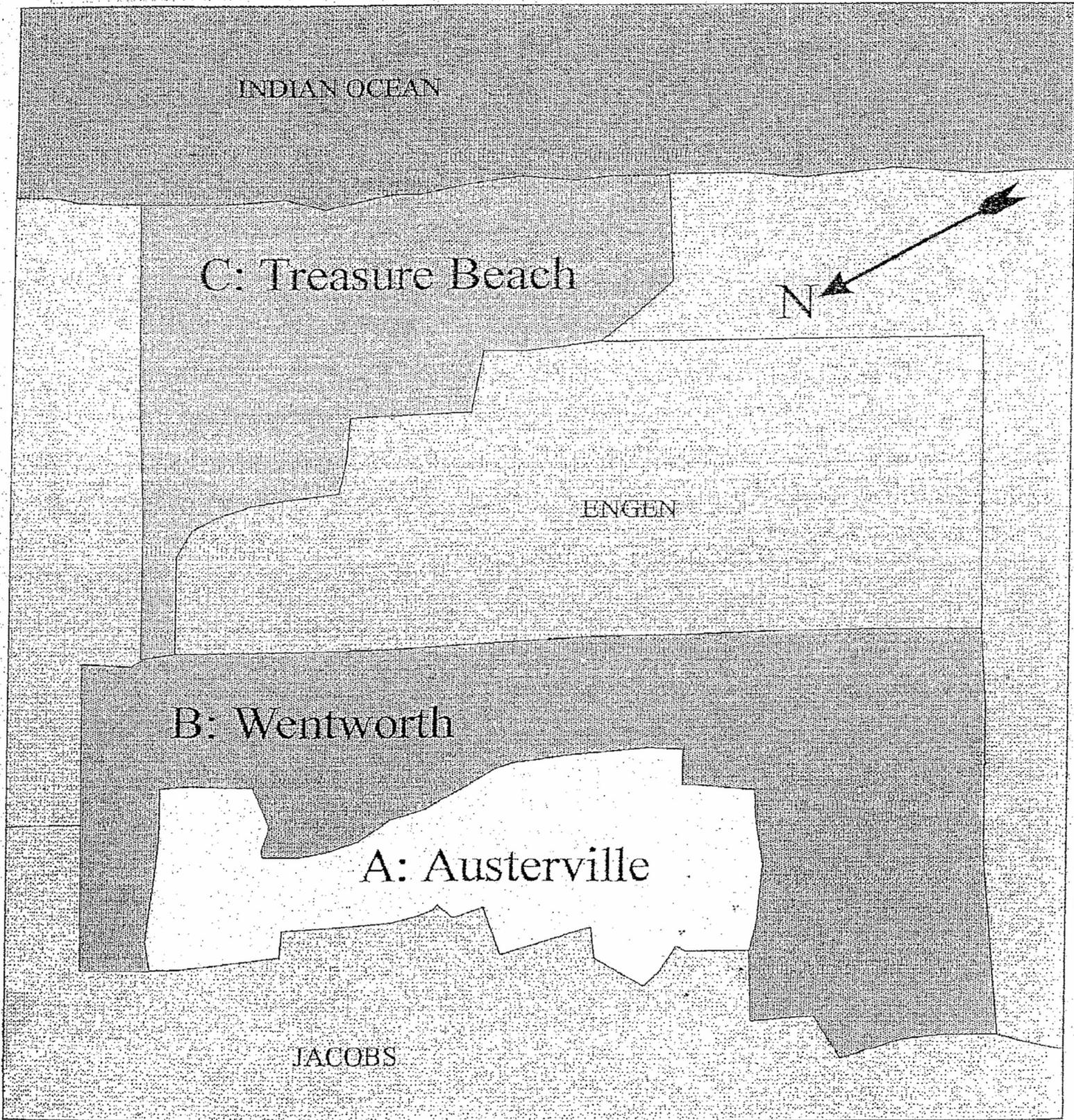
APPENDIX D – FLATS IN WENTWORTH (Pictures taken by Lee Diedricks)
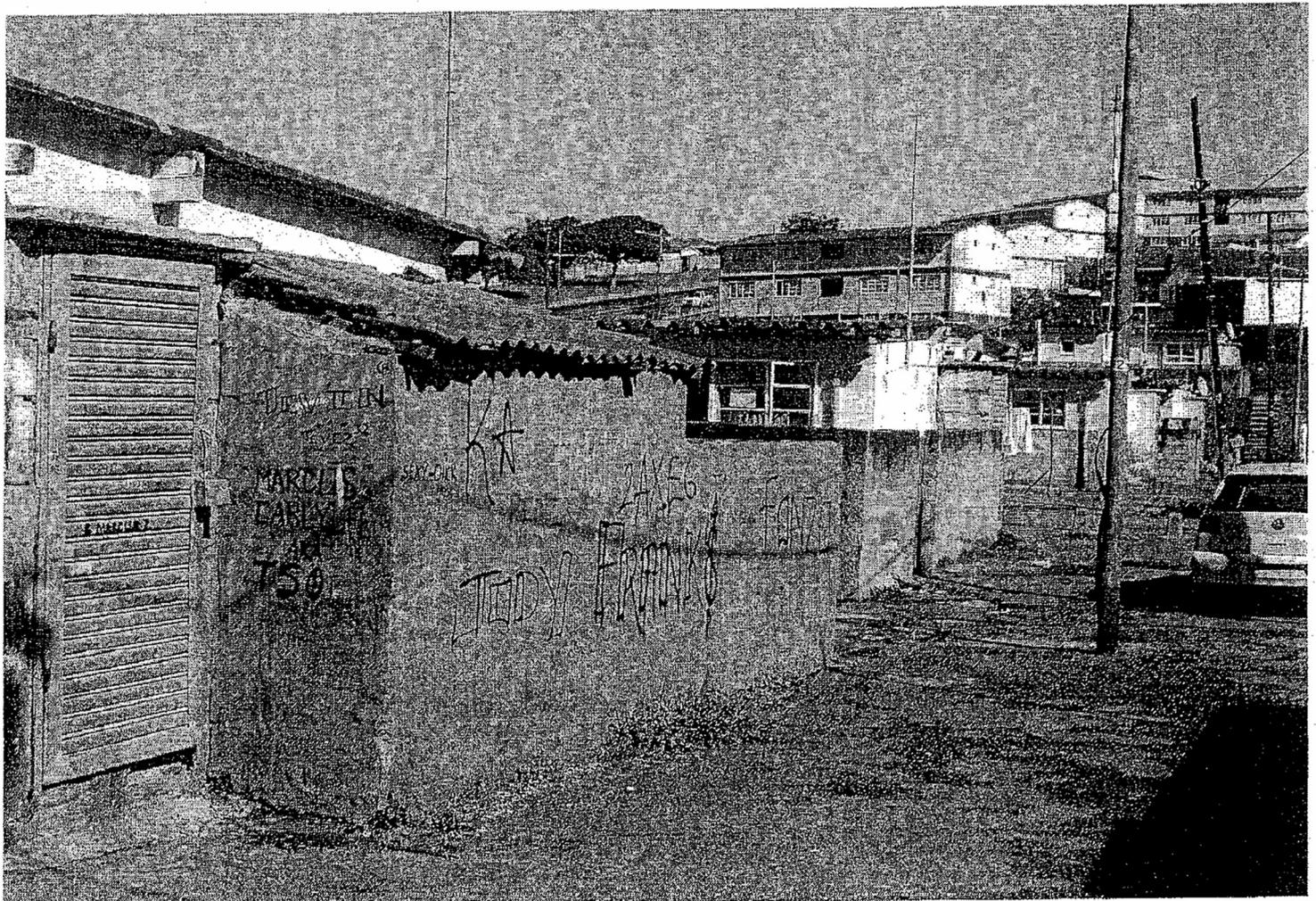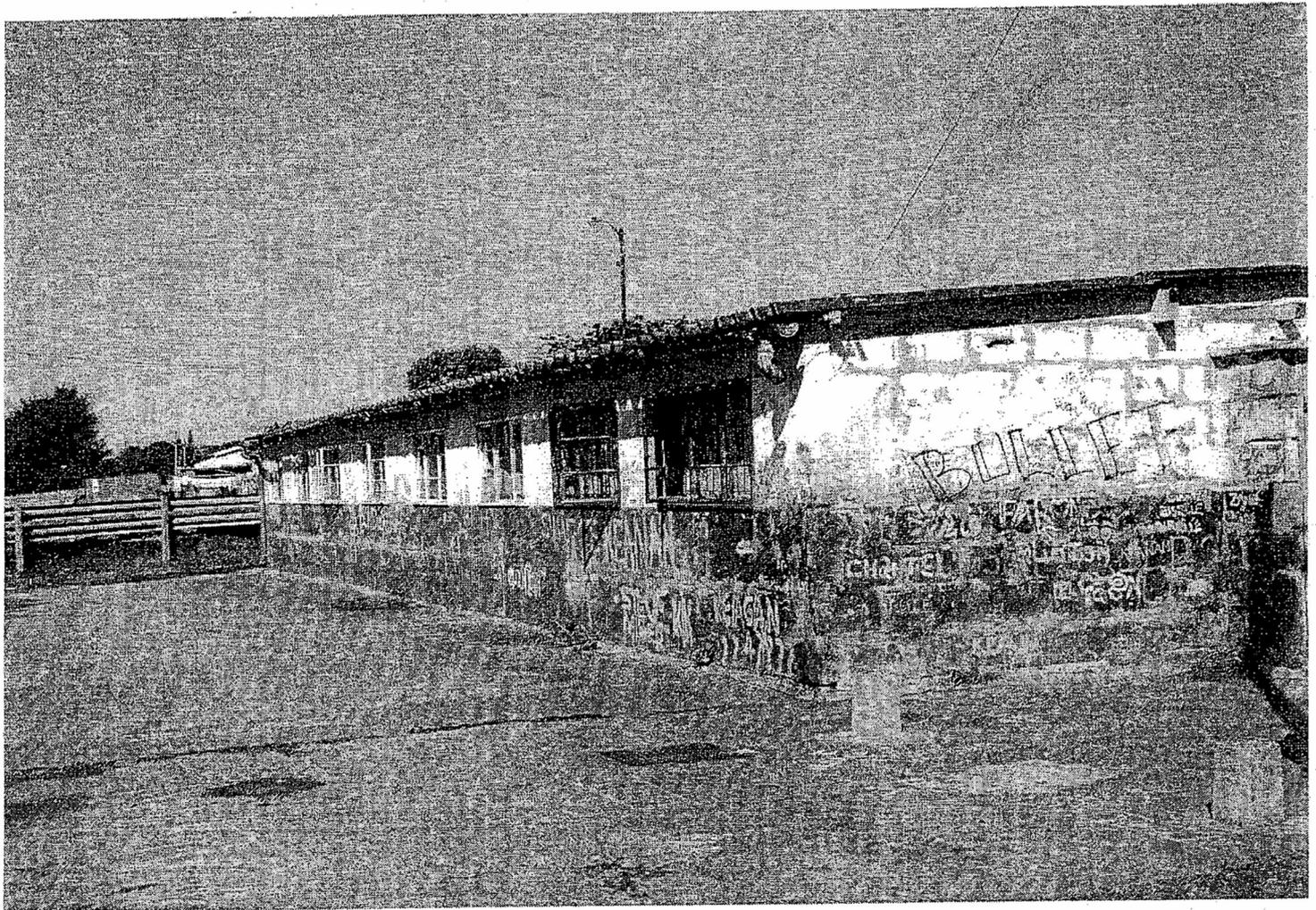
APPENDIX – FLATS IN WENTWORTH (Pictures taken by Lee Diedricks)
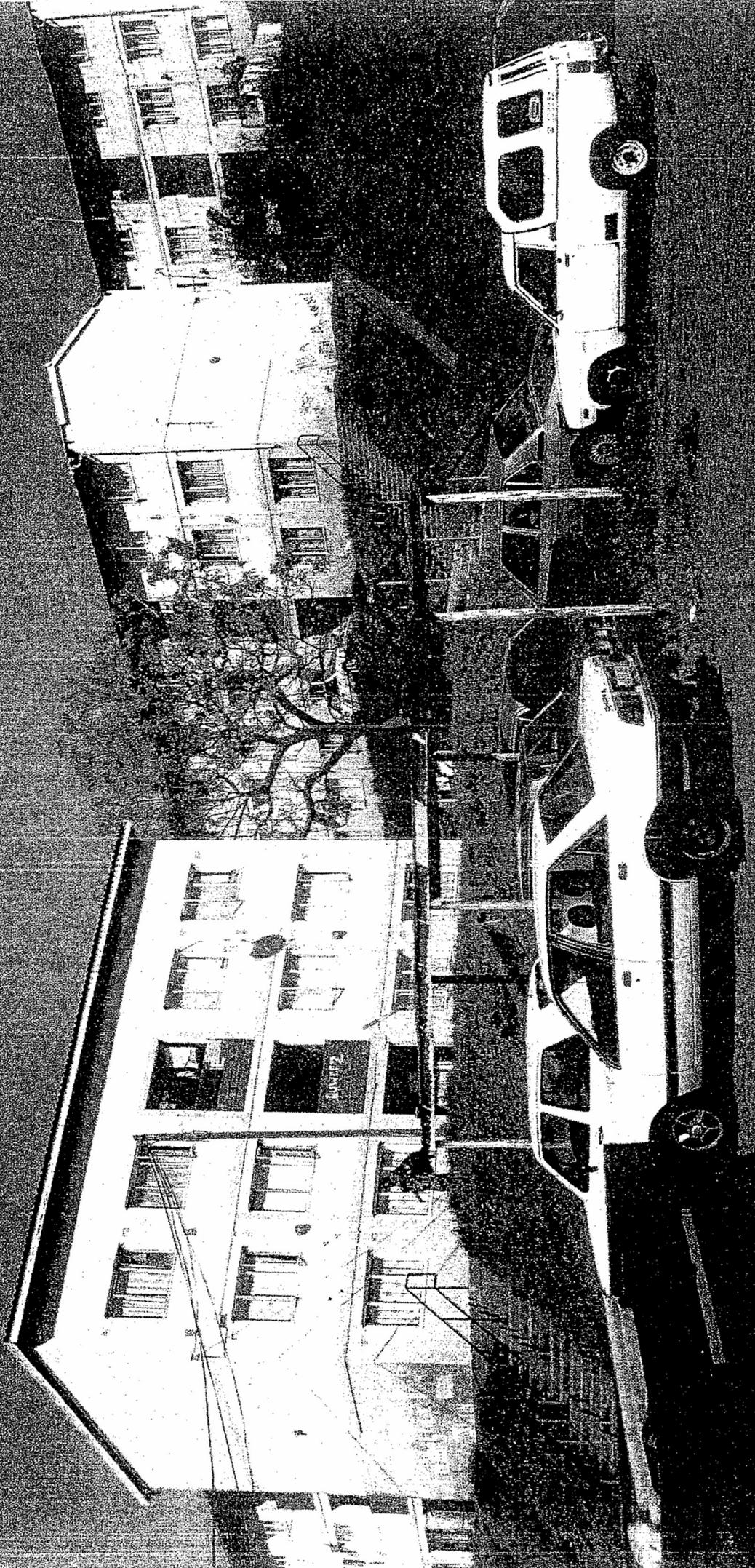
APPENDIX E – LOCATION OF OIL REFINERY IN WENTWORTH (Pictures taken by Lee Diedricks)
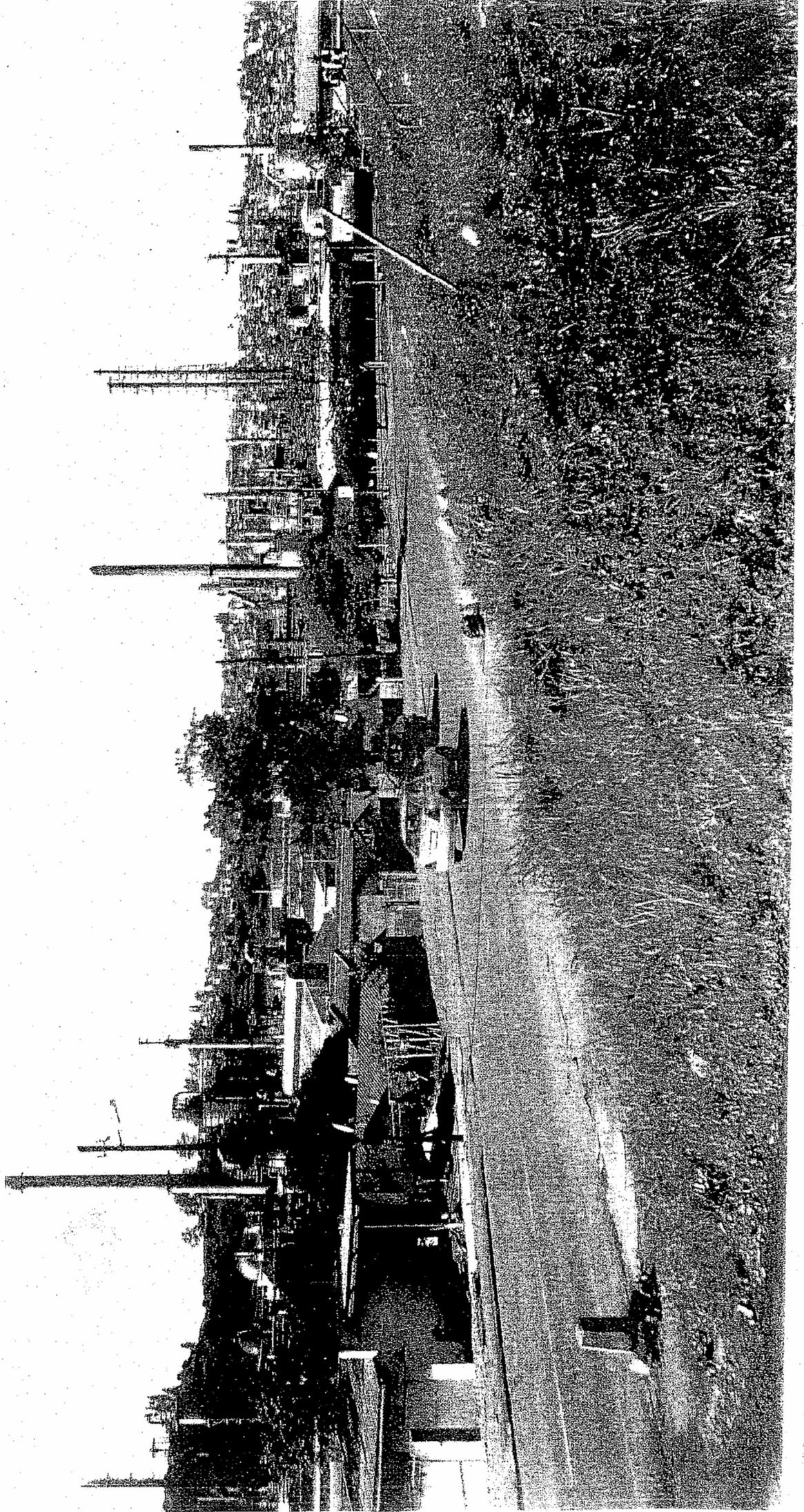
APPENDIX F

Group Interview Schedule: Conducted first – before individual interviews

I firstly introduced myself, that is, my name, where I live, some background of where I grew up and where I schooled. I spoke about my family and my son who is (was) in the same age group as my participants. I then asked them whether there was anything else they would like to know about me (provided it was within limits). This went on for about fifteen minutes and then I began informally asking them about themselves. Each boy introduced himself and told me a little about where he lives, who he lives with, something about his family and his likes and dislikes.

The interview questions include the following in no particular order, with the participants` responses determining the direction and pace of the interviews. Depending on the responses to previous questions I prompted and probed and often it was not necessary to ask certain questions because the participants often spoke at length and covered questions that were forthcoming.

Topics covered:

Friendships

Are you boys (participants) friends with each other?

If not, who are your friends?

Where are your friends from?

Are you close to your friends?

Do you share intimate details with your friends?

Are your friends affiliated to gangs?

Do you befriend girls?

Are you closer to girls or boys?

Do your friendships with girls differ from that of boys? Explain.

What do you value in a friend/ friendship?

Teachers and school

Do you like/dislike school? Explain.

Tell me about your teachers. Which teachers do you like/dislike? Discuss.

How are you punished for misdemeanours?

Do you think these measures are effective? Explain.

Relationships with girls and other boys

Describe your relationships with other boys in the school.

Describe your relationship with girls in the school.

Do you respect girls? Explain

Sexual relationships

Who of you has a girlfriend?

Do you have one girlfriend? Explain.

How do you treat your girlfriends?

What are your expectations of your girlfriend?

How do you expect them to treat you?

Gang affiliations and violence

Do you get into fights in school? Explain

Do any of you belong to a gang? Explain

What kinds of violent acts / incidents have you been involved in?

Have you witnessed extreme forms of violence? Explain

Interview Guides

Individual interviews

Biographical data

Name

Grade

Where do you live?

Who do you live with?

Employment situation

Weekend/leisure activities

Likes and dislikes

Ambitions

1. Questions based on the following in no particular order. Largely depends on boys` responses with less input from the interviewer. Boys` responses determine the direction that the interview takes. The interviewer merely prompts and asks leading questions or for boys to provide more detail.

Schooling:

What are your favourite subjects? Why?

Which subjects do you dislike? Explain.

What are your perceptions and experiences of your teachers in this school?

Do you enjoy school? Explain.

What are your experiences of getting into trouble?

Who are your friends at school? Substantiate.

What are your perceptions of girls in the school?

What are your perceptions of boys in the school?

Describe your relationships with girls in the school.

Describe your relationships with other boys in the school?

Sex and sexuality

Talk about your relationships with girls (girlfriend – boyfriend)

Talk about your sexual relationships.

Do you have a girlfriend?

How do you treat your girlfriend and how do you expect her to treat you?

Do you have many girlfriends? Discuss.

What are your perceptions and attitudes towards effeminate or homosexual boys?

Violence

What are your experiences of getting involved in violence?

Is it only boys who are violent? Explain.

Are there still gangs in Wentworth?

Do any of you belong to gangs? Discuss.

How do you feel about gang affiliation? Explain.

Aspirations

Where would you like to see yourself in a few years? Career/ambition

Would you like to get married?

What type of girl would you like to marry? Explain.

What type of work would you like to do? Explain.

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Establish that teachers teach these boys

Teachers to talk about the types of trouble they get into

How do teachers deal with these problems? Are the disciplinary interventions effective? Discuss.

Discuss your experiences of teaching these boys.

What are the teachers` perceptions of these boys?

Talk about incidents of violence in the school.

What are your perceptions of these boys` relationships with other boys and girls in the school?

Does the school try to assist these boys in any way to modify their behaviour?

3 Ernest Bower Place
Treasure Beach
DURBAN
4052
18 October 2005

The Department of Education and Culture
Truro House
DURBAN
4001

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/ Madam

Permission sought to conduct research in a government school _Senior Secondary School.)._

I would like to apply to do the above.

I am currently a registered doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu – Natal and am in the process of writing a thesis on boys and masculinity. The title of this research project is: *Coloured boys in trouble: An ethnographic investigation into the construction of coloured working class masculinities in a High School in Wentworth, Durban.*

This study seeks to investigate the kinds of trouble that are associated with some coloured boys in a working class context in Durban. The aim of my study is to highlight the specific experiences of `coloured` boys who get into trouble at school. The implications of these experiences will be important in suggesting ways of working with troublesome boys. Currently there exists no school policy in helping and being sympathetic to these boys. The study aims to find key ways in making schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys.

The data to be presented in this thesis will be obtained from an ethnographic study based on the life stories of boys in High School, in Wentworth, Durban. It will be a year –long ethnography that will utilise participant observation as well as individual and group in-depth, semi- structured interviews.

I previously taught at Durban East Primary School and conducted research on boys' naughty behaviour in that school. It is evident that very little attention has been given to the experiences of coloured boys in schools. This study will set out to examine this by drawing upon what boys say and do in school, and how they see themselves, other boys and girls.

The informed consent of the principal, teachers and boys will be sought to conduct interviews. All the participants will be briefed as to the exact nature and purpose of the study. The manner in which the interviews are to be recorded will be discussed and explained to all participants. Participants will be assured of utmost confidentiality

and anonymity. In addition, they will be informed that their participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw or discontinue participation at any time. They also will have the right to refuse to answer certain questions if they choose to.

It will be greatly appreciated if permission to conduct this study would be granted. I have already approached the principal of this school and he has given me permission to do this study in his school, provided that he receives permission from the Education Department.

Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.
Yours faithfully
Bronwynne Anderson

Supervisor of research: Dr.Deevia Bhana
                        University of Kwazulu- Natal
        Contact no.   2602603

Researcher : Bronwynne Anderson
                University of Kwazulu-Natal
        Contact no.   4682486
                         0845115479

An investigation into the construction of coloured working class masculinities.

Informed consent of research participants

Parents of participants and participants

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am currently a registered doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu – Natal and am in the process of writing a thesis on boys and masculinity.
The title of this research project is: *`Coloured` boys in trouble: An ethnographic investigation into the construction of `coloured` working class masculinities in a High School in Wentworth, Durban.*

This study seeks to investigate the kinds of trouble that are associated with some coloured boys in a working class context in Durban. The aim of my study is to highlight the specific experiences of coloured boys who get into trouble at school. The implications of these experiences will be important in suggesting ways of working with troublesome boys. Currently there exists no school policy in helping and being sympathetic to these boys. The study aims to find key ways in making schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys.

The data to be presented in this thesis will be obtained from an ethnographic study based on the life stories of boys in . High School. It will be a year –long ethnography that will utilise participant observation as well as individual and group in-depth, semi- structured interviews.

I previously taught at Durban East Primary School and conducted research on boys' naughty behaviour in that school. It is evident that very little attention has been given to the experiences of `coloured` boys in schools. This study will set out to examine this by drawing upon what boys say and do in school, and how they see themselves, other boys and girls.

I hereby seek permission to interview your son / guardian for the purpose of this study. The way in which the research will be conducted, as well as how interviews are to be recorded, will be adequately explained to you at a later date.
I will assure you of the utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

It will be greatly appreciated if you would grant me permission to interview your son / guardian. I assure you that the boys who are selected for this research project will be treated with the utmost care and respect. There are no foreseeable risks in . participating in this study.

Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.
Yours faithfully
Bronwynne Anderson

REPLY SLIP
PARENT

I, ..., parent / guardian of ....

.... in Grade .... hereby grant permission / do not grant

permission for him to participate in the above-mentioned study. I do understand that

the only way we may benefit is through the impact of this research on making

schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys.

Signature ....   Date...............................

....

PARTICIPANT

I, ... a Grade .... learner at   Senior

Secondary School hereby agree/ do not agree to participate in the above-mentioned

study. I do understand that the only way I may benefit is through the impact of this

research on making schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys. I am

aware that participation in this project is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any

time or refuse to answer any questions that I may not wish to respond to.

....

Supervisor of research: Dr.Deevia Bhana
                        University of Kwazulu- Natal
          Contact no.   2602603

Researcher : Bronwynne Anderson
                University of Kwazulu-Natal
          Contact no.   4682486
                         0845115479

EDUCATORS

An investigation into the construction of `coloured` working class masculinities.

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am currently a registered doctoral student at the University of KwaZulu – Natal and am in the process of writing a thesis on boys and masculinity.
The title of this research project is: `*Coloured* ` *boys in trouble: An ethnographic investigation into the construction of `coloured` working class masculinities in a High School in Wentworth, Durban.*

This study seeks to investigate the kinds of trouble that are associated with some `coloured` boys in a working class context in Durban. The aim of my study is to highlight the specific experiences of `coloured` boys who get into trouble at school. The implications of these experiences will be important in suggesting ways of working with troublesome boys. Currently there exists no school policy in helping and being sympathetic to these boys. The study aims to find key ways in making schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys.

The data to be presented in this thesis will be obtained from an ethnographic study based on the life stories of boys in   High School. It will be a year –long ethnography that will utilise participant observation as well as individual and group in-depth, semi- structured interviews.

I previously taught at Durban East Primary School and conducted research on boys` naughty behaviour in that school. It is evident that very little attention has been given to the experiences of `coloured` boys in schools. This study will set out to examine this by drawing upon what boys say and do in school, and how they see themselves, other boys and girls.

I hereby seek permission to interview you for the purpose of this study. The manner in which the research will be conducted, as well as how interviews are to be recorded, will be adequately explained to you at a later date.
I will assure you of the utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

It will be greatly appreciated if you would grant me permission to interview you at a time which is most convenient for you.

Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.
Yours faithfully
Bronwynne Anderson
Student Number at UKZN IS 991234732.

Contact details : (031) 4682486

REPLY SLIP

I, ...,........................, an educator at   Senior

Secondary School, hereby agree/ do not agree to participate in the above-mentioned study. I do understand that the only way I may benefit is through the impact of this research on making schooling better and more sensitive to the plight of boys. I am aware that participation in this research project is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any questions that I may not wish to.

Signature ....   Date.................................

Supervisor of research: Dr.Deevia Bhana
                    University of Kwazulu- Natal
      Contact no.   2602603

Researcher : Bronwynne Anderson
              University of Kwazulu-Natal
      Contact no.   4682486
                    0845115479

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Telephone: 468 4409   Fax: 468 6582   Private Bag X07   Austerville 4005

01 September 2005

Faculty of Higher Degrees Committee
University of Kwazulu-Natal

To Whom It May Concern:

RESEARCH ON MASCULINITY : (BOYS 14 - 17 YEARS OLD)

Approval for the research has been granted to **BRONWYNNE ANDERSON** (PHD student of University of Kwazulu Natal). An outline of the research project has been presented to me.

P.G.BISHOP
PRINCIPAL

APPENDIX H – ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

30 NOVEMBR 2005

MRS. BM ANDERSON (991234732)
EDUCATION

Dear Mrs. Anderson

<u>ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER:</u> HSS/05225A

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

"Coloured boys in trouble: An ethnographic investigation into the construction of 'coloured' working class masculinities in a high school in Wentworth, Durban"

Yours faithfully
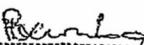
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)
cc. Supervisor (Dr. D Bhana)