

Children's Engagements with Violence: A Study in a South African School

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Abstract

This thesis is an account of a qualitative study which set out to explore the meanings for children of living with violence. Using a social constructionist epistemology, I examine how, through social relationships, children (co-)construct beliefs, values and practices in relation to violence, and consider the implications for violence prevention.

Set in the changing context of post-apartheid South Africa, the study was located in a primary school in a township of Cape Town, where gangsterism, criminal and domestic violence were rife. With 36 children (aged 8, 10 and 13 years), I carried out a series of semi-structured interviews and group sessions, using participatory data-gathering techniques to explore themes of relationships, conflict and violence. Further ethnographic data was gathered through playground observation, working as a classroom assistant, and parent and teacher interviews. Forms of discourse analysis, blending frameworks from developmental psychology, social psychology and sociology, were used to analyse children's talk, thus creating a fine-grained analysis which is sensitive to children's creative engagement with multi-layered social relations. This emphasis on children's active construction of meaning differs from much of the social science literature, which assumes a uni-directional relationship and casts children as passive victims, sometimes caught up in a 'cycle' of violence.

The study reveals some of the complex, contradictory and shifting ways in which children engaged with violence in the social fields of the neighbourhood, peer relations and in adult-child relations. Three psycho-social processes were central to these engagements: *control* (agency), *connection* (inclusion) and *coherence* (sense making). But striving for control, connection and coherence generated tensions and conflicts. In managing these tensions, children sometimes colluded with and perpetuated forms of violence, but they also found ways to contest violent social relations. I construct a framework to illustrate these relationships, and consider how interventions, using this framework, can work with children to reduce the possibility of violence.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Engaging with Children and Violence

This thesis asks what it means to children to live with violence. It investigates children's 'engagements' with violence in South Africa – the ways in which children think, act and feel in relation to violence in their social worlds. I ask, what are the active and creative ways in which children engage with others when their social worlds are riven by violence? I believe that answering this question can help us to begin to change violent social relationships.

The study focuses on a group of primary school children living at the start of the 21st century in a violent neighbourhood of Cape Town. These children spent many hours talking with me about their lives, discussing with me and with each other their relationships, their conflicts and the violence they encountered at school, at home or in the neighbourhood, violence they witnessed or heard about, participated in or ran away from. They shared their problems and reflected on possible solutions. This thesis is my analysis of our talk.

'Engagement' is a social term, used in this thesis to stress children's social relationships, and in this opening chapter, I apply the term to the research relationship. Social relationships are at the heart of this thesis. Thus, I begin this chapter by locating the study in the social context of South Africa. I conceptualise violence as a form of social relation and children as social beings actively constructing the terms of their engagement. I introduce social constructionism as a guiding theoretical framework and show how in this research, I have drawn on approaches from developmental and social psychology and sociology. Through this theoretical synthesis, I address questions about power and agency, considering possibilities for continuity and change in children's engagements, caught up in a web of violent social relations. I introduce my own engagement in the research. Finally, I outline how the thesis organisation engages with questions about children and violence in South Africa.

The Social Context of South Africa

This research took place in South Africa, seven years after the first elections in 1994 heralded the advent of democracy and ended the brutal and repressive apartheid regime. With democracy, a vast programme of reforms has begun, aiming to promote human rights, equality and social justice (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996). But apartheid, and colonialism, have left a legacy of continuing disparities in economic and social circumstances, high levels of unemployment and rates of violent crime amongst the highest in the world, particularly in poorer communities, where people are 80 times more likely than the rich to be the victims of violent crime (Hamber, 2000). Violence enters into children's lives in multiple realms – in the neighbourhood, in schools and in families, leading to perceptions of South Africa as a “culture of violence” (Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999). Much of the violence is enacted by men and connected with the social construction of forms of masculinity which “both reflect the region's turbulent past and have been a cause of that turbulent past” (Morrell, 2001: 12). While men and women, boys and girls, may be the victims of violence, rates of sexual violence against women and girls are very high: “On a daily basis in schools across the nation, South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school that impedes their realisation of the right to education” (Human Rights Watch, 2001: 1).

The study is located in a working class neighbourhood of metropolitan Cape Town, where there are high levels of unemployment, gangsterism, and criminal and domestic violence (Jones Peterson & Carolissen, 2000). The neighbourhood was constructed in the mid-twentieth century to house people relocated, because of their racial designation, from their homes in central Cape Town under the policy of forced removals. The designation ‘coloured’, stemmed from early colonial days when it was used to describe all non-Europeans living in the Cape Colony, but during the twentieth century increasingly it became used to describe people who were neither ‘white’ nor ‘African’. In the years of apartheid it became one of the official racial categories: “a symbolic and literal dumping ground for the hybrid peoples, who did not quite ‘fit into’ other pure apartheid classifications” (Field, 2001: 217). Like Africans, coloured people were disenfranchised, segregated and discriminated against in all areas of life in relation to whites, but at the same time given some political, social and economic preference over Africans, in the attempt to

restrict the influx of Africans into the Western Cape and to fragment opposition to the government (Goldin, 1987). Ian Goldin's work has shown how coloured social identities have throughout the twentieth century been contested and ambiguous (Goldin, 1987), but the term is still in common usage and was used as a marker of self-description by adults and children in this study (see chapter 3). In this thesis, following South African usage, I will use the term black to refer to all non-white population groups, except where I discuss historically constituted social identities related to racial designation and so need to distinguish between Coloured, Indian and African (the indigenous population which predated European colonisation).

The advent of democracy in South Africa in the 1990s and the enshrinement of rights, equality and social justice in the Constitution (1996) heralded changes across all avenues of life. In societies which are undergoing rapid social change, cultural practices may be transformed within a generation (Miller & Goodnow, 1995) and recent South African research has identified changing forms of masculinity reflecting these transitions, as well as the persistence of older forms (Morrell, 2001a; Unterhalter, 2004).

Children in today's South Africa will learn about these changing policies and practices through the media and through education. They will have no memory of the apartheid regime, but attitudes and practices live on through their relationships with their parents, teachers and grandparents, through the imprint of the memories on the present. Through their experiences of social relationships at home, at school and in the neighbourhood, they will construct ways of engaging with the social world. And when these social relationships entail violence, how much sense will words like freedom, equality, rights and justice make to children? This study explores how within these layers of social relationships, children construct their understandings of and engagements with violence.

The Meanings of Violence

The South African context illustrates the ways in which multiple forms of violence are woven together. Violence is "a slippery concept" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004: 2), it is difficult to define, and a stress on the physicality – the physical act itself and the infliction of pain - ignores its social context:

Violent acts, as they are reported in the media, are distilled from the particularities of the social grounds from which they emerge, and that they, in turn, aim to modify through power. Reports tend to

fetishise violence, restricting its location to forced incursions into and the mutilation of bodies.... The beginnings and endings of violent circumstances and their meanings for individuals are much more intangible and wide ranging (Henderson, 1999: 85).

Violence is not random, or reflective of breakdown or disorder, but is a form of communication, which bears many meanings (Harvey and Gow, 1994). Etymologically, the word violence has roots in the latin words *vis latus* – to have carried force – and *violare* - to violate, outrage, desecrate, infringe (Degenaar, 1990). This notion of violation shifts the focus from the act itself to the social meanings – the intentions, the consequences. It is this derivation that has led to an expansion of understandings of violence to include symbolic and structural violence, which violate through imposing power, as in the South African context where: “far from being an ‘aberration’ certain prevalent forms of coercion are socially embedded, historically continuous and deeply linked to decades of structural violence manifested in racial prejudice, labour exploitation and continuing poverty” (Wood, 2002: 241). Violence in relationships between individuals needs to be contextualized within social, economic and political social relations (Das et al., 2000). The anthropologists, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, point out that paying attention to the physical aspects can stimulate a “pornography of violence” in which voyeurism subverts the more critical attention to social relations of injustice and suffering. They argue that a weakness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the attention paid to acts of extreme violence rather than these social relations:

The elderly victim of apartheid who stood before the TRC seeking restitution for the grove of fruit trees uprooted from his yard by security police was treated as a sweet distraction amidst the serious work of the Commission. But the old man spoke to the very heart of apartheid’s darkness and to the more inclusive meanings of state and political violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004: 2).

The focus on reconciliation or restorative justice, they argue, sidetracks the need for redistributive justice. They propose a view of violence as a continuum, which enables connections to be drawn between extreme forms of violence, including war and genocide, and the everyday violence or social suffering stressed in Pierre Bourdieu’s later work (Bourdieu and et al, 1999):

By including the normative everyday forms of violence hidden in the minutiae of ‘normal’ social practices – in the architecture of homes, in gender relations, in communal work, in the exchange of gifts, and so forth – Bourdieu forces us to reconsider the broader meanings and status of violence, especially the links between the violence of everyday life and explicit political terror and state repression (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004: 20).

In this thesis, I view violence as a form of social relationship, a way of communicating which may have multiple meanings. I focus on how children talk about the exceptional violence – murders, rapes and shootings – and the ‘everyday’ violences – the violences

children choose to talk about – their fights in the playground, the gang violence they encounter in the neighbourhood, the drunken fights of adults and the physical punishments at home or at school. I explore how children interpret or make sense of this violence – whether it is seen as legitimate or illegitimate, as productive or destructive. I consider the contradictions and complexities in children’s perspectives. Children are enmeshed within a web of social relationships, and in this study I explore how violence enters into this web, how it coerces, negotiates, controls, reinforces and shifts these social relations and how children engage in these processes.

Children as Active, Social Beings

Understanding the social contours of violence is central to this study, but the notion of children ‘enmeshed within a web of social relationships’ seems to offer little room for agency and change. Indeed, the vast body of literature on children and violence awards children little control or power in relation to violence, with children conceptualised as passive victims, perhaps caught up in a ‘cycle of violence’ which turns innocent children into violent adults (see chapter 2). I chose the term ‘engagements’ in the title of the thesis to present a more generative conceptualisation of children as active, creative beings who construct their ways of engaging with the world through their social relationships. This conceptualisation draws on ideas from developmental psychology, which, influenced by the work of Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, has shifted in recent years from a view of the child as an active, but isolated agent to an emphasis on the child as social being:

We have come to appreciate that through such social life, the child acquires a framework for interpreting experience, and learns how to negotiate meaning in a manner congruent with the requirements of the culture. 'Making sense' is a social process; it is an activity that is always situated within a cultural and historical context (Bruner et al., 1987: 1).

This strand of developmental psychology, known as interpretive or constructivist, has led to an emphasis on how children construct meaning within social context and how these meanings are dependent on the available repertoire of belief systems, or discourses, within a culture, so babies: "come bathed in the concepts their community holds about babies just as surely as they come bathed in amniotic fluid" (Cole, 1996: 184). Development is viewed as a reciprocal process, with the child acting in relation to her social network. The analytic focus arising from this in much recent developmental psychology is the learning relationship – that of the pre-school child and parent or sibling within the home (Bruner, 1990; Dunn & Munn, 1987; Dunn et al., 1995) or the teacher, child and activity or practice within school (Cole, 1996), or the child and cultural practices (Goodnow, Miller and

Kessel, 1995; Rogoff et al., 1995). There is an emphasis on the processes of meaning formation, on how, in Vygotskian terms, learning is driven by internal contradictions and transformations, first social and then individual, and how the pedagogical implications include teaching and learning through participation, collaboration and negotiation.

These ideas are employed in this study to help to identify processes through which children construct meanings within and through social relationships. In particular, I consider children's social relationships with each other, and how peer relationships might entail violence or might provide important sources of social support. Drawing on interpretive research methods, I chose to focus on the fine-grained analysis of talk and to consider how talk between children in groups and with me, as researcher, has contributed to the co-creation of meaning. But there are limitations in the value of these approaches in this study. Kenneth Gergen has criticised the incoherence of the logic in constructivist approaches which acknowledge the social construction of meaning formation yet continue to subscribe to a dualist ontology that separates the internal 'mind' from the external 'world' (Gergen, 2001: 123-4). With violence deeply embedded in social relationships, then the focus of this study needs to be those social relationships and the configurations of power and control which generate violence, and which are frequently neglected in developmental research (Daniels, 2001: 63). The quest for a theoretical framework focusing on these social relations drew me to a critical engagement with social constructionism, and to explore, in addition to developmental approaches, approaches from social psychology and sociology less often used in research with children.

Social Constructionism

In conceptualising children as social beings and violence as a form of social relation, I am taking an epistemological stance to research which is social constructionist. Social constructionism has been highly influential in recent years in many disciplines and in this study, I draw on some of these interpretations across disciplinary boundaries, including developmental and social psychology, sociology and anthropology. At the heart of social constructionism is the view that our ways of seeing the world are generated by social relations rather than by external realities. This is not to say that there are no external realities, but that what is important in the study of humans is how we perceive and make

sense of the world around us and it is our historically and socially constituted relations that determine this:

Constructionism doesn't try to rule on what is or is not fundamentally real. Whatever is, simply is. However, the moment we begin to articulate what there is – what is truly or objectively the case – we enter a world of discourse – and thus a tradition, a way of life and a set of value preferences (Gergen, 1999: 222).

Rather than seeking facts or truths, social constructionism is interested in discourse, or those historically constituted repertoires, systems of belief or 'knowledges', which we take for granted as if they were facts and which construct our social identities:

Our identity therefore originates not from inside the person, but from the social realm, where people swim in a sea of language and other signs, a sea that is invisible to us because it is the very medium of our existence as social beings. In this sense the realm of language, signs and discourse is to the person as water is to the fish (Burr, 1995: 53).

This emphasis on discourse has been criticised for the potential slide into relativism and the apparent denial of the 'realities' of social inequities like racism or sexism (Mullender et al., 2002, Reason, 1998). For example, Ann Levett's controversial social constructionist analysis of child sexual abuse in South Africa challenged the assumption that sexual abuse always leads to psychological trauma. She argued that where gendered power relations normalise abuse, such consequences cannot be assumed: "we need to understand that it is a form of appropriation or neocolonisation to 'name' a girl raised in this context as 'sexually abused' and 'damaged' and to hold that a set of traumatic consequences is to be expected, as has been claimed for the metropolitan youth of North America, the UK and elsewhere" (Levett et al., 1997b: 127). Her analysis challenged the 'facts' we 'know' about child abuse and was therefore deeply threatening to social scientists (Dawes et al., 2004: 14). A social constructionist perspective challenges taken-for-granted meanings, viewing these as socially situated. This does not though prevent taking a political standpoint or position, but entails recognition that this is a position and that there are other possible positions. And since positions are mobile, it also anticipates greater potential for change than rigidly structuralist perspectives:

For many people this supposition is deeply threatening, for it suggests there is nothing we can hold onto, nothing solid on which we can rest our beliefs, nothing secure. Yet, for others this dark night of insecurity gives way to an enormous sense of liberation. In daily life, so many of our categories of understanding – of gender, age, race, intelligence, emotion, reason, and the like – seem to create untold suffering. And in the world more generally, so many common understandings – of religion, nationality, ethnicity, economics and the like – seem to generate conflict, alienation, injustice, and even genocide. From the constructionist standpoint we are not locked within any convention of understanding (Gergen, 1999: 47-8).

In studying children and violence, social constructionism can be highly discomforting for the researcher. It challenges me, as researcher, to examine my own assumptions about

violence, to question my 'instinctive' views that violence is harmful and that children should be protected from violence. I am forced to consider whether and how violence might be productive. It also challenges my temptation to position myself as a 'voice' for the child, empowering children through representing their views about violence. It urges me instead to consider how children's views are situated within their social webs, to understand that children's perspectives, like my own, are constructed in and through relationships, past, present and anticipated. My task is to try to make sense of these complex relationships.

Social constructionism attempts to make sense of relationships through the analysis of patterns of communication, and in this study the methodological focus is on children's talk. Talk is viewed as selective, partial, situated and fluid (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). So, when I ask a child about violence in the neighbourhood, her response will be influenced by her relationship with me, a (foreign, female) adult, and may be quite different from what she would say to her friend or her father. She may be thinking of violence witnessed on the way home from school yesterday, what she heard last week at church or mosque, or what she saw on television last night. Or she may be remembering a conversation she overheard between her mother and aunt, or her mother's words to her about where to play or not to play. And her mother's views will be influenced by her own life experiences, and for both their perspectives will be connected with their social identities as female, black and working class. And if these previous interactions have influenced the perspectives and practices we have now, then what about this present interaction? What impact might it have on the future? Talk is constructive, a form of social action: "discourse builds objects, worlds, minds and social relations. It doesn't just reflect them" (Wetherell, 2001: 16).

This gives the analysis of talk immense potential. As children talk about violent social relations, they co-create ways of engaging with violence. Analysis of their talk can tell us not just their opinions, but where those opinions come from, how they are constructed through social relations, how they are repeated, patterned and how they change. Through focusing on patterns and variability in talk, analysis can illuminate processes whereby beliefs and practices about violence are constructed and changed.

Power and Agency

At the same time, social constructionism pays attention to how talk is not just enabling, but also constraining, to how some discourses come to dominate, how they are appropriated by powerful groups and converted into 'knowledges', which constrain and subjugate less powerful people. The work of Michel Foucault on the relationship between knowledge and power shows how power is exercised through common knowledge or discourses, which function in a disciplinary way to produce 'docile bodies', with identities of dominant groups maintained through the denigration and exclusion of marginal groups (Foucault, 1978; Foucault, 1979). In South Africa, for example, the appropriation of social-Darwinist ideas about race by the National Party was used to justify policies of racial segregation and violence was a tool to enforce this subjugation (Goldin, 1987).

Within social psychology, these ideas, derived from Foucault, have been used to analyse how beliefs, subjectivity and practices are connected with material relations, so for example, how attitudes and practices in today's South Africa can be deconstructed, or traced back to the historical conflicts and inequities (Levett et al., 1997a). Forms of discourse analysis have been developed to analyse how social relations construct our ways of talking and how talk is constructive, how we are positioned by discourse and how our talk positions ourselves and others (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, Wetherell et al., 2001, Willig, 2001). Though much of this work is focused on the world of adults, rather than children, these ideas and the methods they have spawned, have been valuable in this study as tools for systematic analysis of children's talk about violence.

Poststructural analyses, and in particular, the work of Judith Butler, have highlighted the instability of gendered discourses or norms, which are constructed through regulatory practices in opposition to an excluded other and therefore are inherently unstable. To make these discourses appear natural, they must be frequently repeated or performed, reinscribed on to bodies, so reproducing social orders (Butler, 1999). In this analysis change happens at the margins, through actions that disrupt and displace gender norms (Butler, 1993). This approach has shown powerfully how in the primary playground or in secondary classrooms children adopt and perform particular gendered subject positions, which perpetuate inequitable relations between boys and girls (Thorne, 1993; Benjamin, 2002). In

researching children and violence, Butler's work helps to identify ways in which children's engagements with violent practices can reproduce power relations – between girls and boys, children and adults, rich and poor - while clarifying how those power relations are unstable and contested.

Lois McNay has argued that these poststructural theories offer a negative and uni-directional understanding of subject formation, since the view that subjectivity is discursively or symbolically constructed renders the subject essentially passive (McNay, 2000). She argues that the work of Pierre Bourdieu offers a more 'generative' paradigm, which takes into account not just the way disciplinary effects are sedimented in the body, but how the living through or 'praxis' of these embodied norms offers some space for agency. This is a more reciprocal way of viewing the relationship between subjectivity and social relations, or what Bourdieu calls 'habitus' and 'field':

A field consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital), while habitus consists of a set of historical relations 'deposited' within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation, and action (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 16).

According to Bourdieu, social relations operate within multiple fields – economic, political, religious, artistic and so on – in which agents struggle, either to preserve the field's boundaries or to change its form. Through using a game metaphor, Bourdieu illustrates how fields, like games, operate through rules and regularities, with the players colluding with the rules of the game, and having access to varying amounts and types of 'tokens' or capital (economic, intellectual, political...) with which to compete:

At each moment, it is the state of the relations of force between players that defines the structure of the field. We can picture each player as having in front of her a pile of tokens of different colours, each colour corresponding to a given species of capital she holds, so that her *relative force in the game*, her *position* in the space of play, and also her *strategic orientation toward the game*, what we call in French her 'game', the moves that she makes, more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative, depend both on the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she retains, that is, on the volume and structure of her capital" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 99).

Success in the game is connected then with access to forms of capital within the particular field. 'Habitus' describes the dispositions or ways of being, which embody the social structures within which it is created:

Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents. And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is a product, it is like a 'fish in water'; it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about it for granted (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127).

An observant reader may have noticed the repetition of the fish-in-water metaphor I used earlier in a quote from Vivien Burr (Burr, 1995: 53). For both authors, the image reflects the embeddedness of humans in the social world and here is also an overlap with Foucault's 'docile body'. But for Bourdieu, habitus also provides a space for improvisation. Habitus can be used creatively and inventively and is: "a strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 132). With the proliferation of social fields in contemporary societies (Bourdieu and et al, 1999) and the consequent potential for conflict and dissonance in the habitus, there is also potential for change: "individuals may respond in unanticipated and innovative ways which may hinder, reinforce or catalyse social change" (McNay, 2000: 5).

These ideas have been used as tools in studies of working class families in French housing estates, or the educational and work trajectories of economically disadvantaged young Australian women (Bourdieu & et al, 1999; Mackinnon & Bullen, in publication; McLeod, in publication). These studies identified ways in which the changing patterns of contemporary society multiply sites of potential change, but also sites of suffering, subordination and continuities in gendered or class inequities. In studying children and violence, Bourdieu's ideas and the feminist interpretations facilitate an understanding of how violent social relations can become incorporated within children's beliefs and practices – or habitus – but how also there may be conflict in the habitus generated by different social fields, in the classroom or playground, the home or the neighbourhood. These conflicts can result in change or in the reproduction of social inequities; they may enable children to resist and contest violence, or to reproduce violent social relations. In the changing context of South Africa, children may have more possibilities for agency, more choices in how they engage with violence, but there may also be increased possibilities, as Bourdieu argues, for "positional suffering" (Bourdieu & et al, 1999: 4), or greater awareness of their low social standing in relation to others.

In this study, I am attempting to synthesise these approaches from social and developmental psychology, anthropology and sociology, which all share a social orientation to the study of people, but differ in their attention to adults or children, to intimate or broader social relations and power networks, and to agency and change. There are overlaps in theorizing processes of change, illustrated in this extract from developmental psychology, through the

metaphor of learning as a dance, which bears striking resemblance to Bourdieu's game metaphor discussed above (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 99):

Dancing is a cultural activity that is far older than any individual participant and, although new forms emerge and are, in turn, replaced by still newer, the basic patterns tend to persist from one generation to the next. In learning to dance, therefore, the newcomer is joining an ongoing community of practice. To begin with, as the novice takes the first faltering steps, he or she is carried along by the rhythm of the music and guided by the movements of the other dancers... Before long, however, the novice begins to get a feel for the dance and is soon able to participate on equal terms, both creating new variations that are taken up by others and adapting easily to those that they introduce (Wells, 1999: 322).

The metaphor of the dance, like the game, illustrates how shared practices are socially constructed, how, in following the rules of the dance or game, we reproduce these historical practices. Gordon Wells stresses how the joint process of participation generates learning, and, in "creating new variations", is generative, not just reproductive. The main difference in Bourdieu's game metaphor is the existence of tokens, or capital, which brings in the notion of power differentials, a notion that is entirely lacking in Wells' metaphor. For developmental psychologists, the processes of developmental change and learning are at the heart; for Bourdieu, the negotiation of power is central. In studying children and violence, both dimensions are central. Through this synthesis, my intention is to unravel some of the processes with which children construct, co-construct and re-construct beliefs and practices in relation to violence and to learn therefore from these children not just how violence is reproduced, but how we can contest and change violent social relations.

Engaging the Researcher

I did not embark on this study with these theoretical underpinnings fully fledged, but I did begin with some basic elements drawn from my experience as an educational psychologist in the UK. With my psychological background, the ideas from developmental psychology discussed above were a useful starting point. Working for many years with children who were finding it difficult to access and succeed in the British education system, I had developed a firm commitment to understanding and respecting children as active, constructive learners and an interest in how the social context – of the classroom, of home and of peer relationships – could help and hinder the learning process. I was also interested in how the broader social, economic and political context interacted with the learning process, and I was concerned about the marginalisation of groups of children in schools, but did not have the theoretical tools for analysing this.

In 2000, my husband, John, and I took an opportunity to move on a short term basis to Cape Town, along with our two young sons, Sam and Tom, then 8 and 5 years old. I was keen to explore ways to use my skills as an educational psychologist in the South African context and had also been thinking for some time about embarking on a doctorate in order to be able to reflect more deeply on the social aspects of learning and social justice. My initial studies identified violence prevention as a priority area of concern, and my early work in Cape Town involved networking with academics and organisations concerned with children and violence, while my ideas gradually took shape and crystallised. Having advocated for some time the importance of listening to children's views, I quite quickly identified children's perspectives about violence as a neglected area of research, and was able to draw on my psychological experience in developing a rationale for exploring the active nature of children's constructions of meaning. The importance of social context was also related to my earlier experience, though with a tendency to see social context as somehow separate from, though interacting with, the individual. Connecting this analytically with the social and historical context of South Africa was clearly crucial from the start and one of the biggest challenges was to familiarise myself, as a foreigner, with the South African context, a process that I will discuss in more depth in chapter 3. Another challenge was to incorporate the layers of social relations within a theoretical framework, and this involved drawing on a range of disciplines outside my own experience. Incorporating these within my theoretical framework has been at times painful, sometimes exciting and frequently illuminating. While I believe it has enriched my work, it has left me with discomfort about self-description, no longer sure what kind of psychologist I can purport to be.

Conclusions and Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis aims to contribute to knowledge about what it means to children to live with violence. It illuminates how children living in a violent neighbourhood construct beliefs and practices in relation to multiple forms of violence. It explores children's talk about violence in different social fields – in the neighbourhood, in peer relations and in adult-child relations, and looks at the continuities and discontinuities in children's engagements with violence in these different fields. Through this analysis, I am able to identify psychosocial processes which recur in children's engagements with violence across the different

realms of their experience, and to consider how these processes both perpetuate and resist violence. Finally, I consider the implications of the findings for violence prevention.

Chapters 2 and 3 build on some of the themes identified in this opening chapter. In chapter 2, I critically appraise the psychological and social literature on children and violence. These studies together paint a rich picture of the complexity of children's engagements with the many layers of violence in their lives, but leave unanswered questions about how children construct beliefs and practices in relation to violence. I argue that, in order to understand and change engagements with violence, research needs to explore these social processes of meaning construction. In chapter 3, I describe how this study sets out to investigate these social processes, through discussing in some depth the ethical dilemmas of researching a sensitive topic, with children, as a foreigner. I show how I attempted to solve these dilemmas through a social constructionist epistemology, through developing ethnographic and participatory methods and through the use of discourse analysis. I locate the study within the Cape Town context, the neighbourhood which I shall call Uitsigberg, the school and the children who participated in the study.

Subsequent chapters present the findings of the study. Chapters 4-6 explore children's engagements with violence in different social fields. Chapter 4 discusses children's talk about violence in the neighbourhood, considering how, like a magnet, violence repels but sometimes also attracts and I explore the ways in which children resist this attraction. Chapter 5 addresses violence in peer relations. It considers how friendship protects children from violence, but is at the same time a site of conflict, and explores the complex relationship between inclusion, exclusion and violence between children, often connected with markers of difference, like language, gender and sometimes religion. In chapter 6, the analysis moves to adult-child relations, and the chapter explores how regulation and protection are intertwined in children's talk about adults. The analysis considers how violence features in this regulatory framework, and what happens when children challenge this relationship.

The final chapters explore in more depth themes that cut across these different social fields. Chapter 7 considers the narratives and rules children construct in order to make sense of violence, looking in particular at retaliation and retribution. A recurring theme is how the strategies children use to make sense of violence can successfully contest violence, but can

also perpetuate it. In chapter 8, a model is constructed to illustrate this process, showing how in their engagements with violence children strive for control, connection and coherence. This chapter considers the implications of the study for continuity and change. It identifies change processes arising in the course of the study and generates questions that violence prevention initiatives might usefully address in planning interventions with children. The final chapter considers further the implications of the study, reflecting on the methodology, discussing the importance of the findings and identifying future directions for research and practice. It concludes that through engaging with children as they talk about the violence in their lives, we can find ways to resist and prevent continuities in violent social relations.

Chapter 2

Violence and Children in South Africa: Psychological and Social Perspectives

Introduction: Researching the Context of Violence for Children

There is a rich literature analysing violence in South Africa in the period of democratic Government, considering the emergence from the history of apartheid and colonialism, and continuing concerns about crime and violence. A corollary of this legacy is that, in contrast to much literature on children and violence from elsewhere, South African literature in diverse academic fields pays attention to the social context of violence. In this chapter I will review this literature, considering how studies from psychology, sociology, anthropology and education have explored violence in relation to children in South Africa. I will additionally discuss literature from other countries where studies extend the field of knowledge or have been influential to South African research. I will refer for example, to some studies from the extensive US literature on youth violence and living in violent neighbourhoods (Garbarino et al., 1992; Reiss et al., 1993; Osofsky, 1997; Garbarino, 1999), and to the recent growth of studies in the UK on multiple forms of violence (Mullender et al., 2002; Lee and Stanko, 2003; Stanko, 2003).

Much of the literature in South Africa has been preoccupied with exploring the prevalence and nature of violence in children's lives. Given the widespread fear of violence and the dearth of reliable epidemiological data on patterns of violence affecting children's lives, this is unsurprising yet important in deciding how to work with children (Kuhn, 1990; Biersteker and Robinson, 2000; Hamber, 2000). Crime statistics inevitably under-estimate violence because of the levels of unreported and undetected violence. Figures are also skewed, since particular types of crime are much less likely to be reported. In particular, domestic and sexual violence have been under-reported in South Africa, with the family seen as a private institution and, Frances Whitehead argues, fear of social stigma, reprisals, indifference and hostility of police and judiciary:

There is an enormous lack of understanding regarding the nature and extent of violence against women in South Africa. This is partially because the problem was previously marginalized by the law

enforcement and judicial systems which held the attitude that men's abuse of women was a private entity in which they did not see fit to intervene (Whitehead, 1998: 10).

Rates of violence are much higher in some areas than in others, and the term 'culture of violence' may overstate the actual violence in South Africa as a whole, leading to public misconceptions. So, for example, high national crime statistics erroneously lead to the perception that violent crime is uniform and pervasive, with widespread fear of violence in adults and children across communities (Dawes and Finchilescu, 1994; Hamber, 2000).

Surprisingly though, very few studies actually ask children about their experiences of violence, perhaps because of the privileging of the authority of adults over children and a mistrust of the accuracy of data from children. As a sensitive topic which deals with areas of experience that are "private, stressful or sacred" (Lee & Stanko, 2003: 3), there may also be reluctance to expose children to such questioning, with children deemed vulnerable, innocent and unformed (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Nevertheless, the growing interest in children's rights is beginning internationally to generate more research which seeks the views of children about violence (Mullender et al., 2002; Spilsbury, 2002; Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003; Renold and Barter, 2003; Irwin, 2004). More often, however, children's perspectives have been marginalised and information gathered from adults (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). Where data has been gathered from parents *and* children, there have sometimes been contradictions in their reports of violence, with parents reporting that their children have been exposed to less violence than that reported by the children (Richters and Martinez, 1993). Rather than concluding though that children cannot be trusted to report accurately, Richters and Martinez wondered whether the inaccuracy lay in the parents' reports, either because parents were unaware of some of the violence children experienced, or because of the feelings of shame engendered by the admission of being unable to protect a child from violence. Such findings highlight the importance of developing trusting research relationships in studies around sensitive topics, like the experience of violence.

Studies which seek information from children often rely on surveys and questionnaires. In Cape Town several studies have revealed very high levels of violence, with more than 70% of children reporting exposure to severe trauma either as victims or witnesses (Seedat et al., 2000; van der Merwe and Dawes, 2000; Seedat et al., 2004). A study set in a primary school in the same district of Cape Town as the research for this thesis was located found

that the forms of violence children were most commonly exposed to were seeing a person arrested, being chased by an individual/gang and being exposed to various forms of physical assault. 15% of children reported sexual abuse, molestation or rape. In all cases these had happened in the vicinity of home or 'somewhere else' in the community, with the neighbourhood therefore representing much more a source of danger than home or school (van der Merwe and Dawes, 2000).

In contrast, another Cape Town study of violence and crime in a socio-economically representative sample of 20 primary and secondary schools found violence within schools to be "endemic", across boundaries of age, gender and race (Eliasov and Frank, 2000). Theft of property and possession of weapons were a major problem in all schools surveyed; fighting/physical violence and vandalism in 95% of schools; drug abuse in 90% of schools; bullying and intimidation in over 75% of schools; assault in 60% of schools; gangsterism in 50% and rape in seven of the twelve secondary schools. According to this study, disadvantaged schools were worst affected, exacerbated by community violence, gangsterism and the trafficking of drugs and weapons. Most types of crime and violence were higher in secondary schools, in particular gangsterism and rape. Teachers and children expressed the view that both male and female students could equally instigate crime and violence, though girls were almost exclusively the victims of sexual violence.

Both studies point to high levels and multiple forms of violence in the lives of children in Cape Town, though violence in the school and neighbourhood are documented more than violence in the home, where researchers were aware of a "wall of silence" (Eliasov and Frank, 2000). A rare example of a longitudinal study in South Africa found that over time the forms of violence experienced by children in the Johannesburg-Soweto area changed, with a decline in political violence combined with an increase in violence in homes, schools and communities (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). They also identified a coalescence between different types of violence, so that in communities where there were high rates of political and community violence, there were also high rates of family violence. Christine Liddell and her colleagues, reviewing literature on the effects of political struggle on South African youth found that political violence was strongly associated with criminal violence in many neighbourhoods (Liddell, Kemp and Moema, 1994).

There are though significant weaknesses in these survey studies, which merit caution in interpreting the results. Since they use different measuring instruments, the results are difficult to compare. Questions are often ambiguous, inviting subjective responses which are difficult to interpret – how, for example, should we interpret what a teacher means when they rate the level of violence ‘high, medium or low’ or ‘above normal’ (Eliasov and Frank, 2000: 7)? Frequently there is no distinction in the analysis between witnessing a type of violence on one occasion, or repeatedly (Seedat et al., 2004) or there is no distinction between more mild and severe forms of violence. This makes it difficult to make sense of what children are actually experiencing. Often questionnaires are imported from elsewhere, particularly from the US, where understandings about the nature of violence and abuse may be quite different. So for example, in a study of the effects of child sexual abuse among black South African women, Ann Levett and her colleagues found that in much of the literature on sex abuse, a wide range of phenomena were collapsed into a single category of sexual abuse, though it made no sense to South African women to define rape in a similar way to genital touching or dirty talk (Levett et al., 1997b). The questions are selected by adults, reflecting the priorities of the researcher, which may be quite different from those of the child.

There are then many pitfalls in use of surveys and questionnaires to find out about violence in children’s lives. To some extent, these can be solved through combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Some researchers have used focus groups to help illuminate questionnaire data (Whitehead, 1998; Eliasov and Frank, 2000). In one sensitively constructed quantitative study of over 500 teenagers in townships in Cape Town, Rachel Jewkes and her colleagues developed questions for the survey from an earlier qualitative study, and found that more than two thirds of sexually active teenagers had experienced coerced sex (Jewkes et al., 2001). These authors then combine the breadth of data of quantitative research with the depth possible with qualitative methods. What they are unable to do with the quantitative methods though is to illuminate the significance or the meanings for children of their experiences. With emotive issues like violence, there may be reluctance to disclose personal information. Even in the most sensitive, qualitative studies, where researchers spent many months and years getting to know the children they worked with, they found that children were selective in what they chose to tell about their experiences with violence (Jones, 1993; Henderson, 1999).

Nevertheless, all these studies show that for many children in South Africa, violence features in many of the social arenas of their lives. The consequences of this are the focus of the rest of this chapter, which I have structured to examine psychological and social perspectives on children and violence. The first section explores psychological research, mainly within a positivist research tradition of inquiry. The second section explores research associated with sociological and anthropological inquiry, often from critical theory and social constructionist perspectives. I have structured the chapter this way to reflect the mainstream literature on children and violence and some of its critics, but the distinction is a little misleading, as there are many overlaps and increasingly psychologists are engaging with a social and interpretive paradigm, as discussed in chapter 1. In the final section of the chapter I will consider the implications for my own research of the two overlapping framings.

Psychological Perspectives on Children and Violence

Much of the literature on children and violence stems from the field of psychology, perhaps because, as Berry Mayall suggests, developmental psychology has until recently dominated the study of children (Mayall, 2002: 22). This literature comes mainly from a positivist tradition, with studies attempting to identify measurable effects of violence on children. These effects include emotional consequences, including post-traumatic stress disorder and effects on child development and socialisation. Finally, in this section I will consider the growing awareness in psychology of the importance of context, which has generated research into risk and resilience factors.

Emotional consequences and the concept of post-traumatic stress

The significance for children of their experiences of violence has been researched mainly in terms of effects or correlations, with violence viewed as the explanatory variable associated with a range of psychological consequences. A widely used umbrella term for these consequences is the psychiatric diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Several South African studies have reported PTSD symptoms in children exposed to violence (Dawes and Tredoux, 1990; Seedat et al., 2000; Barbarin and Richter, 2001). In a Cape Town based study, these symptoms included avoidance of activities, places or people that aroused recollections of the trauma, avoidance of thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma, irritability or outbursts of anger, and intense psychological

distress at exposure to traumatic reminders (Seedat et al., 2004). The South African findings share many similarities with US studies on the effects of chronic community violence on children (Martinez and Richters, 1993; Osofsky et al., 1993; Jenkins and Bell, 1997). In both countries, PTSD symptoms have been highest in children exposed to the highest levels of violence (Lorion and Saltzman, 1993; Seedat et al., 2000) and in their review of US studies, Jenkins and Bell identified proximity to the violent incident or close relationships with those engaged directly with violence as influencing the extent of the symptoms (Jenkins and Bell, 1997). In some studies, symptoms have varied with age and gender, so girls, for example, have been found more likely to exhibit depressive symptoms or to internalise pain, while boys may be more likely to externalize pain and participate in aggressive acts (Lorion and Saltzman, 1993; Seedat et al., 2004). Younger children may exhibit more passive, regressive symptoms, like bed wetting or delayed language development, while older children may be more likely to engage in acting-out, self-destructive behaviour (Duncan and Rock, 1994; Jenkins and Bell, 1997).

The diagnosis of PTSD is a psychiatric one, usually employed to assess the need for clinical support following single traumatic events. A number of studies have pointed out that the effects of repeated exposure, as is common in high violence areas of South Africa, may be quite different from those following single traumas, and exposure to chronic, daily violence may generate longer-term developmental changes (Lorion and Saltzman, 1993; Jenkins and Bell, 1997; Fick et al., 1997; Perry, 1997; Zeanah and Scheeringa, 1997). An alternative label of “continuous traumatic stress syndrome” has been proposed to reflect the context for many people of repeated, expected traumas (Simpson, 1993). But, while such labels might serve to highlight the problems of people living in violent communities, they simultaneously explain their behaviour within a medical model, suffering ‘symptoms’ of a disease or illness within the individual rather than motivated by the features of the situation (Smith, 1990). So, in Seedat’s study, avoiding violent hotspots is viewed as a PTSD symptom, or in other words as a sign of psychiatric disorder, rather than a rational way to keep safe (Seedat et al., 2004). In Duncan and Rock’s scrutiny of studies in South Africa, they conclude: “children traumatised by public violence typically exhibit symptoms ranging from extreme anger, fear and shock to debilitating helplessness and despondency” (Duncan and Rock, 1994: 3), yet these emotions could be seen more appropriately as functional responses rather than ‘symptoms’. Whichever PTSD term is used, the emphasis on ‘disorder’ pathologises children’s reactions, and the focus on this in the literature can be

counter-productive, when emotions like fear, anxiety and aggression may in fact be functional for day to day coping (Swartz and Levett, 1989).

Duncan and Rock's work also illustrates another problem with these studies in its use of the word "typically". Studies in South Africa and internationally have identified that approximately 10-20% of children exposed to a range of traumas experience PTSD, with perhaps another 10-20% exhibiting some symptoms of emotional distress (Dawes and Tredoux, 1990; Cairns and Dawes, 1996; Seedat et al., 2000; Seedat et al., 2004). The majority of children then do not appear to be measurably distressed by their exposure to violence (Straker et al., 1992), suggesting either that studies, which emphasise PTSD as a consequence, are exaggerating the effects, or perhaps that the relationship is more complex than that conceptualised in these studies. Is it that the effects are so bound up with other aspects of social relations that separating them into variables over-simplifies the kaleidoscope of possible relationships? To measure a relationship between variables, studies tend to cluster various forms of violence to constitute an explanatory variable – so being smacked by a parent might be clustered together with severe and frequent beatings, witnessing a family fight might be clustered together with witnessing the murder of a parent. Such clustering makes it very difficult to understand children's experiences. Within this positivist paradigm, only by creating more and more variables can these dimensions be explored, yet the variables overlap and become immeasurable. The social relationships generating violence, including the child's place within those social relationships, are not easily measured, and without understanding something of these relationships, how then can we make sense of what these experiences mean for the child?

Psychoanalytic studies in South Africa have used drawings to explore children's emotional responses to violence, concluding that interpretation of children's drawings shows that children are traumatised by experiences of violence (Rudenberg et al., 1998; Gibson et al., 1991). While drawing can offer children more flexible and perhaps more open-ended ways to express themselves, the interpretation is the adult's rather than the child's (Simpson, 1993; Dawes, 1994b), as evident in one study when those drawings of children's neighbourhoods which did not contain violent images were interpreted as indicating 'denial' (Gibson, Mogale and Friedlander, 1991). Drawings are open to many interpretations (Burkitt, 2004).

The finding that, despite often horrific engagements with violence, many children do not appear to suffer long term psychological effects, has led to a shift towards the question of how children cope (Cairns, 1996) and even whether there may be positive effects. Case studies of children living in war zones have identified negative consequences, but also for some children the development of precocious moral sensibility (Coles, 1986) and enhanced empathy (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991). In South Africa, Gill Straker and colleagues undertook an in-depth clinical study of a group of 60 young people who, over an extended period, were exposed to and engaged with political violence (Straker et al., 1992). Using a psychoanalytic perspective, she linked their life histories to current functioning. Asking the question whether there may be positive outcomes of engaging with violence, she concluded that when violence can be justified within an existing system of morality, such as ideology during war, it creates few psychological problems. However, it does not solve problems or have a healing or transforming effect as suggested in Freudian literature. Engagement in political violent acts can induce short-term euphoria, and bind a social group together, but immediate feelings of trauma and guilt are more common. The 'continuous traumatic stress' had short term emotional consequences, but, followed up three years later, most of the young people did not seem to suffer long-term consequences. For those who did, the source was traced not directly to violence but to early relationships. Those who coped more effectively were assisted by a strong group identity and an active coping style.

Studies which explore emotional effects show that there are emotional consequences for many children of living with violence, but that these are enormously variable and many children show remarkable resilience. One of the recurring themes is the importance, in illuminating emotional responses, of how children interpret the meanings of violent encounters (Liddell, Kemp and Moema, 1994; Garbarino and Kostelny, 1997), but empirical research which details this is lacking.

Development and socialisation in the cycle of violence

As well as investigating the emotional effects of violence and trauma, the psychological literature addresses ways in which violence is perpetuated, through what is commonly known as a cycle of violence. This literature views violence as rupturing the normal pattern of development in ways which sometimes generate further violent practices. This might be through imitation or modelling of anti-social behaviours, through changes in moral

development, or indirectly through relations with parents. Reproductive statements abound in the literature, with comments like: “it is a sociological fact that people treated inhumanely can only treat others in the same way” (Malepa, 1990: 47), or: “these children live in a ‘culture of violence’ and their view of the world is shaped by it. This fact is tragic and extremely dangerous” (Oshako, 1999: 363). But the evidence for these assumptions is weak.

One of the ways in which children are thought to learn violence, deriving from social learning theory, is through imitation and modelling. Researchers have observed children’s play imitating violence in the neighbourhood (Bundy, 1992b; Jones, 1993). In contrast, in her detailed study of children in a township of the Cape Flats, Pamela Reynolds noted that there was remarkably little violence in children’s play, either real or pretend, despite the violence to which the children were exposed (Reynolds, 1989). There has been very little systematic analysis of violence in children’s play in South Africa, with the exception of one unpublished study of a primary school playground in the same district of Cape Town in which this thesis is located (Rangasami, 2000). Using a hidden video camera, 2.87 incidents of physical aggression per minute were observed, figures which were reported to be higher than those in a similar US study.

The finding that children’s experiences of violence are sometimes re-enacted in their play is unsurprising, but the evidence is slim and contradictory. There are studies which have identified a relationship between exposure to violence and anti-social tendencies. A South African study found a moderate correlation between direct exposure to violence and aggression, opposition/defiance and deficits in self-regulation (van der Merwe and Dawes, 2000). However, witnessing violence was not associated with antisocial behaviours, and gender (being male) was more predictive of anti-social behaviours than direct exposure to violence. A criminological study of 20 young male sex offenders in South Africa found half the young men lacked social skills and were quiet and withdrawn, a finding which corresponds with profiles of young sex offenders internationally, but half the young men were reported to have friends and reasonable social skills, and to have a history of involvement with a delinquent peer group, and the majority had experienced high levels of sexual and other violence in their lives (Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000). While the authors were cautious about generalising from the small sample size, these results point to the need to attend to social as well as individual factors in contributing to sexual violence.

In one US study no relationship between antisocial behaviour and violence exposure was found, though there was a relationship between antisocial behaviour and family conflict (Osofsky et al., 1993). Such evidence suggests that the nature of social relationships may be more significant than the exposure to violence per se.

Andrew Dawes reviewed literature on moral development and political violence, exploring in particular the assumption that violence is perpetuated through its effects on children's moral reasoning and problem solving (Dawes, 1994a). He concluded that the international evidence for a direct causal relationship is weak, though he found some evidence that children's moral attitudes, for example towards punishment, may harden following exposure to violence (Dawes and Tredoux, 1990). Other studies have investigated whether perpetrating violence becomes easier when children are repeatedly exposed to violence, so becoming de-sensitised, numbed or viewing violence as normal and therefore acceptable. Clinical observations have identified normalizing the violence, becoming de-sensitised, and dehumanising the enemy (especially in war time) as short term coping strategies, which can also lead to violence then being seen as an appropriate response to many everyday situations (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991). But the systematic evidence for this in South Africa is again lacking and what evidence there is tends to refute this. Gill Straker found that despite their frequent exposure to violence, rather than being numbed or de-sensitised, the young activists she worked with continued to be deeply distressed at the death of a comrade (Straker et al., 1992) and in a later study, she found that young people living in a high violence area did not appear to become habituated to the violence (Straker et al., 1996).

Other studies, rather than looking for direct relationships between violence and children's development, have explored parental relationships as a mediating factor. In a study of the impact of political violence on families, children were more likely to exhibit multiple stress symptoms when their mothers also reported such symptoms (Dawes and Tredoux, 1990). The Birth-to-Ten study, following the development of children in Johannesburg-Soweto through the 1990s, also found that maternal functioning appeared to mute some effects of violence (Barbarin and Richter, 2001). While direct victimization and family violence appeared to impact directly on the child and were not moderated by the mother's coping, the impact of ambient community violence was mediated by its impact on mothers, so the non-specific but palpable sense of danger in the community was mediated by maternal

functioning. These studies suggest that maternal stability can play a buffering role in protecting children from the impact of some forms of violence exposure. Other studies allude to the importance of secure bonding and attachment between a young child and mother, and relate this to the likelihood of the child being protected from or drawn into the violence in the community (Straker et al., 1992; Mokutu and Thomson, 2000; Reynolds, 2000). The attachment theory underpinning these studies postulates that violence which affects early relationships can create lasting problems of attachment, and potentially violent relationships (Fonagy et al., 1997).

These studies then begin to explore social relationships rather than considering exposure to violence within a vacuum. They tend however to focus almost exclusively on parent-child relationships and to ignore relationships which may be central to children's lives in contexts where family patterns vary. So when Pamela Reynolds was exploring retrospectively the sources of support for students who had been political activists, she found that she had to question the nature of family, since western notions of the mother-child relationship and the family did not reflect the types of family and sources of support in many South African communities (Reynolds, 2000). She found that there were five layers of support system which the students drew on in surviving political turmoil – individuality, family, peer group, political comradeship and prisoner solidarity. The imposition of notions of the 'ideal' family of the US and Europe can generate criticism of families not seen to live up to this ideal, and consequent judgements of inadequate parenting. Peggy Miller's work in the US showed how, in a community where aggression and violence were common, mothers often talked with or in front of their pre-school children about violence, but rather than reflect inadequate or insecure parenting, such talk served the function of helping to prepare or toughen children for the real world (Miller and Sperry, 1987).

The contradictions and tensions in much of the work on the effects of violence on children's development suggest that exposure to violence may affect children's well being and development, but the connections are complex and may be enacted through a whole range of social relationships within a politico-cultural context. Little attention in this literature is paid to the context beyond the parental relationship. The notion of reciprocity, that the child might also impact on these relationships, is absent. Some of these

weaknesses have been addressed by psychologists through analysis of the constructs of risk and resilience.

Risk and resilience

The growing awareness in developmental psychology of the importance of context and the active nature of development has generated ecological or interactional perspectives. These view the child as having a reciprocal relationship with the different nested systems, such as the school, the parent's employer, the broader political and cultural framework, with influences varying at different developmental epochs, or points in the life cycle (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lerner, 1976; Brooks-Gunn et al., 1997; Dodge and Pettit, 2003; Aber et al, 2003). Acknowledging a range of factors which mediate the effects of violence, there has been a growing interest in risk and resilience (Tolan et al, 2003; Cicchetti and Lynch, 1993, Matthews et al, 1999). Risk factors are those features – temperamental or environmental – which increase the likelihood of children developing violent lifestyles. The South African literature identifies key risk factors, which combine in ways which have a multiple rather than additive effect on the likelihood of criminal behaviour, as being: poverty, race, age, location of residence, gender, history of victimisation, coming from a dysfunctional family, poor school achievement and substance abuse (Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999). Awareness of these associations may serve to help target interventions, but can also generate dangerous assumptions and causal inferences, for example, the assumption that a poor, black male will become involved in crime and violence. The overlaps between the factors are such that isolating them as separate variables has little meaning. For example, in South Africa race and poverty have been so closely bound together that it is generally impossible to separate them as factors.

The repeated finding that despite the risk factors, many children do not appear to suffer the predicted negative consequences, has led to a growing interest in resilience, a construct which connotes the maintenance of positive adaptation by individuals despite experiences of significant adversity (Werner and Smith, 1983; Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker, 2000). In the context of community violence in the USA, Garmezy identifies three sources of resilience: temperament factors (activity level, reflectiveness, cognitive skills, positive responsiveness to others); warm cohesive families with the presence of a caring adult; and external support, such as teacher, neighbour, parent of a peer or institutional structure like a school (Garmezy, 1993). Very similar sources of resilience were identified

in case studies of children growing up in war zones (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991; Garbarino and Kostelny, 1997). Such factors interact with the nature of violence exposure, with predictability, social and physical proximity also influencing children's resilience (Fick et al., 1997; Osofsky, 1997; Perry, 1997). Younger children experiencing violence may face more negative consequences than older children, who have developed the reasoning and cognitive capabilities to adapt (Perry, 1997; Garbarino et al., 1992). While South African studies have noted the resourcefulness and resilience of children (Jones, 1993; Reynolds, 1989; Reynolds, 2000; Straker et al., 1992; van der Merwe & Dawes, 2000; Reynolds, 1995; Dawes & Donald, 2000) and Reynolds and Straker have both explored sources of support for youth in the resistance to apartheid, there has been a lack of systematic analysis of the sources of resilience for children.

Studies of resilience of children living in war zones have identified ideology as a factor influencing children's coping. There is some evidence that when ideology enables violence to be justified within the child's existing system of morality then this protects children from the negative consequences of violence (Straker et al., 1992). In their analysis of growing up in war zones in Mozambique, Nicaragua, Palestine and Cambodia, Garbarino and colleagues considered how an ideology can be "comforting", and can enable children to be supported by a community united by belief (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991). They compare the experience of living in gang-controlled urban poverty in Chicago, where:

The ability to unite around common goals and maintain families and cultural ties is weak. Instead, residents experience a unique form of physical and psychological stress that becomes an assault on one's self-esteem that is not recognized by society and is only vaguely comprehended by the residents themselves" (Garbarino et al., 1991: 146).

Active coping mechanisms are undermined because of the faceless enemy. Such an analysis may have relevance in the South African context, where during the struggle against apartheid, political violence had a clearer purpose than the violence of the present, though in the past as in the present multiple forms of violence coalesced (Glaser, 2000). These studies introduce the possibility of a connection between coping and belief systems. Religion, for example, may also offer a belief system which provides a "social, psychological and spiritual anchor" (Garbarino, 1999).

Andrew Dawes and David Donald argue that such approaches have rich potential for the South African context, because of their sensitivity to cultural context (Dawes and Donald, 2000). The existing studies tell us little, however, about how these factors operate, and

ideas on this are mainly theoretical. So, Cicchetti and Lynch theorize that, within families, assumptions about violence in the neighbourhood may shape a family's or an individual's expectations – or community models - about their place and value in the neighbourhood: “we believe that these ‘community’ models may be one mechanism for perpetuating violence in communities” (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993: 113). But, though the argument that the different levels of the ecological system interact and influence each other is persuasive, the inference that this interaction perpetuates violence remains theoretical.

Dawes and Donald discuss how resilience can operate through compensating for or protecting from the impact of risk factors; or through a challenge model, whereby exposure to moderate amounts of stress may strengthen a child's ability to cope in the longer term:

When children are exposed to continuous stresses, as is common in poverty environments, it makes sense to draw on the challenge model to design interventions that will enhance a sense of coping in the child, despite the continuous difficulties. This strategy could have long-term protective consequences if it equips the child to face further challenges in this environment from a position of strength (Dawes & Donald, 2000: 11).

The resilience literature offers a tantalising glimpse into the possibility that children's perceptions help to protect them from the harmful effects of violence, but the positivist paradigm through which this literature has been formulated does not enable in-depth investigation of these processes. Central to the positivist paradigm underlying the risk-resilience literature is the notion that the factors which determine effects on children interact in a mechanical fashion, and although human agency is alluded to, it cannot be investigated or adequately theorised within a mechanistic discourse (Dawes, 1994b). Kerry Gibson argues that interactionist perspectives can be viewed as an elaborated behaviourist approach:

In its crudest form the ‘event’ of violence is simply transferred from being an external influence to a mirror image of itself in the mind. Here, the image is altered by the reflected images of other ‘events’ such as social support and so on. It is this accumulated set of images and their influence on one another which constitute appraisal (of the violent ‘event’). From this point of view appraisal is a function of external events rather than a reflective activity of the mind (Gibson, 1993: 168).

The analysis of children's values, beliefs and practices, which could shed light on children's relationships with violent social contexts, is then left unexplored. The psychological literature shows that living with violence has many consequences for children, and these consequences are complex and varied. Increasingly, psychological studies have acknowledged the importance of the social context of violence to the developing child, but the individual child remains at the heart of analysis, while sociological and anthropological studies shift the focus to social relations.

Social Perspectives on Children and Violence

While the risk-resilience literature stresses the importance of context in children's development and there is a growing awareness in psychology of the cultural embeddedness of children's values, beliefs and practices (Goodnow, 1990; Stigler, Schweder and Herdt, 1990; Cole, 1996), psychological studies tend to neglect broader relations of power, which have been central to sociological and anthropological studies of violence in South Africa. These studies have explored how the structural violence of poverty, racism and inequity have reproduced violent relations in more intimate realms of people's lives – in neighbourhoods, families and in schools (Byarugaba, 1993; Glanz and Schurink, 1993; Glanz and Spiegel, 1996). Ethnographic studies have provided rich descriptions of young people's lives in adverse social contexts, have documented the multiple forms of violence they experience and have considered the multiple meanings and functions of violent social relations and the consequences (Reynolds, 1989; Jones, 1993; Henderson, 1999; Bhana, 2002; Wood, 2002). Through spending extensive time living or working in these communities, and developing close relationships between the researcher and the research participants, these studies were able to explore experiences of violence which are often tabooed or private (Lee and Stanko, 2003).

Recurring through these studies is a multi-dimensional definition of violence, which is inextricably connected with power, and generates a more nuanced analysis than the narrower view of violence as an explanatory variable which dominates the positivist psychological literature. This multi-dimensional view of violence illuminates complex social processes in the reproduction of violence. A further difference in these studies is the importance of gendered social identities, with gender seen not just as one of many variables but as central to the understanding of violent social relations. I will discuss these two dimensions in some depth before considering their implications for the current study.

Power and violence in social relations

Many of the studies which take a social perspective view state violence, traced back to colonial and in particular apartheid practices, as generating institutional erosion or breakdown, including the institutions of family and school. Violence is connected with social power relations which are metaphorically or literally 'violent'. Monique Marks, drawing on Durkheim's analysis of society as needing regulative power that is respected,

worked with ANC youth in Soweto, and traced the increasing levels of violence to the breakdown of township life, particularly the family and the school, which she views as sites of violence. With the traditional authority of parents and teachers undermined, there is a lack of regulative power to generate respect, norms and values: “In all areas of life, therefore, youth have come to learn that violence is the most effective method of problem solving” (Marks, 1992: 1). Mamphela Ramphele argues that increasing liberalisation since the 1990s may have exacerbated the social disintegration through creating a mismatch between socio-economic expectations and constraints and rapid urbanisation (Ramphele, 1992). In the introduction to a group of empirical papers on violence and family life, Andrew Spiegel talks of the:

dialectical relationship between public and private worlds; that intradomestic (family) violence is a reflection of circumstances beyond the boundaries of the domestic or close-kin group; and that extradomestic violence equally reflects incoherencies in the domestic circumstances of those that perpetrate it – that in a sense “the family is ‘the cradle of violence’” (Glanz & Spiegel, 1996: 3).

In a retrospective study of support systems for young activists in a context of state violence, Pamela Reynolds concludes that the effects of state violence against the family in South Africa have been to disrupt adult-child and child-child ties, with demands then on young people to negotiate loss and separation (Reynolds, 2000).

In these studies then, violence is understood as an outcome of inequitable social relations, which have disrupted structures and institutions of family and school. Patricia Henderson explored how the erosion of institutions like the family and the school generated “institutional incoherence” and fragmented and violent social relations (Henderson, 1999). Sean Jones analysed how apartheid policies, and in particular, forced labour migration, generated violence in family and community relations (Jones, 1993). However, fine grained studies, like those of Henderson and Jones, view violence not just as outcomes of social breakdown, but as functional and productive, maintaining or challenging the social order (van der Waal, 1996).

In his study of 10-15 year old children growing up in migrant worker hostels near Cape Town, Jones shows how the apartheid policy of forced labour migration disrupted families, creating childhoods filled with domestic flux, upheaval, fragmentation and uncertainty (Jones, 1993). In overcrowded living conditions, domestic violence was widespread and retributive violence was often socially sanctioned. Through violence in play, including fighting with sharpened sticks, knives, screwdrivers and bottles, children mimicked

violence they had witnessed, thus providing practice for violent lifestyles. Violence then could function as a resource in the context of fragmented and uncertain childhoods.

In a longitudinal ethnographic study of 10-16 year olds in a Cape Town township, Patricia Henderson also considered the functions of violence in children's lives (Henderson, 1999). Violence was viewed as re-moulding temporarily social situations – to commandeer scarce resources, to create new configurations of power or to express dissatisfaction and frustration. She emphasises the importance of viewing violence within its specific social location, since violence has so many layers, and different consequences. So, for example, although violence plays a major part in the lives of two boys, for one, a “comrade” (youth affiliated to political organisations), the violence was socially sanctioned and therefore open for discussion and reflection, while for the other, who was a gang member involved in crime, it was not sanctioned and he was therefore often silent about these locales of his life. Violence was often viewed by children with ambivalence, so, for example, fighting with gangs was seen as both empowering, but also children criticised excess – one child would fight with a brick but not with a knife. Henderson views violence as a short-term solution, using a metaphor of a hall of mirrors in which violence is not a solution but infinite reflections – of men beating their sons to try to end gang violence, of boys joining gangs to protect themselves from the violence of other gangs: “the practitioners of different forms of violence jostled for claims to streets and attempted to fix particular kinds of relations of power within them” (p.102). The image of the infinite reflections “captures my sense of the entrapping and suffocating qualities of circulated violence in New Crossroads” (p.98). For Henderson, the multi-layered violence has reverberations for children's social relationships at all levels, including the potential fragmentation of identity: “the cultural repertoires they employed to ‘restitch’ the social fabric were unable to effect an end point in the process” (p.iii).

Violence in these studies has multiple meanings and these are connected with negotiating power:

Violence is rarely, if ever, meaningless. While violence is often experienced and witnessed chaotically at its moment of enactment, even that committed casually and without immediate logic is embedded in a network of meanings and practices which, more often than not, make sense to the protagonists.... Violence is a dimension of everyday living, a form of communication that configures lives and subjectivities and that is productive of relationships (Wood, 2002: 242).

Violence negotiates and imposes social relations, it is functional though, as Henderson's work shows, it may not achieve the desired endpoint, and it is closely connected with gendered social identities.

Gendered social identities

In this thesis, gender is viewed as socially constructed, a process that we 'do' or 'perform'. Gender arrangements are reproduced by social relations which constrain, but do not fix, individual action and identity. Gender identities are multiple and fluid: "a lived set of embodied potentialities" (McNay, 2000: 25), and this fluidity is the source of agency and change. There are multiple ways of 'doing' womanhood or manhood, diverse masculinities and femininities: "inflecting or inflected by all the other dimensions of someone's social identity – their age, ethnicity, class, occupation and so forth" (Cameron, 2004: 3). Gender identities are constructed therefore, not just in contrast to the opposite gender, but by contrast with other versions of the same gender.

In South Africa, violence and masculinity have been closely connected, and though remarkably often neglected in the psychological literature, these connections are central to social analyses. Many researchers have traced violence back in masculine identities, from African patriarchy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the identities moulded by more recent history – the role of 'comrade' in the 1970's and 1980's and the effects of apartheid on these identities (Campbell, 1992; Ramphele, 1996; Morrell, 2001b). Historically, African masculinities enabled men to dominate public space and decision-making, to have unquestioned dominance over women and to demand respect from young people. With the move to the cities starting in the nineteenth century, black men's roles changed to that of worker in the context of legislated racial inferiority and an oppositional masculinity developed, which was tougher and more violent (Morrell, 2001b). During the anti-apartheid struggle, a high value was placed on 'heroic masculinity' – with its qualities of adventure, danger, daring, loyalty, autonomy and comradeship (Unterhalter, 2000). Male hegemony cut across boundaries of race and class (Morrell, 1994). Within the family, patriarchy and the role of tradition was non-negotiable (Ramphele, 1996).

In an anthropological study of children living in a Cape Town township in the early 1990's, Mamphela Ramphele explored how, in adverse social and economic circumstances, Xhosa traditions of male dominance in the family were both adhered to uncritically and

unattainable. So men and women replicated and reinforced patriarchal practices, like harsh physical punishments:

Giving children choices about where they want to be or who their care givers could be, and negotiating boundaries of discipline instead of resorting to physical punishment would be too risky in the tough world where traditional custom is pitted against a reality which challenges it at many levels (Ramphela, 1996: 55).

For men in particular, the dissonance caused by the role of men as supporter, provider, protector and decision maker and the reality of being none of these things because of social circumstances, sometimes led to seeking refuge in alcohol, escape from the family or domestic violence (Ramphela, 2000). In the absence of other ways to demonstrate male dominance, physical force was common: “Children are thus driven to the conclusion that personal relationships are shaped by the ability of the powerful to enforce their will on the powerless whose fate is to submit” (Ramphela, 1996: 56). Ramphela argues that urbanisation and poverty have eroded rural traditions of apprenticeship, which provided boys with supportive environments, and encouraged respect and responsibility, and this erosion has generated increasing dependence on peers and the likelihood of entry into gangs (Ramphela, 2000: 112). For the Xhosa people of New Crossroads, traditions continued in the 1990s to be of great importance, distinguishing them from the ‘coloured’ people: “they pride themselves in being different from *amalau* (people of mixed descent) who have no roots as a reference point” (Ramphela, 1996: 53). At the same time she challenges the uncritical adherence to traditions like male initiation rituals in changing social and economic circumstances:

Is it fair to young black males that their bodies continue to be marked for male dominance that they have little opportunity to attain other than through sheer physical force? Is it not time to modify initiation rituals into processes which prepare young males to negotiate more equitable gender relations? (Ramphela, 2000: 117).

Ramphela then views traditional customs and practices with ambivalence, as providing defensive armour in difficult circumstances, but also perpetuating and generating forms of violence and inhibiting change.

Catherine Campbell’s studies of township life and more recently her work with men working in the gold mines of Johannesburg also stress the importance of gendered social identities in understanding violence (Campbell, 1992; Campbell, 1996; Campbell, 2001). In her earlier work, she showed how social identities within groups like the family, friends or comrades, were associated with a range of ‘recipes for living’, which make possible or constrain certain behaviours, and all these are gendered. Historically, apartheid and

capitalism have disempowered men both in race and class terms, so that the only arena in which men could exercise socially sanctioned power was in the home, over women and younger men. Yet her interviews revealed an erosion of intergenerational respect, partly because of economic constraints on older men, partly the politicisation of younger men. For younger men, with higher aspirations and education, factors like the frustration of unemployment, the subsequent inability to pay *lobola* (bride price) and the slow pace of political change may leave them feeling hopeless and lacking any kind of coherent family role. Opportunities to assert male power within the family then become increasingly limited. Men may withdraw from families, drink heavily, try to reassert their rights in tyrannical ways, or resort to violence as a socially sanctioned recipe for living available to all men for the reassertion of their manhood. While violence was sanctioned for men as a mechanism for conflict resolution, in the culture of resistance as Comrades and to ensure obedience of wives and girlfriends, women on the other hand, dealt with conflicts by means of negotiation, avoidance or subterfuge. Women viewed male violence as undesirable but inevitable and unchangeable, and felt their options for responding were, not to challenge, but to avoid or tolerate men's violence.

A study of Xhosa-speaking adolescent women in Cape Town also found that young women tolerated their partners' beatings (Wood and Jewkes, 1997; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1998). For these young women resistance was difficult in a context of male violence and peer pressure to have a partner and to stay silent about the violence, which was viewed as an inevitable part of relationships. One of the primary roots of sexual abuse, rape and violence against women and children identified in recent South African studies is this assumption that women and children are naturally subordinate to men and so duty-bound to meet their needs (Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith, 2004). Campbell argues that: "it is within the family that the association between masculinity and violence is first established, and it is within the family that men learn to view violence as a socially sanctioned means of resolving conflict" (Campbell, 1996: 212).

Catherine Campbell's study of HIV transmission amongst black workers in gold mines illustrates how the process of identity construction is context-dependent and situation-specific (Campbell, 2001). Crafting particular masculine identities helped men to cope with the hardship of working in the mines of Johannesburg - identities which included bravery, fearlessness and persistence in the face of the demands of underground work.

Connected with these identities was a repertoire of insatiable sexuality, which put men at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS: “Ironically, the very sense of masculinity that assists men in their day-to-day survival also serves to heighten their exposure to the risks of HIV infection” (Campbell, 2001: 282).

Gendered social identities are also central to Sean Field’s work on the life histories of men who had grown up under apartheid in a shanty community on the urban periphery of Cape Town (Field, 2001a). Field reflects on the forms of masculinity available to the men he talked with, in particular the ‘gangster’ and the ‘sportsman’, and on the inevitability of being unable to attain these mythical masculinities:

It is precisely the mythical, totally masculine, heroic figure, of ‘the gangster’ or ‘rugby player’ that has helped these men to negotiate their uncomfortable emotions and oppressive social contexts.... However, these mythical roles and nostalgic stories were only partly self-sustaining for these men, and in the process an emotional cost was incurred. The cost of unresolved feelings and unacknowledged needs means that for all the success of their social and working lives, these men remain disappointed (Field, 2001: 222).

This unattainability leads Field to conceptualise social identities as “masculine myths”. A related notion of the “fantasies” of male identity and power led Henrietta Moore to theorise interpersonal violence as stemming from “thwarting”, when people are unable to take up the subject positions generated in their fantasies of masculinity (Moore, 1994).

Katharine Wood’s ethnography of sexual health and violence among young black men living in a working class Eastern Cape township found violence to be productive and also unstable (Wood, 2002). Her analysis shows how the violence carries many meanings and imposes inequality in sexual relationships. Violence helps to “en-gender” difference, and attempts to produce a hierarchy of gender, but not altogether successfully. And so it needs to be frequently re-established, repeated and reinscribed in everyday practice (Butler, 1999):

For young men, the importance of women to their sense of masculinity, both in terms of their own self-respect and esteem and in the eyes of others, was evident in the energy they expended on acquiring girlfriends, gaining sexual access to them (and seeking to establish exclusive sexual access), surveilling them and attempting to control their behaviour. The vast majority of acts of violence against young women emerged out of these practices (Wood, 2002: 241).

What is clear in all these studies is that while violence is functional in helping men to construct social identities, there are unforeseen and negative consequences – in the breakdown or fragmentation of relations discussed by Henderson or Ramphela, in the health risks discussed by Campbell and Wood, and in the disappointments discussed by

Field. One unpublished study of the future orientations of adolescents of young people in a coloured neighbourhood of Cape Town highlighted how imaginings of the future also influence young people's gendered social identities (Jones, 1997). These studies show how gendered social identities are both situated within contexts of violence, and generate conflict and violence. The studies focus particularly on relationships between men and women, and sometimes between men of different ages. But they rarely explore gendered social identities of younger children, though there are some studies which do consider these in relation to schools.

Schools as sites for the construction of gender and violence

Schools and the system of education in South Africa have been explored in relation to violence as sites of conflict (Gultig and Hart, 1990) and as both reproducing the inequitable social order and generating change (Unterhalter et al., 1991). The reproduction of gendered inequalities, partly through hierarchical adult-child power relations, have been shown to produce violence in children's lives. In 2001, Human Rights Watch published a report on sexual violence against girls in schools in South Africa, which documented incidents in which girls from all levels of society and ethnic groups were raped, sexually abused and harassed and concluded: "sexual abuse and harassment of girls by both teachers and other students is widespread in South Africa" (Human Rights Watch, 2001: 5; see also Jewkes et al., 2002, Niehaus, 2000; Kent, 2004). They found that sexual violence had "a profoundly destabilizing effect" on girls' education, with girls reporting that it was harder to concentrate on work, teachers reporting the girls were not performing to their full potential and parents reporting that their children became depressed, disruptive and anxious. The report was highly critical of school responses, stating: "Although some schools try hard to respond to the problem of violence, too often school officials have concealed sexual violence and delayed disciplinary action against perpetrators of such violence at great cost to victims" (Human Rights Watch, 2001: 6). Girls were unsupported, and often victimised and stigmatised by teachers and students and the report called for national guidelines on sexual violence and harassment in schools.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) subsequently undertook studies exploring further the dynamics of violence and harassment of girls and school responses (Brookes and Higson-Smith, 2004). They found considerable variations in gender violence across schools, with verbal and physical bullying and hitting being the most prevalent forms of

violence. The level and nature of violence were connected with schools' understandings of and attitudes towards violence, acknowledgement of violence, policies and, most of all, the school climate. Where educators used violence as discipline, all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, were higher.

Robert Morrell's work has also shown how violence and gendered power relations are connected with school values and practices (Morrell, 1998b, Morrell, 1992, Morrell et al., 2002). So, for example, his study of the colonial education system in Natal in the 19th and early 20th century showed how schools relied on corporal punishment to produce a rugged, tough masculinity, which was idealised and spread through colonial society (Morrell, 1994). Though corporal punishment was outlawed in schools in 1996, studies document its continuing use as a disciplinary practice (Henderson, 1996; Burnett, 1998). Morrell traces connections between these practices and continuing authoritarian attitudes which in turn maintain an oppressive educational gender order (Morrell, 1998a). In a study of corporal punishment and masculinity in Durban schools, he showed how many learners, while preferring more consultative punishments, still viewed corporal punishment as the most effective form of punishment, with young people expressing the beliefs that teachers know best, and that to learn about right and wrong, one has to suffer (Morrell, 2001b). The masculinities expressed by learners rested on the idea that there are big differences between men and women, with men harder and harsher than women, and core values of masculinity including toughness, physicality and endurance. Gendered social identities then interacted with school practices in perpetuating social relations which legitimated forms of violence, a finding which has been replicated in studies of masculinities outside the South African context (Connell, 1995; Mills, 2001).

Deevia Bhana's ethnographic study of the production of gender in primary schools in Durban is unusual in focusing on younger primary aged children and her study illustrates how early schooling is integral in the construction of gender identities and discourses (Bhana, 2002). She traces teaching discourses which produce and regulate gender identities, including 'making difference biological', 'children are children: gender doesn't matter', 'parents are the models', 'just kids; still young', 'presumed innocent' and 'teachers are mothers'. In one of the primary schools she worked in, the context of violence and poverty was associated with particular forms of masculinity and femininity. Some boys, known as "Tsotsi boys", used violence extensively in their relationships with girls and

other boys. Others, known as “Yimvu boys” performed non-violent masculinities, they were frequently victimised and were subordinate to the tsotsi boys. A few girls, known as ‘hard girls’, also used violence. In this context, tsotsi masculinities were hegemonic and she shows how alternative masculinities always existed within patterns of hierarchy and exclusion:

Violence is about power and tsotsi boys use their bodies, their loud voices and their age and their size to dominate others forcibly. They learn that violence is a way of getting what they want. In conditions of poverty, violence and the threat of violence are the most effective means to get a material reward, even a small sweet. The boys learn this: that violence is a way to get what they want, as well as respect and deference from others (Bhana, 2002: 264).

Drawing on poststructural theory, Bhana argues that gendered identities are fluid and local, that power is made and remade in different contexts and times. She introduces the notion of ‘momentary discourses’ to account for the fleeting moments of power through which children constructed their identities, and which are also generative of change and agency.

The research I have discussed here shows how schools are implicated in the production of gender inequalities that reproduce violence. But these studies also view schools as part of the process of change, so Bhana talks of the need for the education system to provide spaces where gender identities can be made and remade to move beyond the negative constraints gender can impose. Morrell sees illegalisation of physical punishment as having the potential to permit “gentler” masculinities and more consultative forms of discipline (Morrell, 2001b). Action research studies of school based interventions have discussed how school climates are crucial to the success of interventions. So a study evaluating a gender equality and HIV intervention found that schools’ provision of social capital, a language of gender and good management all contributed to the success of interventions (Moletsane et al., 2002). Reviewing the relevance in South Africa of international literature on school reform, Muller suggests that schools can be classified according to their level of effectiveness in response to intervention, with failing schools requiring more external intervention at an organisational level before being able to encompass interventions for learners and educators (Muller and Roberts, 2000). A Violence Prevention Programme in Cape Town, in their evaluation of their work in schools, commented: “this ... presents a paradox in that often schools with the greatest level of need show the least responsivity to interventions” (Carolissen et al., 2001: 53). The South African research in this area then clearly identifies a relationship between school values and

practices and children's experience of violence, and identifies challenges in shifting from being implicated in violent practices towards the possibility of schools contesting violence.

The social literature on children and violence adds to, challenges and sometimes conflicts with the psychological literature, offering a more nuanced understanding of violence, as having multiple meanings and as embedded within historical and social relationships.

Conclusions: The Meanings for Children of Living with Violence

The literature shows how violence has many reverberations in children's lives. The psychological studies explore the consequences on children's emotions, their development and family relationships. Children's responses vary with age, gender and the nature of and proximity to violence. It also shows that many children are resilient, that they seem to be protected from some of the negative consequences, perhaps because of the social support within families, or because of the ways in which they appraise or make sense of violence. These ways of making sense though are not well understood.

The social literature offers a rich analysis of life in a context of violence, illustrating the complex meanings attached to violence within the web of social relations in children's lives and drawing close connections with experience, history and culture. These studies show the importance of understanding violence as social interaction which has multiple meanings. The interpretation of meanings is central to how violence is understood and acted upon by those engaged in violent relations, including children, and the researcher. Meanings are socially constructed, with local understandings rooted in the past and reproduced through discourse. They are closely connected with gendered social identities and power relations. These social identities are constructed within the spaces of school and family. Hierarchical and oppressive systems, and disrupted and fragmented social relations, are associated with violence within these settings. Violence can function to "restitch" the fabric (Henderson, 1999) of these disruptions, to negotiate positions within hierarchies. But often the meanings are ambivalent, and the repercussions are unintended.

Together these studies paint a rich picture of children's engagements with violence, but many questions remain. Most of the studies I have discussed have involved adults or young people in their teens. And yet, it is before the teenage years that many of our beliefs,

values and practices are formed and crystallised, and so research which explores the beliefs of younger children could have immense value in illuminating these social processes. Little attention has been paid to the mediating and supportive dynamics of intimate relations in children's lives (Unterhalter et al., 2004). Rarely in South Africa have children's perspectives about violence been elicited. Research then is needed to explore the multiple meanings with which children interpret violence, using a theoretical framework which interprets these meanings within the network of social relations in children's lives. Research needs to explore the relationships which are most important to children – with parents and family members, with teachers, and – a particularly under-researched area – with peers. How, through these social relationships, do children (co-)construct beliefs, values and practices in relation to violence? This is the question at the heart of this thesis.

This literature review raised many questions. The psychological studies raise questions about resilience, and how it is that some children in some situations cope better than others. Studies suggest that children's coping is connected with the social world around the child and with the meanings and interpretations children attach to violence. The sociological and anthropological studies illuminate how violence of the past and present can be reproduced in children's social relationships, but leave questions about children's agency in contributing to change and transformation. Through a social constructionist theoretical framework, as discussed in chapter 1, this study aims to address these questions, viewing children as embedded within *and* actively engaging with their social worlds:

When we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress – a play whose somewhat open plot determines what part we may play and towards what denouements we may be heading. Others on stage already have a sense of what the play is about, enough of a sense to make negotiations with a newcomer possible (Bruner, 1990: 34).

In this study, I am interested in these processes of 'negotiation', the ways in which children engage with violent social relations and the consequences of these engagements. Many of the studies, and particularly the ethnographies discussed in this chapter, generate rich and nuanced data, which begins to address these questions. In chapter 3, I will discuss how I have incorporated some of these methods in the design of this study, blending them with alternative ways to actively engage children in the research process, in order to illuminate further what it means to children to live with violence.

Chapter 3

Talking with Children about Violence: Dilemmas and Solutions in the Construction of Research Methods

If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them? (Kvale, 1996: 1).

There is a disarming and patent simplicity in Steinar Kvale's challenge to those embarking on qualitative research interviewing. To ask children their perspectives about the violent contexts in which they live seems an obvious strategy but, as chapter 2 illustrated, it is rarely used by researchers. I suggested this may be connected with the ways in which children are conceptualised – as passive, vulnerable, unformed and untrusted, rather than as social agents. But even with a reconceptualisation which takes agency seriously, there are a whole host of ethical and methodological issues in asking and learning from children about violence. There are dilemmas of which children and which questions, how to ask and how to interpret, what to record and how then it might be read. How can I, as a white foreign woman, make sense of the complexities of South African children's lives; how can I begin to understand the meanings for children of multiple layers of violence? And how do I produce a text which is not random, or just a reflection of my own ideas, but which is worth others reading, which is credible and trustworthy (Yates, 2003)?

Answering these questions is the focus of this chapter. I hope to show how the epistemology, methods and analysis produce a useful, rigorous and credible reading of children's engagements with violence, and help to answer the question with which I ended the last chapter: *How, through social relationships, do children (co-)construct beliefs, values and practices in relation to violence?* Many would regard my study as an ethical nightmare, full of pitfalls to be avoided – of research with children, of being a foreigner, and of researching a sensitive topic like violence. Reflecting on the experience of managing the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's Violence Research Programme, Elizabeth Stanko and Raymond Lee ask:

Too often, we suggest, many researchers are reluctant even to try to capture a phenomenon that is so quick to capture newspaper headlines or dinner party conversations, but presumed to be illusory to the researcher. Yet we challenge this assumption: How can something so pervasive remain so elusive to research, and be allowed to remain so unexplored in a systematic way – by researchers or front-line workers – leaving decision-makers without evidence on which to base policies that might reduce violence (Stanko & Lee, 2003: 1).

Yet the twenty studies that made up this programme encountered enough “thorny dilemmas” to generate a whole book. I will begin this chapter by addressing these dilemmas head on – discussing the ethical issues and my epistemological and methodological solutions. I will then introduce the context of the neighbourhood, the school and the children who participated in the research, and will finally describe and discuss the methods and analysis.

Research as a Foreigner

Postcolonial writings have highlighted the ways in which researchers from the ‘west’ continue to ‘colonise’ through the imposition and appropriation of knowledge:

Research ‘through imperial eyes’ ... is an approach to indigenous peoples which still conveys a sense of innate superiority and an overabundance of desire to bring progress into the lives of indigenous peoples – spiritually, intellectually, socially and economically. It is research which from indigenous perspectives ‘steals’ knowledge from others and then uses it to benefit the people who ‘stole’ it. Some indigenous and minority group researchers would call this approach simply racist (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 56).

While qualitative research approaches try to avoid criticisms of universalism, stressing the importance of local meanings rather than truths (Guba and Lincoln, 1998), colonial and imperialist attitudes persist, albeit unintentionally, in the implicit assumptions of the superiority of the educated, westerner’s viewpoint. I arrived in Cape Town, for example, hopeful that with my UK-educated, professional expertise in educational psychology and my academic credentials as a PhD student, I would have something to ‘offer’ these ‘others’, but at the same time aware that my skills might not easily transfer and that I had much to learn – hence the long period of information gathering and relationship building during my first year there. Tuhiwai Smith states: “it galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 1) and I am even more aware now at the end of the research process of how little I know about the complexity of children’s lives, but have tried to bound the research and have restricted my claims to a point in time, in a particular place, and within a research relationship, in which the conversations that occurred have something to say beyond that space.

I was much less aware though of how, in constructing myself as a professional, academic foreigner, I was ‘othering’, potentially exacerbating inequities. Chandra Talpade Mohanty has shown how western feminist researchers have contributed to the process of ‘othering’,

as they “discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular ‘third world woman’” (Mohanty, 1991: 53). A homogenised ‘third world woman’ is then constructed in contrast to the Western feminist academic who is “secular, liberated and in control of their lives – the one enables and sustains the other” (Mohanty, 1991). In engaging with violence prevention, I was then in danger of connecting South African children with ‘violence’, in contrast to the ‘non-violent’ West, and awarding myself the power to contribute to solving these problems – to “steal” the knowledge of the children I worked with. The research was clearly of benefit to me, with its doctorate potential, but how did it benefit the children who participated? The research was designed in partnership with a community-based violence prevention intervention, and aimed to contribute to that intervention (McKeever, 2000). But were there ways, through targeting the neighbourhood as violent, that it could be harmful to the participants?

One solution is to stress the need to locate the ‘problem’ not in the individual or community, but in wider social and structural power relations (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), so that violence is re-located within broader inequalities; but this can have a paralysing effect on the potential for change, reproducing the binaries criticised by Mohanty and reproducing notions of ordinary people as powerless. A social constructionist approach resists this view of the inevitability of given forms of oppression:

One of the explicit aims of much social constructionist research is to analyse the power relations within which people live their lives and thus within which their experience is framed, and to offer an analysis which allows the person to facilitate change (Burr, 1995: 111).

But postmodern and poststructuralist approaches can also paralyse change:

Thus post colonial theory and criticism have increasingly become riven by a contradiction: the social referents in the postcolonial world call for urgent and clear solutions, but because speaking positions in a postmodern world are thought to be always already immanently contaminated by being part of a compromised world, postcolonial critics often resort to a sophisticated form of rhetoric whose main aim seems to be to rivet attention permanently on the warps and loops of discourse (Quayson, 1999: 8).

Ato Quayson argues that postcolonialism must both deconstruct or “look awry” at the phenomenon under analysis and at the same time integrate the analysis into larger affirmative projects. Mohanty stresses the need to emphasise diversity and for research to explore the intricacies of particular power networks, which exist simultaneously and often overlay each other, and the contradictions in women’s location which enable them to resist, challenge and subvert (Mohanty, 1991).

Epistemologically then, I constructed my research to be situated and local, to explore the complex power dynamics in children's relationships – with each other, with adults, and with me – and to interpret these within broader social networks. I considered how these networks position children in particular ways, and at the same time how children engage with and resist that positioning.

Some argue that research should only be carried out by indigenous researchers, that the process of decolonisation requires the reclaiming of control through research (Evans, 1990; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and there are rich accounts of 'insider' research (Bhavnani, 1991; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). But these researchers have also pointed out how the process of becoming a researcher can reposition an 'insider' as an 'outsider'. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, working as an insider with Maori mothers and children, found that when she visited other mothers as a researcher, she was treated by the participants differently from usual (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 137-140). Being trained as a researcher can shift attitudes and practices of the researcher and of the research participants towards the researcher, altering the relationship so that the researcher becomes an outsider. Being a member of a community does not then automatically solve the problems of the power relationship, which are multi-layered, reflecting also the workings of power in education and social class. In research with children this power differential is exacerbated by generational inequalities. Feminist writings have stressed the need for reflexivity throughout the research process, for constant reflection on the relation between the researcher and the researched, or as Michelle Fine says "working the hyphen" between self-other:

Working the hyphen means creating occasions for researchers and informants to discuss what is, and is not, 'happening between,' within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequences (Fine, 1998: 135).

Race, class, sex and age are all deeply embedded in power inequalities in South Africa. Being a white, educated woman from England I was implicated in these inequalities and imbued with immense power in relation to children, but I could sometimes jostle these forms of power in opposition with each other. For example, I sometimes used my foreignness to distance myself from children's hierarchical conceptions of adults in school. I introduced myself as a newcomer, keen to learn about life in school and the neighbourhood, suggesting to children that "you are my teacher". My foreignness was a source of curiosity to the children who quickly approached me in the playground wanting to

know about England and eager to tell me about their own contexts. William Corsaro talks of a similar experience when he moved from the USA to work in an Italian nursery setting: "His limited competence in the Italian language and his lack of knowledge of the workings of the school led the children to see him as an 'incompetent' adult who they could take under their wings to show the ropes" (Corsaro & Molinari, 2000: 180).

The dilemmas raised by the postcolonial writers have influenced the research process at all stages. Epistemologically, I have employed a social constructionist perspective which explores how meanings are constructed in multiple and diverse ways, and how these are connected with broader social relations. I have adopted a reflexive stance to research (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000) and used ethnographic methodologies to learn about the research context, and participatory methodologies to respect the agency of research participants. Before I describe in more depth how the research methods reflect these approaches, I want to discuss two further "thorny dilemmas" in the ethics of this research.

Research with Children

Many of the issues I have discussed in relation to being a foreigner in South Africa apply also to researching as an adult in relation to children. In particular, there are clear parallels between the "global hegemony of Western scholarship" (Mohanty, 1991) and the power of adults in relation to children. While much research, particularly within developmental psychology, conceptualises children as incomplete, or 'not yet being' (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000), sociologists have recently advocated viewing childhood generationally, as a social group which, like women in relation to men, or minority racial groups in relation to majorities, has been oppressed and ignored in research (Qvortrup, 1985; Alanen, 2001; Mayall, 2002). Berry Mayall argues from a critical realist perspective that children, as 'valuable strangers' to the social order determined by adults, can tell us about gaps and misfits in that order. Research which takes a "child standpoint" can then contribute to a full account of the social order. There is a danger though of creating a fixed category of 'childhood', which, like the construction of the 'third world woman' discussed above, homogenises children's perspectives, and 'fixes' the inequitable relationships. A more social constructionist orientation, however, acknowledges and works with these power relationships, but sees them as fluid and multiple, and therefore open to change.

One effect of these changing conceptions of children and childhood has been a proliferation of research from the perspective of the child. There is a growing emphasis in children's rights, enshrined in the United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which addresses children's rights to provision and protection and also to participation: "when children are respected as active members of their family, community and society, as contributors from their first years" (Alderson, 2000: 23). Qualitative research methodologies have been developed to investigate children's perspectives through ethnographies (Davies, 1982; Corsaro, 1992; Hey, 1997) and participatory research approaches, which seek ways to involve children in the production of knowledge and to empower children in solving problems (Dallape and Gilbert, 1993; Hart, 1997; Adams and Ingham, 1998; Johnson et al., 1998; Christensen and James, 2000; Smith, Taylor and Gollop, 2000). These studies have found creative ways of exploring children's perspectives, seeking methods which help children to express their ideas without being blocked or misrepresented by adults, so for example, using methods which are less dependent on words, but which use a range of methods like art and role play (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; James, Jenks and Prout, 1998). Such studies have been valuable in generating sensitive ways to find out children's perspectives, and I have drawn on both ethnographic and participatory approaches in this study.

One of the key challenges for research with children is to bridge the inequitable power relations between children and the adult researcher. The challenge is not just to find ways for children to express their views, but to ensure that when they do talk to us, they are not just saying what we want to hear. Some of the ethnographic studies try to minimize the power relations between adults and children, so Barrie Thorne attempted to take on a "least-adult" role in the US primary classrooms and playgrounds (Thorne, 1993), and William Corsaro attempted to be an "atypical less powerful adult" in his observational studies of Italian nurseries (Corsaro and Molinari, 2000). Berry Mayall though argues that a central characteristic of adults is that they have power over children, and, rather than try to deny or dilute this, she tries to build a more reciprocal research relationship or 'research conversation':

I am asking children, directly, to help me, an adult, to understand childhood. I present myself as a person who, since she is adult, does not have this knowledge; for though I can remember some things about being a child, I may have forgotten much, and childhoods may vary and have probably changed over the years since I was a child. (Mayall, 2000: 122).

Rather than try to deny the existence of the inequalities I observed in adult-child relationships in Sandwell Primary School, like Mayall, I tried to construct a more reciprocal relationship, and to be reflexive about this relationship throughout the research process, reflecting constantly how to “work the hyphen” of the self-other relationship (Fine, 1998).

Like ethnographic studies, participatory methodologies also try to find ways to listen to children, but they go further, adding to the researcher responsibility to engage children fully throughout the research process: "It is clear that listening to children, hearing children, and acting on what children say are three very different activities, although they are frequently elided as if they were not" (Roberts, 2000: 238). As well then as gaining informed consent and using methods which enable children to voice their opinions, these approaches involve a commitment to action and empowerment. There are a number of problems with such a commitment both in terms of actions generated and notions of empowerment, which can be naïve and romanticized in participatory approaches which assume that engaging people in their own research will in itself empower and generate democratic solutions, and ignore the ways in which all groups are embedded in and may reproduce wider inequalities (Reason, 1998). In my study, I disagreed with some of the solutions generated to counter violence when they too employed violence, as in the proposal to reintroduce the death penalty. Although researchers claim to ‘give away power’ to participants, in reality the researcher holds the power to exert undue influence in the planning, implementation and analysis of research, and both ethnographic and participatory approaches have the potential to interpret the data along the lines of the researcher’s own interests (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Oleson, 1998). Working with groups of children, the researcher might have to manage the dominance of some children, the invisibility of others, a problem identified by Barrie Thorne in her study of US playgrounds when she found herself drawn to the visible and dominant children (Thorne, 1993).

A further problem with the notion of empowerment is whether the promise of power given by researchers to their participants is illusory. In one South African study which evaluated ‘Growing Up in Cities’, a project in which children in Johannesburg were involved in documenting and improving their urban environments, the authors found that, contrary to expectations, children’s involvement did not seem to have an effect on self-esteem and locus of control, but actually had lower self-efficacy at the end of their involvement than they had had at the start (Griesel, Swart-Kruger and Chawla, 2002). It may be that

participation in action research can reinforce children's sense of helplessness, perhaps reflecting a more realistic analysis of their own power – or lack of power. A continuing concern I felt through the fieldwork period was that, through listening to children's perspectives, I may be offering an illusion of power which would not be sustained when I left. I tried to be realistic with children about where change might be possible, but that did not stop one group suggesting we go to take their proposals to Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's President.

While I have found participatory approaches highly effective ways to engage with and elicit data from children, the social constructionist stance has led me to explore children's perspectives not in order to 'give voice', but as a way to explore the diverse and dynamic ways in which children engage with social relations, with the premise that it is not the 'giving voice' that is empowering, but the destabilising of dominant discourses, which can in turn challenge and unsettle the power relations that generate violence. This involves a methodology which privileges children's talk, and interpretation within a social constructionist theoretical framework.

Researching Violence and Conflict

The third "thorny dilemma" was the ethical challenge of researching a sensitive topic, like violence and conflict. Again there are overlaps with the ethical issues already discussed and in some ways, the theme of violence in the research magnifies the issues discussed above for all children. So, for example, while in all research with children there must be an intention that the research will not be harmful, when the subject area is violence, then the potential to harm is high – through delving into 'private' realms of experience, and through troubling relations which entail violence, coercion and social control. Elizabeth Stanko points out also how researching violence can elicit information that might be stigmatizing or incriminating, and can impinge on political alignments: "if political is taken in its widest sense to refer to the vested interests of powerful persons or institutions, or the exercise of coercion or domination" (Stanko & Lee, 2003: 3). Nancy Sheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois reflect that one reason anthropologists have avoided studying violence in 'third-world' countries is the potential to exacerbate western stereotypes of savagery and barbarism (Sheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 6). The potential harm of studies of

violence reverberates beyond the children to those around them – their parents, teachers and neighbourhoods, and sometimes also to myself as researcher.

A major concern of researchers of violence and tabooed subjects is how to gain accurate data – whether people will speak truthfully or at all about the topic (Stanko and Lee, 2003). When Audrey Mullender and her colleagues asked about their experiences of domestic violence, they found children at the same time keen to talk about their experiences and selective, since they were anxious to protect their mothers and so careful about what to disclose and what to keep silent (Mullender et al., 2002). In this study too I found that children were happy to tell me at some length about incidents of violence, but they were clearly selective. Their talk of fights seemed one-sided, with the violence of their protagonists emphasised. They talked little about violence within their own homes. For studies taking a critical realist perspective, which aim to get an accurate and ‘true’ picture of violence in children’s lives, then this selectivity is a problem, and the solution lies in the choice of sensitive methodologies. But even in the most sensitive qualitative studies, children are selective in what they choose to tell about their experiences of violence (Jones, 1993; Henderson, 1999). A social constructionist epistemology though does not seek truths, but it is the selectivity that is central to the research process, so in this study I was interested in how it is that children choose to talk about violence in particular ways. The one-sided accounts of fights, for example, are not viewed as problems but as useful data for the analysis of meaning construction.

Researchers of violence have reflected on the consequences of their research on participants – for example, the potential of research to generate disclosure, distress and danger (Mullender et al., 2002). Since my research was based in a school setting, it did not endanger children in obvious ways, though it did affect the organisation of the study, influencing my decision to work with children within school hours rather than after school, when they could be endangered through the loss of their usual arrangements for travelling from school. My questions could potentially intrude on children’s privacy (Stanley and Sieber, 1992) and generate unease, misgiving and distress (Stanko and Lee, 2003). Research is not counselling, and yet the techniques – non-directive listening, warm empathetic approach – are similar and likely to facilitate the expression of views, without offering the ongoing support of a counselling relationship. My choice of research methodology then needed to tap these issues, but within a framework which alleviated

unease and distress, and the participatory methodology facilitated this through giving children some control over their input and through the choice of methods, which will be discussed further below. The issue of disclosure presented some problems for me. Although the group structure of much of the research meant that disclosures of abuse were unlikely, they were possible in these and in the individual interviews. Through discussion with the Children and Violence Programme, I was aware of the appropriate channels of support but not convinced that adequate support would be forthcoming in a context where resources are sorely limited. In the event, I did not need to follow up these channels, and in sharing some general issues, for example about school practices, with the Children and Violence Programme, I was reassured that indirect support to prevent violence through interventions with teachers would be forthcoming.

I have considered so far the possible consequences of violence on the individuals who participated in the research, but perhaps of even more importance in this study are the relational consequences. From a social constructionist perspective, how children choose to talk about violence will be influenced by their social relationships, will be constructed within these relationships and will reconstruct those relationships. That the very act of talking can change these relationships is both disturbing and auspicious. For myself as researcher there is a burden of responsibility in the possibility that children may alter their views of relationships, in ways which could potentially create further conflict in those relationships. So for example, they could choose to challenge the use of corporal punishment at home, and so be seen as criticising and undermining forms of parenting. This could be auspicious in the potential for creating more equitable and reciprocal relationships without violence, but it could also be a source of conflict, perhaps making violence a more likely consequence. The potential unforeseen outcomes of research then need to be considered carefully by researchers, requiring a highly reflexive approach throughout the research process.

Research about violence can then trouble social relations which entail violence, coercion and control. Sometimes this put me as researcher in the uncomfortable position of having to decide whether to intervene directly in such relationships. Although I saw my role as facilitator and listener, not as intervener, when there were playground fights or conflicts in the groups, I decided that it was not ethical for me to ignore violent and coercive practices (Barter and Renold, 2003). Occasionally children came to sessions clearly distressed about

conflict between the group members, and I decided to take a more proactive role than usual in facilitating resolution through encouraging children to voice their perspectives and to discuss the issues in the 'safe space' of the group. There was often a tension for me as researcher in seeing coercive and inequitable social relations as problematic and distressing, and at the same time as 'good data'. In an insightful reflection on their study of violence in children's homes in the UK, Christine Barter and Emma Renold talked of their ambivalent feelings when, after working in several homes where children did not talk about violence, they visited one where at last children talked about violence:

That we felt any form of 'release' in the face of such truly dreadful acts, described by one participant as constituting 'physical, emotional and psychological torture', provoked feelings of revulsion and made us question whether we had become desensitised, 'cold-blooded' researchers. Though we tried to rationalise these feelings, they were a powerful reminder to us of how our 'job' of collecting data on violence, if not guarded against, could overpower our personal feelings of empathy and dismay in the face of other people's suffering (Barter & Renold, 2003: 102).

Studying violence then can generate unease and misgiving, it may be emotionally charged and it may induce stress – for the researcher as well as the research participant (Stanko and Lee, 2003). Barter and Renold also discussed another source of stress they experienced as researchers, in what they called the "feminisation" of the research process, with children exercising their control to participate or not, to arrive late to interviews and so on in ways which left the researchers feeling helpless and humiliated (Barter and Renold, 2003). While in general, these challenges were not present in my research, there were times when I felt disempowered, as when one 8 year old boy chose to disregard instructions, ignoring me and using abusive language with other group members. At one level, this is 'good data', but it does not make for comfortable research.

One reason for the dearth of research in violent contexts is the risks to researchers in studying violence (Lee and Stanko, 2003). Throughout the research, I took precautions to avoid 'ambient' danger (Stanko and Lee, 2003) like staying alert to my surroundings, travelling in daylight hours and keeping my car doors locked. In the school context I felt safe, but during the period of fieldwork, there was a murder at the school gate (fortunately when there were no children present), several attacks locally and occasionally these spilled into the school setting:

There were a couple of announcements on the intercom during the session in which Mr P. announced that there had been some trouble and all children must go straight home after school and walk with others. I found out later that the 'trouble' was shooting in [adjacent neighbourhood]. Gangs were shooting at each other, including some shooting on school grounds. The [adjacent neighbourhood] schools were subsequently closed.... Mr P. told me that many parents had phoned him asking for the

school to be closed, but he had said that the school is the safest place for the children. (extract from my journal 29th August 2001)

Sometimes I was deeply distressed by children's stories, sometimes overwhelmed by a desire to protect children, like when I read in the newspaper that a 12 year old girl in the area had been murdered. Sometimes I felt honoured and privileged to be trusted with children's stories, at other times, like with the 8 year old boy I mentioned above, I felt frustrated and annoyed. Although my years working as an educational psychologist helped me to manage feelings of unease and pain shared with those I worked with, the intensity of the relationships was unexpected. Researching violence can evoke a whole range of feelings in the researcher and the researched – as well perhaps in those not immediately involved in research but connected through their relationships - and it helps to anticipate these, and to consider systems of support for all those involved, directly and indirectly, in the 'research conversation'.

Research Context and Questions

I have shown so far how the dilemmas of researching a sensitive topic like violence, with children and as a foreigner have influenced my choice of epistemology and methodology and in the next section I will show how these reflections translated into the methods employed in the study.

When I arrived in Cape Town in July 2000, the research design was at an embryonic stage and my starting point was to make contacts with universities and non-governmental organisations, to visit violence prevention programmes, to find out local concerns and so to ensure that the research was embedded in the local context. One of these programmes was the Children and Violence Programme (then known as COPES), a community-based violence prevention project of the Trauma Centre for the Survivors of Violence and Torture run by a team of clinical psychologists. The programme was based in Uitsigberg:

The project is situated in this context because of the intense levels of violence and because the community identified violence as a real concern and requested assistance in combating this problem. [Uitsigberg and nearby neighbourhoods] are coloured working class communities on the Cape Flats. They are characterised by numerous social problems such as high unemployment, poverty, overcrowding, gangsterism, substance abuse and domestic violence. Schools are rigidly authoritarian and tend to exacerbate aggression (Carolissen et al., 2001b: 1).

The programme aimed to work preventively through school based interventions, mainly with teachers, and was distinctive in also prioritising research and evaluation (Jones Peterson and Carolissen, 2000; Carolissen, Jacobs and van der Riet, 2001a; Carolissen,

Jacobs and van der Riet, 2001b). My focus on violence prevention through working directly with children complemented the existing programme which targeted mainly adults, and focused mainly on the teachers of the younger children at the school. The existing intervention was unlikely therefore to have made a significant impact on the perspectives of the majority of children in this study. We agreed that I would work with the programme on their evaluation and they would support my research. We collaborated on the planning of the research design, they helped me to gain entry to (what I shall call) Sandwell Primary School and I consulted the psychologists throughout the period of fieldwork and since then periodically during the analysis. Through these early discussions and my review of the literature the research questions were generated:

- What meanings do children growing up in this culture attach to peer relationships and to the social world of the playground and neighbourhood?
- How do they construct and reconstruct these meanings?
- What are the beliefs, cultural practices and interpretive frameworks available to these children which inform their social relationships with each other?
- How does gender feature in and relate to children's meanings about peer relationships?
- How does social status within the peer group relate to a child's developing meanings about peer relationships and social support in this culture?
- What strategies can and do children in groups use to address social problems within the local community?
- What alternatives to violence do children employ in their social relationships and how can interventions learn from these?

While my particular interest was in violence prevention, I did not know in the early stages of research planning whether violence would be a priority concern for children, and since the research was constructed to elicit children's perspectives, I therefore decided to broaden my focus to more general questions exploring children's perceptions about their social worlds and the negotiation of social relationships between children growing up in a community where there are high levels of violence, discord and poverty. Because of the absence of studies of peer relationships in relation to violence and the potential importance of these relationships, both as a source of support and as a source of pressure (Tolan,

Gorman-Smith and Henry, 2003), there was a strong emphasis on these relationships in my questions. These questions were modified as the research progressed, to a closer focus on violent social relations and a broader analysis of relationships beyond the peer group, including relations with parents and teachers.

To address the research questions, I used a range of methods. At the start of the fieldwork, the methods were ethnographic. I worked in classrooms assisting teachers and observed in the playground, and kept a journal of my discussions with teachers and children in the playground and in classes. I interviewed children, teachers and parents, and I worked with groups of children using participatory research methods. Before discussing these methods in more depth, I will introduce the ‘coloured community’ of Cape Town, the neighbourhood of Uitsigberg, the school and the children, using data from my fieldwork notes to illustrate the research context.

The ‘Coloured’ Population of the Western Cape

The study was located in what I shall call Uitsigberg, an urban, working class neighbourhood of the Cape Flats, constructed in the mid-twentieth century to house ‘coloured’ people forcibly moved from their homes in central Cape Town. The term ‘coloured’ was initially imposed through colonial practices, but has come to be widely utilised as a term of self-definition by certain groups. It is also used by the government as a means to assess the extent to which discrimination is ending, as in the 2001 Census, when population groups (Black African, Coloured, Indian/Asian, White) were based on self-description and self-classification (<http://statssa.gov.za/census01/>). Just over four million of South Africa’s total population of 46.6 million defined themselves as ‘coloured’. Amongst this population, Afrikaans is the home language for 80%, with English the home language for 19% (see *Appendix 1* for glossary of terms used in this study). 87% describe themselves as Christians and 7% as Moslem.

Over 60% of coloured people in South Africa live in the Western Cape. In this province, according to the 2001 Census, 54% of the population were coloured, constituting easily the largest population group, in marked contrast with other provinces. This distinctive feature of the province is partly a legacy of colonial racial practices which, from the 18th century, attempted to regulate and restrict entry of Africans into the province (Goldin, 1987). The

province was the only region to have experienced slavery (James and Simons, 1992), with settlers importing slaves from the Dutch colonies in the East Indies, and from Madagascar and the east and west coast of Africa, to provide the labour force for the new colony. The people who came to be termed 'coloured' partly comprised the descendants of these slaves, together with indigenous Khoisan people, other Africans and people born of cross-race sexual relations and marriages, relatively common between settlers and slaves or 'free blacks' (Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, 1998). During the nineteenth century, the term denoted all non-Whites, but early in the twentieth century, Coloureds came to be distinguished from Africans and given preference in many aspects of life in the province. However, relative to Whites, their economic position deteriorated as Whites became more protectionist about employment during the depression years of the 1930s (Bickford-Smith, 1995; Bickford-Smith, van Heyningen and Worden, 1999). Increasingly, skilled jobs were restricted to whites and often employers preferred African men for unskilled labour (Goldin, 1987: 44, 144-148). Ironically, the extension of the franchise to white women in 1930 weakened the political influence of the coloured vote, since coloured male voters therefore became proportionately fewer, with their share of the vote halved from 20% of the Cape electorate in 1929 to 10% in 1930 (Goldin, 1987: 54).

Throughout the twentieth century, coloured political identity was contested, with successive Governments discriminating against coloured people through protectionist policies favouring white people, while at the same time attempting to engineer an alliance of coloured and white people and so to fragment opposition. While in the first half of the twentieth century a small number of elite, educated coloured people were able to vote and "pass for white" (Goldin, 1987: 234), with specific legislation enacted from 1948, separation from whites was completed, with segregation introduced in all aspects of life. The Population Registration Act (1950) classified South Africans by racial designations which: "far from being based solely on physical characteristics, involves a mishmash of indicators, most of which in themselves are highly problematic and contentious" (West, 1988: 103). The minority of coloured people able to vote were disenfranchised (1951), sexual relations across race were prohibited (1949, 1950) and with Group Areas legislation (1950, 1955) residential areas were segregated and coloured people in areas like District Six in central Cape Town were forcibly moved to new municipal townships, like Uitsigberg, generating a sense of loss and dislocation (Field, 2001b):

Burned deep in the collective consciousness of past generations of coloured people has been the loss of property, income, social stability and neighbourhood networks. Some understanding of these processes... would go a long way towards documenting the experience of dispossessed people further dispossessed, and understanding the politics of the coloured generations of today (James & Simons, 1992: xiii).

Historians like Sean Field, Ian Goldin, Wilmott James and Mary Simons have attempted to understand and document this relationship between dispossession and the politics of coloured people in South Africa (Goldin, 1987; James and Simons, 1992; Field, 2001b; Field, 2001a).

For coloured people, successive government policies created a double bind, in which the promise of labour and residential preference over Africans entailed complicity with their own inferior positioning relative to whites. Alliances between Africans and coloured people were hampered by geographic separation, separate schooling and administration and cultural and linguistic barriers (Bundy, 1992b: 211). Resistance to these policies was widespread, for example in the boycotts of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in the 1940s and 1950s, but was suppressed during the 1960s and 70s. Following the 16 June 1976 protests of Soweto students and the killings of hundreds of protestors in Soweto and subsequently in the Western Cape, there was increasing coloured radicalisation and involvement in the struggle against the apartheid regime (Goldin, 1987), with increasing militancy in students and school children (Bundy, 1992a). The violent actions of the state contributed to the increasingly militant confrontations: “The rapid transition within a school, from peaceful rally through impromptu preparedness to confrontation with police and soldiers behind fiery barricades, was repeated time and again” (Bundy, 1992a: 211).

Apartheid policies towards coloured people were often ambiguous and contradictory. Azeem Badroodien discusses, for example, the mixture of care and correction in state approaches to young coloured men from poorer coloured families (Badroodien, 2002). Using case studies of two boys institutionalised in the 1950s, he shows how judgements were made about poor parenting of the “lower strata of the Cape Coloured” (p.312) and fear of juvenile delinquency, resulting in an emphasis on technical education, which was designed to but did not succeed in improving employment chances. The stereotyping in the decision to commit large numbers of coloured boys to such institutions: “was derived from an insidious linkage between notions of criminal defect, Colouredness, and poverty” (Badroodien, 2002: 320). While labour preference favoured coloured people over Africans,

unskilled coloured workers were often viewed by employers as 'less dependable' than African unskilled workers (Goldin, 1987). Educational policies were also contradictory, for example, simultaneously increasing access but restricting opportunities. For example, high school enrolment of coloured children increased from 25 000 in 1960, to 57 420 in 1970 and 158 000 in 1984 (Bundy, 1992a). But this increased access, together with the glaring defects in black education (Unterhalter et al., 1991; Kallaway et al., 1997) and the high levels of unemployment in school leavers in the late 1970s and 1980s generated radicalism and political confrontations.

The turbulent history of the coloured people of the Western Cape has generated a complex, contested and ambiguous sense of social identity:

The extent to which Coloured identity was able to bind Coloureds could never be determined a priori, for the identity of each person, each group, was a product of a different set of historical circumstances. Racial identities are the unresolved outcome of a conflict which is constantly being reshaped. Individuals ascribed a range of meanings to the term Coloured and defined themselves in different ways according to the context. And of course racial identities at all times co-existed with other forms of identity (Goldin, 1987: 235-6).

While social constructions of race have impacted in material and symbolic ways in people's lives, this impact has been fluid and varied, interacting in complex ways with other dimensions of social identity, like gender, religion and social class, and continuing to change over time at the start of the twenty-first century.

Introducing the Neighbourhood and the School

The neighbourhood of Uitsigberg was selected for the study because it had been targeted by a violence prevention initiative for the high levels of violence in the community and in homes, and because the community requested this support. While crime statistics are not generally available at such local level, questions in Parliament had generated some figures comparing Uitsigberg with a more prosperous district of Cape Town. In the first six months of 1996, there were no murders, 4 rapes, and 12 assaults with grievous bodily harm reported in the more prosperous district, compared with 23 murders, 50 rapes and 257 assaults in Uitsigberg (source: personal communication). Such figures illustrate the horrific levels of violent crime in Uitsigberg, as well as the variation between different areas of Cape Town and its environs. A study which used questionnaires to assess exposure to community violence of children in Uitsigberg, reported that more than 70% of the children in one primary school experienced direct exposure to violence (van der Merwe and Dawes, 2000).

In 2001, the teachers and children still defined themselves as coloured, with, according to the principal, approximately 40% of parents unemployed and the rest in a wide range of occupations, including labourers, technicians and teachers. While the majority of families were Christian, 103 of the 660 children at the school were Moslem. The principal estimated that two thirds lived in single parent families, with a divorce rate of 50%. 40% of children were living with extended family members, and 25-30% lived in multi-family households. All households had running water and most had inside toilets. The principal told me that there was “a lot” of pupil mobility and that this had increased in recent years, partly because of unemployment and children being sent to live with grandparents, and partly, he told me, as a way to avoid paying school fees. Children then shared a perceived racial homogeneity, but came from diverse employment and religious backgrounds. While the neighbourhood experienced severe social problems connected with unemployment, poverty and overcrowding, there were also some more prosperous families.

Sandwell Primary School was selected because of its location in a high violence district of Cape Town, its existing relationship with the Children and Violence Programme and its readiness as an organisation to engage with projects, and because there were both English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking classes. The predominant language spoken within Uitsigberg is Afrikaans, although in many schools parents are able to choose whether their child is taught in Afrikaans or English medium classes. I had to choose whether to work with an interpreter or to restrict my work to the English speaking children. While working with both linguistic groups could generate useful data, I was concerned about the differences in group dynamics likely when discussions were interrupted by interpreting. Lai-Fong Chiu and Deborah Knight found, when using bilingual moderators in focus groups, that discussions with interpreters produced more matter-of-fact responses, and the “editing out” of emotions and feelings through the process of interpretation (Chiu and Knight, 1999). They also found that when bilingual moderators came from outside the immediate community, as in a different social class group or culture, that even with a common language, talk was inhibited. I decided that these risks outweighed the benefits of working with both linguistic groupings, and selected to work with the English speaking classes, whilst being aware that the beliefs, cultural practices and interpretive frameworks available to these children may differ in some respects from those of children in the Afrikaans speaking classes. Meetings with the school principal and relevant class teachers

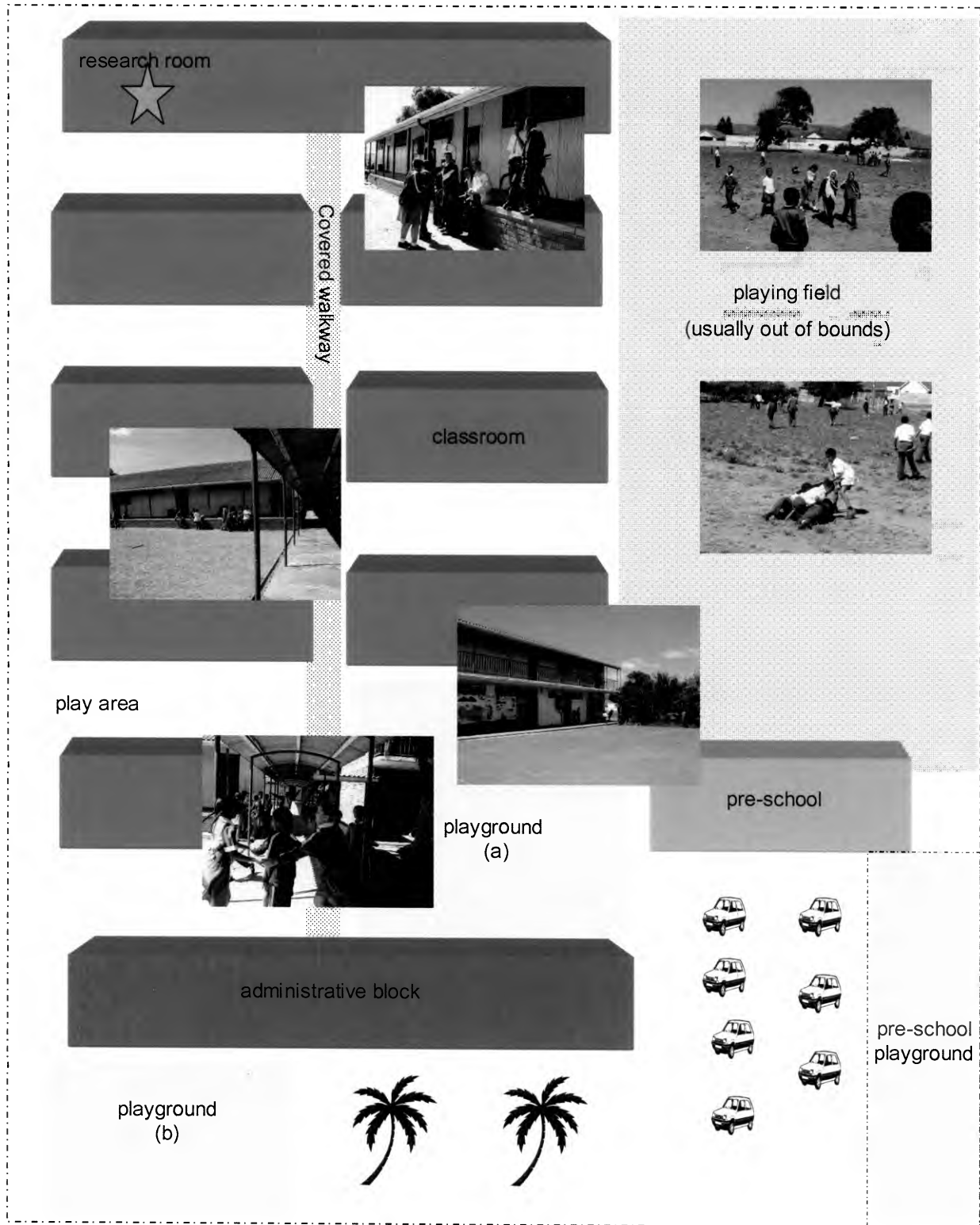


Figure 1: Plan of Sandwell Primary School

were held and teachers were asked if they would be happy for me to work with them and their children.

The school intake is between 5 and 16 years, with formal schooling starting in grade 1 at 7 years. Class sizes varied considerably, with the three classes I worked in having 28, 36 and 47 children each with one teacher. The principal and deputy were both men, and there seemed a clear gender hierarchy, with the majority of class teachers and support staff women. The school principal exercised a high level of control, frequently interrupting lessons with announcements over an intercom. Order and discipline were maintained through punitive systems and, although I never witnessed corporal punishment, children often talked of physical punishments, and this was a concern of the Children and Violence Programme (Carolissen, Jacobs and van der Riet, 2001b). Classrooms were poorly equipped, and the building was in need of repair, with leaking roofs and broken windows.

Figure 1 is a plan of the school, showing the location of classrooms and play areas. Outside its perimeter fence, the school was surrounded on three sides by roads, with the fourth having a stream, where children told me there were “*dronkies*”, or people who were drunk. Inside the school grounds on this side was a large playing field, but for most of the time I was there children were banned from playing there (apparently because of a programme to rejuvenate the grass). Behind the school, the children told me, lived a drug dealer, and children were restricted from going near this fence. On the side road, women came to sell snacks and children reached over the fence at break times to purchase them. Although children perceived the school to be safe from neighbourhood violence, they were aware of dangers in the immediate vicinity. At the front was an attractively planted - and prohibited - area and a parking zone which children walked through to get into the school. There was also a well equipped play area for the pre-schoolers, also prohibited from the school aged children. Children played mainly in two small tarmacked playgrounds, the *stoeps* or verandas in front of classrooms and the sandy ground between the classrooms.

Although the school had plenty of space, there were severe restrictions on children’s access to this space, and children often complained about this. The space that remained was often contested, with boys dominating many of the available playing areas. The tarmac playground next to the administrative block (a), which was closest to the classrooms of the younger ages, was used mainly by younger children and by girls and was an area where

adults were most likely to be present. I rarely saw an adult at any of the other play areas. The other playground (b) was marked for playground games, but frequently dominated by boys playing football. On several occasions I was watching girls playing *hocks* (hopscotch), when a group of boys appeared, and immediately commandeered the space for football. Football was also played in the sandy areas in front of classrooms, despite being officially prohibited, and the effect was that boys dominated the space, with girls restricted to the edges and the *stoeps*. The *stoeps* became particularly crowded on rainy days:

It was raining today. The children still have to be outside the classrooms, but stand under the roofs of the *stoeps*. The sandy soil of the play areas is awash with large puddles, in which a few children splash each other (Observation notes, 18th June 2001).

The geography of the school meant it was difficult to supervise adequately and rules controlling the football and rough play were frequently ignored. The recruitment of prefects from the oldest class during the time I was at the school represented an attempt to improve the regulation of children and the opening up of the field towards the end of my fieldwork was welcomed by children as a way to reduce conflicts over space.

The Children

Having gained entry to the school, I took some time to negotiate research participation. My choice of ethnographic and participatory research methodologies meant that, like a *bricoleur*, I planned to use a range of tools, methods or techniques as building blocks (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). For the first month of work in the school, I worked as a classroom assistant in the three targeted classrooms, and observed and talked with children in the playground at break times. During this time I also consulted the teachers about which children to invite to participate in the groups which were to be the heart of the research. I chose to work with groups over a period of time for several reasons. I was interested in how perspectives are socially constructed and group discussions, like focus groups, enabled this to be built into the research:

Focus groups are ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns. The method is particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary. Focus groups also enable researchers to examine people's different perspectives as they operate within a social network. Crucially, group work explores how accounts are articulated, censured, opposed and changed through social interaction and how this relates to peer communication and group norms (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999: 5).

I wanted to explore how the group dynamics operated to facilitate and control discussion. Finally, I chose to work with groups because the group setting could help children to feel at ease, shifting the relative power in the discussions from researcher towards the children,

who could choose when and whether to contribute more than they could in individual interviews (Farquhar and Das, 1999).

The criteria for selection of research participants took into account language, sex, age and friendship patterns. The decision to work without interpreters meant that I was restricted to working with English speaking classes. Conceptualising violence within social relationships meant that working with mixed-sex groups could be illuminating, but this rationale was countered by my concern that since much violence in South Africa is highly gendered and connected with attempts by men to dominate women (Campbell, 1996; Whitehead, 1998; Wood, 2002), then for girls in particular working in mixed sex groups might be intimidating and inhibitory. For both sexes the potentially sensitive nature of the discussions might be easier to manage in more 'homogeneous' friendship groups (Moran et al., 2003). I chose therefore to work with girls and boys in separate groups.

Since I was interested in how children construct and reconstruct meanings over time, but was not able to conduct a fully longitudinal study, I decided to work with children at three different age points in the hope that focusing on children at different ages may give insights into how patterns vary with age. Concerns about youth violence peak in the teenage years and it is these age groups that have generated most research interest (Wood, 2002; Dodge and Pettit, 2003; Tolan, Gorman-Smith and Henry, 2003). But I was interested in the period before children take up these practices, since, not just are these earlier ages under-researched, but it is throughout childhood that beliefs, values and practices are constructed. I chose therefore to work with an age group that was at the start of teenage years – the 12-13 year olds in their final year of primary school. Given the need to talk, listen and concentrate in group discussions, I decided that the youngest groups would be 7-8 years old, now in their second year of formal schooling. The third age group would be between these two ages – 9-10 year olds. These ages span two of the developmental epochs identified by Lawrence Aber and his colleagues to take account of the transitions that occur at significant points where new demands are placed on children by society (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan and Aber, 1997). According to this research, at 7-11 years – the primary school period - the influence of peers and adults outside the family becomes increasingly important and children's views of themselves as social beings and learners develop. At 11-14 years – the early adolescence epoch - changes in biology are linked to changes in social relationships, with influences outside the family becoming increasingly important and

increased exposure to risk-taking and negative social influences, like gangs and drugs. While these epochs were devised in the US and require adjusting for the South African context (Dawes and Donald, 2000), taking into account for example, that children are still in primary school at 13 years, they illustrate how physical changes interact with environmental changes in influencing children's development. Between 7 and 13 years then, I anticipated that children's experiences of violence might change, with the older children more likely to engage with violence in the neighbourhood.

Finally, in selecting research participants, I decided to work with friendship groups, on the basis that working with friends would help children feel at ease and would facilitate discussion (Davies, 1982; Mitchell, 1999). Working with friendship groups would also generate a more naturalistic setting for exploring peer dynamics, though clearly being videoed working with me in a separate room on a whole range of unfamiliar tasks is far from 'natural' (Green and Hart, 1999). The group size of 6 children per group aimed to maximise collaboration and to elicit a range of views. In most cases, this worked very well, but the group size seemed too big for collaboration of the youngest group of boys and when I divided them into two groups of three for the final sessions, discussions were much richer. Groups were selected partly through observing children interacting in the playground, but mainly through consulting the class teachers about established friendship groups. In some cases, there were a core of three or four close friends together with two or three children who, the teacher felt, related well to the group though they were somewhat peripheral, a positioning that was sometimes noticeable in the group sessions.

The major problem with working with friendship groups was the children who were therefore omitted from the research. Given that I was interested in how children talk about friendship, conflict and violence amongst peers, I was reluctant to omit children who were already excluded from the peer group. There were also many children who asked me if they could come and join my groups, which appeared to become sources of status within the peer group. My compromise was to spend time at break times informally 'interviewing' children who asked to contribute, but they were clearly aware that this was second best to being a group member, with its access to status, opportunities to miss class and to do unusual and entertaining activities. This issue of who is omitted from research is a significant issue, which I will take up further in the final chapter. It is an issue which has tended to be neglected by researchers more interested in the ethics of consent.

Seeking informed consent from children to participate in research is a complex issue, because adult-child power relations make it difficult for children to say no, and because children may not always be clear why it may not be in their best interests to participate (Mayall, 2000; Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002). Helen Roberts argues that such dilemmas are inevitable and put the onus on the researcher to ensure that the research participation is not harmful and is enjoyable:

However careful we are about informed consent, there are aspects of the adult-child relationship or practical issues concerning research in schools or youth settings which may make non-participation difficult for a child or young person. For this reason, I believe that there is an onus on us to make participation in research, at whatever level, an experience which is at best fun, and at worst, does no harm, to young people. The time that they devote to our research agendas is a gift, and one which we should be prepared to reciprocate (Roberts, 2000: 238).

After selecting the children, I wrote to parents to seek parental permission (*Appendices 2, 3*), and once this was agreed I met with each of the groups to explain the nature of the research and to ask each child if they would like to participate. I told them that I wanted to find out about how children spend their free time at school and at home, how they play together and how they sort out problems. At the end of each individual interview I asked each child again if they wanted to be in the group. At the first group session, we devised ground rules and children were reminded of these in subsequent sessions. Where they were not generated by the children, I added ground rules about listening to each other, talking one person at a time and that 'being in the group is your choice – it's OK to choose to leave the group'. Children's consent to participate was therefore established at the start and throughout the research process.

The research participants then formed six groups, in three different age groups. Children in these groups reflected the range of religious, social and economic circumstances of the school population discussed above and these circumstances had some influence on their talk of exposure to violence. For example, while violence was widespread across the school catchment area, there was some variation in the perceived dangers within the neighbourhood, with the poorer areas to the east of the school considered less safe than those to the west. The selection of participants from English-speaking classes skewed the sample towards families who have selected to have their children educated in English, often viewed as the language of opportunity (see chapter 5 for more detailed discussion). This may have had some influence on the social class composition, but the equation was not clearcut, with parents occupying a broad spectrum of employment – varying from taxi

drivers, bricklayers, mechanics and policemen, to child care workers, teachers and nurses. Family composition varied, with many of the children living with single parents and/or extended family members. While the majority of children were Christian, almost a third were Muslim, and these families too occupied a diverse spectrum of social and economic positions. Religion did not appear to have any impact on the likelihood of children being exposed to violence in the neighbourhood.

Here I will briefly introduce the groups, giving fictionalised names to the children, in order to contextualise the extracts discussed extensively in future chapters:

The youngest group of girls were *Natalie, Rushaanah, Odette, Karen, Ayesha* and *Louise*. All born in 1993, they were between 7 and 8 at the time of the study and were in their second year of formal schooling. Friendships in this group seemed fairly fluid, with the firmest friendship being between Louise and Natalie, and with Odette often involved in conflicts in the group.

The youngest boys' group included *Peter, Ismael, Omar, Richard, Robin* and *Alex*. They were all born in 1993 and were 7-8 years during the study. Again the friendships in this group were fluid, with children talking of other friends outside the group. Omar was particularly well liked in the group, while none mentioned Richard in their lists of friends. They complained that he fought, though this was not evident in the group sessions, where Alex generated more conflict. This was the most excitable group and I found the group difficult to manage on occasions.

Faiza, Ferial, Chantal, Shanelle, Melissa and *Simone* were born in 1991 and 1992, and were 9-10 years during the study. Faiza and Ferial were close friends. Melissa said very little in group sessions, but often talked elsewhere about her enjoyment of them. The others contributed with confidence. Ferial enjoyed widespread popularity in the class, but reciprocal friendships throughout the group were strong.

Mikhail, Ryan, Imraan, Timothy, Nicholas and *Cassiem* were born in 1990 and 1991, with Nicholas slightly older than the other children, and all were between 9 and 10 at the time of the study. Imraan and Timothy were close friends, playing often with Nicholas and Cassiem. Ryan and Mikhail had more volatile friendships within the group.

The oldest girls were *Jacqueline, Fatima, Ramona, Stacey, Shandre* and *Anastasia*. They were born in 1988 and 1989 and were 12 to 13 years during the study. With the exception of Stacey, all these girls were appointed to be prefects and they exercised high status, as some of the oldest pupils, well liked by the teachers. Ramona was one of the most popular girls in the class. There were strong mutual friendships throughout the group, with the exception of Anastasia, who was not considered part of the friendship group because of her interest in soccer. Shandre and Anastasia rarely spoke in group sessions.

The oldest boys were *Clinton, David, Luke, Charles, Lester* and *Tariq*. They were mainly born in 1988, but Clinton was born in 1987 and Luke in 1986, so their ages during the study were between 12 and 15 years. Luke and Clinton were the most talkative, and exercised clear authority during group sessions. David, in contrast, said very little. Clinton, David, Luke and Lester viewed themselves as good friends, and had a protective relationship with Charles, who was often unwell because he had leukaemia and either out of school or out of the playground at break times. Tariq was not selected by the others as a friend and was the only prefect in the group.

Early Data Collection

Ethnographies of life in schools have provided a rich picture of schools and peer groups within schools as social or cultural groups (Corsaro, 1992; Thorne, 1993; Benjamin, 1997; Hey, 1997; Swain, 2001; Bhana, 2002). Through extensive time “in the field”, these studies describe and interpret patterns of behaviour, customs and ways of life in naturalistic settings, using journals, participant observation and interview (Burgess, 1984). I drew on ethnographic approaches in this study to familiarise myself with the context and to gather information about children’s social relationships from a range of sources, including keeping a journal, working as a classroom assistant, playground observation and interviews.

For the first month working at the school, I worked as a classroom assistant once a week in each of the three focus classes. This helped me to understand the classroom context for the children, to develop familiar, trusting relationships with the children, to get to know the teachers and for the teachers to feel that the relationship was reciprocal. After some initial trepidation about having an outsider in class, the experience of working jointly in the

classroom built trust, so that teachers afterwards often consulted me about their concerns, talked with me about the children and engaged more actively with the research process. I interviewed two teachers and two parents to gather information about their perspectives on children's social relationships (*Appendices 4-7*).

Throughout the period of fieldwork I spent time observing children in the playground. Initially, the purpose was for familiarisation – to familiarise myself with the children, with the games they play and with group dynamics in an unstructured social setting, and for children to get used to me, to be able to approach me and talk with me if they choose. Structured observation presented significant problems, particularly for a white, foreign, mono-lingual woman with a strange accent. Children were not used to adult presence in most of their play areas, and my attempts at systematic structured observations were frequently curtailed by children coming over to chat with me, increasingly as I became a more familiar figure and children came to tell me about a new game or their latest fight or argument. Increasingly, I used these times to discuss with children what was happening in the playground, seeking clarification and help with interpretation of issues that had been raised in individual sessions or practices I had observed in the playground:

Aggression does not seem always to imply conflict. For example, one tall boy ran around with a football and, when he got close to someone, threw the ball hard at him from close range. The 7G group told me if a teacher sees them do this, they would get into trouble – this game is not allowed. They also told me if you sit by the wall opposite which runs alongside the football area, then they will come and hit you hard. They described the game where if a tennis ball goes between your legs, you can be hit hard. I asked if this is called 'Rape' and they giggled and refused to answer. They told me you must not cry if you are hit by a ball, it is not cool (Observation notes 13th June 2001).

Later in group sessions, I followed up the themes of rough games, rule evasion, boys' aggression to girls and responses to aggression, that were touched upon in this observation. Often I recorded observations of what appeared to be fights or conflicts, but I found them very difficult to interpret:

One boy was attacked in a 'joking' way by one of the others and became distressed when his clothing was damaged. I think he may also have been unhappy about being shown up in front of me. Two of the other boys play fight with him in a very gentle way – to help dissipate his anger? He laughs, but goes back to push the first boy and then walks away from the group (Observation notes 20th June 2001).

Research approaches which focus on the analysis of talk, like discourse analysis, have been criticised by ethnographers for paying insufficient attention to the non-verbal aspects of social relations (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998), but I found that often playground practices were so difficult to make sense of that talking with children about their perspectives offered a much clearer, albeit partial account of their social relationships.

Discourse analysts have in turn criticised ethnography for the “gross categorisation and selective reading” arising from the researcher’s interpretation of ethnographic descriptions, arguing that this suppresses the variability inherent in social texts (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). There are many ethnographies which challenge this critique, through the detailed and nuanced observations and thoughtful and painstaking analysis, and provide a complex analysis of variation as well as commonalities and repeated patterns (Thorne, 1993; Wood, 2002). In this study, the observations helped to build up a picture of life in the playground, but the richest data was generated through talking with children.

Talking with Children

At the heart of this study were individual interviews and a series of group sessions. There has been some debate about the relative merits of individual and group discussions in research with children, with individual interviews seen as inhibiting for some children who might be supported and enabled to talk in a group with peers (Mayall, 2000), while other researchers have reflected that some children find it difficult to speak in groups, particularly when they have low status in the peer group (Mitchell, 1999). While Helen Mitchell found that some children were reluctant to talk about personal experiences of bullying and victimisation in a group setting but talked freely in individual interviews, Clare Farquhar, in contrast, found that groups provided a relatively safe space for talking about issues that might in other contexts be seen as taboo (Farquhar and Das, 1999). Choosing to use both individual interviews and group discussions enabled me to maximise children’s participation.

Individual and group discussions also generate different types of data. While interviews may be particularly valuable for reflecting on individual experiences, groups can offer a window on shared or commonly held beliefs, they enable differences of opinion to be discussed and the social process of meaning formation is more readily accessible (O’Kane, 2000). They can therefore elicit variability in perspectives, and the act of talking in a group can itself change perspectives. On the other hand, interviews (or “Inter Views”) are also relational, between the researcher and the research participant, and can be productive of knowledge (Kvale, 1996). Group discussions though are distinctive in revealing group dynamics which can illuminate hierarchies, tensions and negotiation of power relations within the peer group.

After gaining children's agreement to participate in the groups, I interviewed each child using a semi-structured interview schedule, which focused on the everyday social world of the child (see *Appendices 8-9*). Questions were structured under the themes of playground, neighbourhood, friendship and social support. Although I used the interview structure flexibly, it was very carefully planned and prepared: "improvisation requires more training and more mental preparation before each interview than simply delivering lines prepared and rote-learned in advance" (Wengraf, 2001: 5). Even with careful preparation, the interviews were challenging, with a constant need for "double attention" – the need to listen to responses while at the same time considering my needs as researcher to have all questions addressed (Wengraf, 2001). The interview began with straightforward questions about activities in the playground. Questions about problems (in the playground, or neighbourhood) were balanced with questions about good times. Wording of questions was designed to be clear, inviting children to talk about concrete experiences and everyday life (*can you tell me about your day yesterday, from when you first woke up to when you went to bed?*), and open, enabling children to decide which events in their lives to tell me about (*Can you think of a time when you had a really good time playing with another child or children at home or in the neighbourhood? Can you think of a time that was not so good*). There were introducing questions which I asked all children (*If you had a problem, who would you go to for help?*), follow-up questions (*what happened?*) and probes which I used as prompts when needed (*what sort of problems might a friend be able to help with?*). I piloted the questions first with my own children and with friends, then informally in the playground, and finally conducted one more formal interview at school, which generated some adjustment to the recording system. I used techniques like active listening, empathy, reflecting back and interpreting to extend the meanings of children's statements (Kvale, 1996).

The resulting interviews were rich and informative, though there were occasional misunderstandings, sometimes because of my lack of familiarity with the linguistic context, and sometimes because of poorly worded questions. So for example, interested in popularity and unpopularity, I asked children to "*think of someone in school who everyone likes*", and then asked them to "*think of someone who is not at all like that person*". I was perplexed when several children started to tell me about children who were "not tall" like the person that everyone likes! Although English was a shared language for us, there were

differences in accent, morphology, syntax and vocabulary (see *appendix 1*). The long period of familiarisation alleviated potential communication problems, but there were certainly times when we misunderstood each other. My difficulties with comprehension were probably more significant in the group sessions, when children were talking to each other and less likely to adapt their talk for my benefit. These difficulties though, were minor and did not usually seem to affect the flow of conversation.

The initial analysis of individual interviews involved summarising responses on large charts, which enabled comparison within and between groups, and generated shared themes to be followed up in the group sessions. Violence was identified by almost all children as a key problem in the playground and in the neighbourhood. In the group discussions, these were followed up in greater depth and in different ways according to the interests of the groups and the ages of the children. The first session for most groups focused on fighting and aggression in the playground, moving in the next session to the more general theme of violence and creating non-violent play space. Subsequent sessions explored play with 'others' (including conflicts between girls and boys and Afrikaans and English speaking classes), problems in the neighbourhood, social support and problem solving. *Appendix 10* is a plan of one of these sessions.

Each group met weekly for between an hour and an hour and a half at a time agreed with the teacher, and continued to meet over six to seven weeks, with sessions culminating in a 'party' where I brought food and each group presented a video they had prepared with a 'message' for children inspired by their work in the group. The group sessions used techniques from participatory research, aiming to be fun and to use a range of methods to support children's expression of ideas and perceptions (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). Fun and laughter, not usually associated with research on violence, played an important part in facilitating discussion, collaboration and helping to release tension in exploring emotive subjects (Schatz and Walker, 1995; Moran et al., 2003). Each group session was structured broadly with a circle time approach (Mosley, 1996). Sessions began with warm up games, rounds (*something good that happened to me this week is...; for me, being a girl means...*), reminders of ground rules and opportunities to raise 'news' from the week. Beginning with less sensitive topics, sessions gradually explored more sensitive areas (Farquhar and Das, 1999) and structured discussions were interspersed with games (Brandes and Phillips, 1977; Sher, 1998). Activities were adapted to the age and interests

of the groups, so for example, the younger groups drew jointly pictures of '*the perfect playground*' and then we discussed ways they could help to improve their playground. The older groups role played a conversation between two friends to illustrate '*times when a friend can help*'. While these older groups were happy to spend long periods discussing sensitive issues like the problems of gangs in the neighbourhood, with the younger groups, I explored these themes using guided imagery. I brought in a bird puppet and we imagined him flying across the world to their neighbourhood, and talked about what he would see as he flew overhead. Children made puppets and plasticine figures and then used them to role play conflicts between children, conflicts which were then reflected on in group discussions.

The use of participatory methods was not just selected because of the data-gathering potential of its techniques, but also because of the processes of information-sharing, dialogue, reflection and action, which shift the power, control and authority in the research process further from the researcher towards the participants (Boyden and Ennew, 1997). In their emancipatory goal, some participatory researchers make ambitious claims of shifting power in the research process, arguing that these techniques: "can assist in transforming the power relations between adults and children, enabling children to set the agenda and describe their own reality, rather than being limited by answering questions from the researcher's agenda, or trying to give 'correct' or 'best' answers" (O'Kane, 2000: 140). While I adapted the activities to the priorities of the children, as researcher I was responsible for selecting activities, setting the tone and managing the flow of discussion, and maintained a high level of control over the research process. The emotive nature of the discussions required sensitive and active facilitation. With the youngest boys, role playing conflict sometimes degenerated into verbal and physical attacks which had to be firmly managed. With the oldest boys, conflict within the group was less overt, but through comments, exclamations and non-verbal signals, some boys were effectively silenced by others, and I tried to find ways to avoid this, so as not to reinforce inequitable power relations. The first time I worked with a group on the 'life history of a gangster', the outcomes were so bleak that I was anxious about possible psychological effects and later adapted the activity to a more solution oriented conclusion in which children were invited to seek alternative endings.

Participatory methods then aimed to facilitate data-gathering, to enable the group processes to be incorporated into the investigation and to enable children to share actively in the research process. The researcher role was to facilitate this process, a role which Claire O’Kane argues is less invasive and more transparent than the role of ethnographer, since it is more clearly defined and formal, with times and activities agreed with participants (O’Kane, 2000). She argues that it is therefore a more ethical approach in work with children, but though I agree that the researcher role may be more transparent, I do not agree that this makes the relationship reciprocal, or necessarily cedes control to the children. There were times in the study when I invited children to have an active role in promoting change. They drew up suggestions for playground improvements which were then shared with the principal. They compiled lists of messages for adults and children about keeping safe in the neighbourhood, which were fed back to other children, to school staff and to the Children and Violence Programme. Participatory research methods can then promote active engagement of children, but it may be disingenuous to suggest that this significantly changes adult-child power relations and in research on sensitive issues it may indeed be ethically irresponsible to try to do so.

This research aimed to explore not just children’s understandings of violence, but how these understandings are constructed and reconstructed, and the methods selected aimed to explore change processes in several ways. The group structure enabled children to disagree, we could listen to each other, voice, rehearse and change our opinions, to talk and think about issues in new ways. Our talk could then construct new ways of making sense of violence. Although the research was not longitudinal, the timing of the interviews and groups over several months meant that perceptions over this time period could be compared. At the end of the group sessions, post-group de-brief interviews were conducted with each child (*Appendices 11-12*). These aimed to give children an opportunity to raise outstanding issues, to evaluate the group and to repeat some of the initial interview questions. Using pictures as prompts, we re-visited earlier themes and this enabled some analysis of change over the research period to be incorporated within the design.

The individual interviews were all audiotaped. For the group sessions I employed a technician from the University of Cape Town (UCT) psychology department to video the sessions. Audiotapes of both individual and group sessions were transcribed by two transcribers who had worked for the oral history department of UCT. Use of video was

selected as a way to enable analysis of interactions and was particularly valuable for the analysis of less verbal activities - much of the role play, for example, could only be understood later through watching it on video. Perhaps most important was the use of video to help distinguish voices in group discussion and I have spent many hours editing transcripts of audiotapes in front of a video screen. Though use of video can be intrusive, children quickly became used to its presence and after the first session seemed barely to notice it. While there are advantages in the researcher familiarising herself with material through the transcribing process, for me using local transcribers was invaluable. They were much more sensitive to the nuances of children's language. They could translate the Afrikaans words which were interspersed in children's talk, and they were also more sensitised than me to local expressions and accent. The local dialect of English used by the children has some differences from Standard English, both in terms of the vocabulary and the grammar. In particular, Afrikaans words, syntax and morphology have been incorporated in the local vernacular (*Appendix 1*). The process used for transcription, including an explanation of the notations, is described in *Appendix 13*.

Analysis

Analysis began during the fieldwork, with a recursive process of examining ethnographic data – observations, interviews with teachers and parents, interviews with children- and, analysing the content for common themes and further questions, which then guided the plans for group sessions. Following completion of the fieldwork at the end of 2001, I began a more in-depth systematic analysis of text, using discourse analysis to explore children's talk in groups and in one-to-one conversations with me.

Discourse analysis encompasses a multitude of ways to analyse talk and text, all of which share a view of discourse as 'language in use' (Cameron, 2001; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001). Within social psychology Carla Willig discusses the development of two, sometimes conflicting, forms of discourse analysis (Willig, 2001). The first, known as critical or Foucauldian discourse analysis, often seen as more radical, is associated with poststructuralism and the work of Foucault (Levett et al, 1997a; Parker, 1997; Parker 1998), while the second form, known as discursive psychology, draws on ethnomethodology, sociology and conversational analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards and Potter, 1992). Both have been important in this analysis, the first because of its attention to the

wider social and institutional frameworks in which texts are produced, and the second because of the concern with situated and shifting meanings within interactions.

My use of discourse analysis in this study emphasises talk as socially constructed and constructive. It views beliefs, values and practices about violence as rooted in past and present social relationships, and as generative, so that while discourses prescribe and constrain subject positions, there are contradictions, variations and fluidity in the ways we take up or contest these subject positions, and these processes are a source of agency and change. I have therefore not found it helpful to distinguish the two discourse analytic approaches discussed above and have tried to synthesise the approaches, as proposed by Margaret Wetherell (Wetherell, 1998) and Nigel Edley:

Critical discursive psychology aims to capture the paradoxical relationship that exists between discourse and the speaking subject. It acknowledges that people are, at the same time, both the products and producers of discourse (Billig, 1991), the masters and slaves of language (Barthes, 1982). It aims to examine not only how identities are produced on and for particular occasions, but also how history and culture both impinge upon and are transformed by those performances. It draws attention to the productive capacities of discourse, showing how it comes to structure both subjective experience and our sense of who we are (Edley, 2001: 190).

With the multiple layers of violence in children's lives connected with social relations and the imposition and negotiation of power, the analysis needed to engage with issues of power and dominance, asking how violent and inequitable social relations position children in particular ways. Discourses are viewed as historically constituted repertoires or systems of belief or 'knowledges', which come to dominate social groups and which prescribe the social relations in those groups (Foucault, 1979; Howarth, 2000). When children talk about violence, the repeated patterns in talk can reveal commonly held and dominant local discourses. They can reveal how children are positioned within these discourses and how these positionings are connected with social identities (Burr, 1995; Davies and Harré, 1999). The analysis explores how their talk manages relations with others involved in the interaction – with me as researcher or with each other (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It investigates their talk as social action, as having outcomes, perhaps reproducing discourses or opening up opportunities for change (Billig, 1991; Willig, 2001).

I began the analysis by reading transcripts and extracting all talk concerned with a particular theme – such as all talk about violence in the neighbourhood, or about adult-child relations. These extracts were then read and re-read to draw out patterns, repetitions and to identify the different discourses children used to talk about the themes. Given the large

amounts of text I was working with, the most straightforward way to have done this would have been through content analysis, with the use of a software package like NVivo. Such ways of coding the data though seek referential links, but pay little attention to the context and form of the talk – within a social group or a research conversation – which discourse analysts place at the centre of their analysis:

The reason it is important to consider communicative acts in their original context is, precisely, that they will always and inevitably be performing functions other than just referring to states of affairs in the world. Of course speakers do refer to states of affairs in the world when they talk, but at the same time they are deeply concerned with such non-referential tasks as the management of relationships with others involved in the interaction and the construction of identities for themselves (Cameron, 2001: 147).

With social relationships at the centre of my analysis, attention to the research relationship, group dynamics, and children's social identities – to how they positioned themselves and were positioned in our discussions – were vital to the analysis, and meant that I had to be careful not to extract the participants' talk from the context in which it was produced. Analysis proved then a very time consuming task, reading transcripts and extracting large quantities of data on the chosen theme, taking an inclusive approach, including implicit as well as explicit references to the topic (Willig, 2001). I then re-read these extracted texts and looked for order and patterns – both in content and form of the talk, and at the same time alert to patterns by sex or age – often returning to the original transcripts to gather further contextual information.

Emerging patterns were verified through further analysis. For example, in the analysis of violence in the neighbourhood (chapter 4), I first analysed all individual data in which children talked about neighbourhood violence, wrote about the patterns that emerged from this data, and then checked the robustness through further analysis of the group data. I devised colour coding systems to sort data by group, enabling me to explore trends and variations by sex and age.

Some of these points are illustrated in a brief analysis of the following extract, in which Imraan and I were discussing playground relationships:

Imraan: Maybe the boys don't want them to play with them 'cause they're just girls.

Jenny: Yeah. What about the girls? What do you think they want?

Imraan: They want to play with them.

Jenny: But the boys don't want to play with them. Why don't the boys want to play with them?

Imraan: 'Cause then the boys hurting them, they come in trouble 'cause the girls cry quick.

Jenny: Yeah. Okay. And – and how do you think – do you think it would be a good idea for them to play together or should they stay separate?

Imraan: Stay separate... (*Jenny: Yeah.*) ...'cause otherwise then the girls is going to get them in trouble – the boys is going to get in trouble... (*Jenny: Yeah.*) ...then they're going to get hiding by their mommy or their daddy.

Within the first sentence it is possible to identify a discourse of masculine superiority, in which boys do not want to play with girls because “they’re just girls”. Later in the extract masculinity is also associated with violence, as if boys have no control over their “hurting” of girls. Femininity is constructed oppositionally, as weak and helpless: “girls cry quick”. Through constructing girls in this way, Imraan is able to position himself as strong, brave and powerful. But the end of this extract illustrates the importance of looking at the context of talk, as it both contradicts his self-presentation as powerful and illustrates why he needs to position himself as powerful in this discussion. Although he has constructed girls as weak and helpless, he sees them as holding the power to get the boys “in trouble” and the boys then become the victims of a “hiding by their mommy or daddy”. Perhaps it is partly this fear of his own helplessness faced with a hiding that contributes to his wish to construct himself in conversation with me as strong and powerful. The outcome or social action of this discussion seems to be the perpetuation of separation of girls and boys, through segregating the playground space.

This is only one possible reading of this text, using a social constructionist framework, and it is through the seeking of patterns across multiple texts that this interpretation may be confirmed or discarded. Important to this reading was the seeking of contradictions, seen not as ‘flaws’ or ‘noise’ in the data, but as illustrating fluid and shifting understandings (Cameron, 2001). Exceptions, contradictions and variability within a text, within the talk of one child on different occasions, or over time, and between the talk of different children were crucial in this analysis, because they shed light on the multiplicity of discourses available to children, the contradictions and conflicts between discourses, and the varied ways in which children can engage with discourse and therefore, they can reveal children’s agency in generating change. Often these variations were most evident in group discussions, where interruptions, disagreements and “sensitive moments” – hesitations, silences, collective attempts at exploring a difficult subject – illustrated processes of shared construction of beliefs (Kitzinger and Farquhar, 1999; Waterton and Wynne, 1999). The analysis then needs to consider both the content and the form of children’s talk.

Discourse analysis studies vary in their relative emphases on content and form, and on whether they attempt to give a composite picture or an in-depth analysis of examples (Billig, 1997). My approach varied according to the theme I was investigating, tending to begin with a search for a composite picture, and then to analyse extracts in more depth, paying attention to the form as well as the content, looking for example at how rules and narratives about violence are co-constructed. Writing began early in the analysis, with much drafting, discarding when a pattern apparent in one batch of data disappeared in the next, and re-drafting, only partially reassured by the words of one discourse analyst: “progress can be judged by the volume of unsatisfactory drafts in the waste-paper basket” (Billig, 1997: 48).

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to explore processes of meaning construction in a group of children talking about violence. But in this chapter I have reflected on how *I* have constructed meanings, through the process of planning, implementing, analysing and writing. Lyn Yates, reflecting on a longitudinal study she had been working on wrote:

The epistemological stance from which we were working was an acceptance that what we were producing was certainly shaped by us, was not the only ‘truth’ that could be constructed about the young people we studied – but equally, we were trying to design an approach where what we constructed could not be easily seen as an arbitrary story, or as only the story of 26 individuals we happened to interview (Yates, 2003: 6).

In this chapter I have tried to show how the interpretation I have made in this study is not just random or arbitrary, but carefully and systematically planned, enacted and analysed within a social constructionist theoretical framework. Returning to Steinar Kvale’s words at the beginning of the chapter, I have shown how I have taken seriously his words: “If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?” (Kvale, 1996: 1). My intention has not been to ‘give voice’ to children or to over-interpret, being “too quick to use up the voices of the subjects to their own ends, and too free in building vast theoretical edifices on relatively small bits of data” (Yates, 2003: 4). What I have tried to illustrate in this chapter is how reflexivity, engagement with theory, and a rigorous and systematic approach throughout the research process have generated coherent, credible and useful research.

Chapter 4

The Magnet of Violence in the Neighbourhood

Introduction

“Violence is all of about fighting and killing one another.”

“Violence is swearing, killing, murdering, raping, poison...”

“Violence is killing people, violence is when people always murder people and kill and rob banks also.”

These were some of the responses to a group activity when I asked children to brainstorm the word ‘violence’. Most of the words and phrases generated in the activity related to violence, not in the home or school, but in the neighbourhood. While the neighbourhood could be a source of support, a place to play, for the children in this study it was also a dangerous place. Children’s narratives about violence were replete with incidents located in the streets or parks near where they live. While it may be that violence in the context of school or home is talked about less because it is defined differently, and is private and therefore cannot be discussed in a group activity, in their talk the children concurred with studies which identify the neighbourhood as the key violent hotspot (Higson-Smith and Killian, 2000; van der Merwe and Dawes, 2000). Neighbourhood violence preoccupied the children and in this chapter I explore the ways in which they talked about this violence.

Through analysing children’s talk about neighbourhood violence, I was interested in finding out about children’s experiences and the meanings they constructed to make sense of the violence witnessed, heard about or participated in. I was interested in how children’s interpretations interacted with social identity. The notion of positioning was valuable in the analysis because it captures something of the fluidity of social identity and social relationships (Davies & Harré, 1999, Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Local social constructions of femininity or masculinity offer particular subject positions, positions which constrain and to some extent determine the ways of interpreting violence, but at the same time there is the possibility of movement within and between these subject positions, of re-positioning the self and others.

During the analysis, the pertinence of this spatial conception of social relationships became increasingly clear. Children seemed in their talk to distance themselves from violence, both literally – hiding under the bed when they hear gunshots – and metaphorically. At the same

time they were sometimes attracted by violence. Like a magnet, violence both repelled and attracted. In this chapter I will consider the workings of the magnet, asking how it is that violence can both repel and attract, considering the consequences for children and finally, asking how children resist the magnet.

Violence which Repels

Children were frequently repelled by neighbourhood violence. In examining their talk, patterns, or interpretative repertoires (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edley, 2001), emerged in the ways in which they talked about the violence that repelled them. Two contrasting forms dominated children's talk - the *drink-drugs-violence* repertoire and the *predatory violence* repertoire. The *drink-drugs-violence* repertoire was characterised by the gradual loss of control leading to violence, whether because of alcohol, drugs, or a minor conflict escalating into violent conflict, as in these responses in individual interviews to my question about the causes of neighbourhood problems:

Fatima: This drinking, they drinking and this alcohol is just making them so (**Jenny:** yeah) dizzy and then they catch on all the nonsense.

Lester: They mustn't drink and smoke at the same time and they mustn't take it out on other people.

Clinton: I think it's of drinking, drinking problems and smoking weed, that is my suggestion (**Jenny:** Yeah) because mostly um, here at, again at the back, just by the park, before you get the park, uh, the gangsters call it "a yard". That's where they go drink and smoke weed (**Jenny:** Yeah) and when they come out of there, then they're "high wire" (**Jenny:** Okay) then they start this problems.

Children were highly critical of the lack of self-control of those adults who "catch on all the nonsense". The violence in these narratives spills in an uncontrolled way to others, so that children are endangered almost by accident.

In contrast to this is *predatory violence*, where the violence is seen as intentional:

Ayesha: There's people laying on the fields sometimes that can catch you and then they can kill you.

Karen: I must walk across the river then there's always people, men watching.

Shandre: I don't think anywhere is safe to play because like for instance in parks then the people that drink, they sit there and then they like watch you the whole time what you do or where you walk, places you walk, and then they follow you and then they can do all sorts of things (**Jenny:** Yeah) so I don't think anywhere is safe to play.

Alex: If you, if there's somebody outside and they call you and they give you and they want to give you sweets you mustn't go [...] because then they're just going to grab you into the car and they going to ride away

Robin: And they rape you.

Within this repertoire, there is a clear perpetrator and children see themselves, and others, as prey. While children's narratives of violent incidents they have experienced more often seem to involve the drink-drugs-violence repertoire, their talk suggests that it is this repertoire of predatory violence that engenders more fear, perhaps because it renders children as potential victims rather than bystanders and so inevitably disempowers them. Often though there is a confluence of both these forms of violence.

Some of the most haunting narratives include two contrasting features – they emphasise both the *horror of the crime* and the *everyday nature of the violence*:

- Ryan:** A other time when a girl was in a fight - in a gangster fight - so they shot her here in the back and here in the stomach.
- Jenny:** Okay. And what happened afterwards, do you know?
- Ryan:** They took her to hospital. When they came there she was already dead.
- Jenny:** And was she in one of the gangs or was she a young girl?
- Ryan:** She was a young girl. She was on her way to school.
- Jenny:** On her way to school. And who told you about that? Or did you, did you hear it from anyone?
- Ryan:** I, I was still walking and so I just hear gun shots.
- Jenny:** You heard the gun shots when it happened? Okay.
- Ryan:** And so when I came at home and so my mommy said, "A girl was shot."

As in many of the children's narratives, Ryan's repulsion is stressed by the graphic imagery – the location of wounds on the body of the girl who has been shot in the crossfire of a gang fight. But at the same time, there is a sense that this could happen to anyone, that it is an everyday event – she was just "on her way to school". And it is this that makes the violence even more haunting. Several children talked about a brutal murder that happened "just around the corner":

- Odette:** We heard about people what is shooting the other peoples and just around the corner she heard about this lady what was hanging up her washing and then all the gangsters came over the wall and then they put the black bag over her neck and then she was dead next time and then her son came home and then her son called the police.

This horrific murder had happened the week before these interviews took place. It was not witnessed by the children, but several children were haunted by graphic images. Like Odette, Louise talked of how the men: "put a black bag over her"; and Rushaanah said: "so they undressed her and so they tied her up". Each of them told how she was "just hanging up her washing", innocently going about women's everyday work, and how her son found her body as he came home from work: "So he was crying. It's my sister's husband's friend. He worked by the butcher." As in the incident narrated by Ryan, there was a sense that this could happen to anyone.

In these accounts the violence is presented as extreme and exceptional and the vivid description, a technique of fact construction (Edwards and Potter, 1992), lends authority to the children's narratives, stressing their repulsion. At the same time, the graphic details are juxtaposed with the mundane, and this also stresses their repulsion and an overriding sense of futility, expressed poignantly in this extract:

Lester: Like they said in the Argus [newspaper] that they shot a man who was there at the graveyard - he was selling flowers - they came, I think they said two people in their twenties and one seventeen years old or sixteen - one of them shot him in the back. He died. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And we used to know him. He used to sit there from... They said he used to sell flowers for like fifteen years... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...there by that graveyard - and we used to know him. My mother knew him very well.

There is a sense that people going about their everyday lives are not safe, or as Clinton puts it: "anything can happen to you".

I often felt disturbed by the juxtaposition of ordinary life with violence, which highlighted my own sheltered history. In one guided imagery activity with the younger groups, I used a seagull puppet as a prop, asking groups to imagine what the bird would see as it flew over the ocean to Cape Town and then to their own neighbourhoods. As they reached Cape Town the 8 year old girls imagined that he could see "flowers.... maybe the mountain.... shops" and as he reached the local neighbourhood: "people that is shooting and a lot of bad - and schools". The 8 year old boys imagined: "and they see the gang - the gangsters with gun". On another occasion one of the group sessions was interrupted by an intercom announcement by the Principal, stating that there had been trouble in the neighbourhood and children must not walk home alone. The following week when the group met again, we discussed the incident, which had been a gang shooting in the playground of a neighbouring school. One of the girls commented on the neighbourhood: "'cause every Friday they shoot there".

There is a notable contrast then between the everyday nature of the violence in this talk and the graphic descriptions which emphasise the exceptional nature of the violence, though both express children's repulsion. What is quite clear though is that while incidents like these were frequent events in children's lives, they did not become indifferent to them. There was no evidence of this violence having a de-sensitising or numbing effect, which some studies have suggested teaches children that violence is a normal and therefore acceptable way of life (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991; Matthews, Griggs and Caine, 1999). The overriding emotion seemed to be a sense of powerlessness - they

empathized with the victims, who, like them, were just going about their day to day lives when they were caught up in violence, either accidentally through being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or intentionally, through the predatory actions of the perpetrators. Children were repelled by violence which positions them as helpless, which casts them as the victims, which renders them powerless.

The Attraction of Violence

While usually children were repelled by neighbourhood violence, permeating their narratives were examples where the relationship with violence was much more ambivalent. Sometimes in our group discussions there seemed to be competition to recount incidents of crime and violence, as when one 8 year old boy dismissed his friend's story of a break-in, saying: "No, that's nothing, my daddy was in a accident" and proceeded to recount an incident he saw as more dramatic and worthy of re-telling. There seemed to be social capital to be gained from violent experiences, and some of these narratives had all the hallmarks of a 'good' story – setting the scene, creating an atmosphere, a clear sequence and lively humour and action.

In an individual interview, Imraan talked with me about two incidents, both potentially dangerous, but generating very different emotions:

- Jenny:** Can you think of a time where you've had a really good time playing with another child or children at home or in the neighbourhood?
- Imraan:** My friend opposite us. We were riding bike... (**Jenny:** Mm mm.)...then once a fa... fast car came and so he nearly knocked my friend off the bike, so my friend had to throw his bike on the floor, so he had to run 'cause the man was riding very fast and over the bump he did, he did make fly (very emphasised) over there. He did go fast. He make the car did jump over the bumper. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) He go fast.
- Jenny:** And then could you ride your bikes again?
- Imraan:** Yes.
- Jenny:** And why was that such a good time?
- Imraan:** 'Cause we were frightened and sometimes when we frightened we're happy.
- Jenny:** (*chuckle*) Yeah. Okay. And can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?
- Imraan:** When a man came and he started hitting the children so we all had to run in. (**Jenny:** Mm mm.) He started hitting the children, so we all had to run in at home, we were all riding bike. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Next to us; opposite us. We're all riding bikes, our friends.
- Jenny:** Out in the street?
- Imraan:** It's a block, then we all did ride around the block from the man, so we had to turn around, so we had to run, ride fast away, 'cause the man was running after one of my friends. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And so we had to ride fast away so we went home.
- Jenny:** Why do you think he was doing it?
- Imraan:** He's mad. He's mad.
- Jenny:** And then what happened?
- Imraan:** He was trying to scare us, scare us, make us scared.
- Jenny:** Yeah. And then what happened?

- Imraan:** And so afterwards we were looking for him, he's coming on, so we went to go play by my friend's house. We played, it's a soccer ball, then we were playing with that there.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. So that was all right afterwards? Okay. And how did you feel when you were riding away or when the man came out and started chasing you all?
- Imraan:** I was feeling... *(pause)* I was feeling frightened. If he catch us he's going to hurt us. So I was riding on my fastest.
- Jenny:** And do you think... Is that a different kind of frightened than the time you were telling me about before when the man was going fast in the car, past your friend on the bike?
- Imraan:** Much frightened than that.
- Jenny:** Yeah. So much... The other time you were a bit frightened but you were also happy. But this time you weren't so happy? Just frightened?
- Imraan:** Yes.

I have reproduced this extract at length because it is the text that first generated for me the metaphor of violence as a magnet and it illuminates some of the features in terms of power relations. The extract is about two incidents which Imraan narrated as examples of times in the neighbourhood that were “really good” and “not so good”. There were some similarities in the two incidents. Both took place when Imraan and his friends were playing on bikes near home. Both involved successful escapes from potential danger. But Imraan's emotional responses to the two incidents were quite different. Both incidents generated fear, but while in the second - being chased by a “mad” man - the fear repelled, in the first - being chased by a fast car - it seemed to attract: “cause we were frightened and sometimes when we frightened we're happy”.

When Imraan narrated the escape from the “fast car”, his repetition of the word “fast”, and the expressive stress on words like “fly” and “jump” convey how the fear was overlaid by a sense of excitement, exhilaration, wildness and risk. The thrill of escape seems to have generated in Imraan a sense of power – of being able to move with such speed that he and his friend escaped from a car which was going so fast that it flew over the speed ramps. Once the car had gone, they could return to their play, regaining control of the neighbourhood space. In his account of the other incident, there were also repetitions, of the words “mad” and “scare”, but here the repetitions signified the fear and disempowerment generated by the behaviour of the man that made little sense, and so was explained by madness. This incident undermined the children's control over their play space, casting them as potential victims in the face of a predator.

Imraan was then repelled by this disempowering form of violence, but attracted to the risks of the car chase, which gave him, at least in retrospect, a sense of being able to control his environment. Karen drew on a similar sense of exhilaration when she told me how next to

the school there is a river where people gather and drink together: “there’s always people, men watching”, who “don’t work” and “they don’t smell nice”. She told me how yesterday she had to cross this river with Odette on their way home from school:

Karen: She came, then I said, then I said, “*ja*”, I said “Come Odette, run!” And so she ran, so she came. So then we ran across the river, by the river we just ran there on the pavement.

Like Imraan she emphasised the speed of their escape by her use of expression and repetition of the word ‘ran’. The thrill of escape in both incidents generated a sense of power in overcoming risk.

The pleasure of exerting control of the environment was also a source of attraction to violence in role plays during our group sessions. Video footage demonstrates the relish with which both boys and girls took on roles in which they were able to exert power through violence or the threat of violence over others. Following a role play in which 10 year old boys played gangsters attacking children, the boys who had played the part of children talked of their fear, while those who had acted as gangsters described how their use of violence had generated a sense of power: “I didn’t feel scared.... I felt happy”.

Role play, as well as providing a way to convey some of the feelings surrounding neighbourhood violence, enabled children to develop fantasies about how they would like to position themselves in relation to violence. Images from the media were also used to support particular positionings. There has been growing concern in the USA and Europe about the possible effects on children of watching violence on TV, with a number of studies associating violence in later life with watching violent TV as a child (Murray, 1997; Illinois Center for Violence Prevention, 2001; Eron, 2003) though others dispute the existence of a clear causal relationship (Calouste Gulbekian Foundation, 1995). Reviewing correlational, experimental and field research in this area, John Murray concluded that the TV violence contributed to increased aggression, desensitized children and led children to view the world as more mean and dangerous than in real life. He argued that the effect of violent images on children is determined by children’s interpretations of violence, for example, whether it is seen as effective, justified or whether it goes unpunished, as well as the “suggestibility” of the child (Murray, 1997).

The children in this study were clearly influenced by the stories they heard in the media. Sometimes the media offered a way to warn children about potential dangers:

Peter: ...and they say here's a sweet and then the children go and then they, throw the children in a car (**Jenny:** Yeah) and then they ride with the children away (**Jenny:** Yeah) and then they rape the children [...] and then they, then they hide with the children away and then they show on the TV what children is lost and what children is found.

But with kidnapping a rare event in the neighbourhood, I was sometimes concerned that these stories could endanger children through making them more fearful of dangers they were unlikely to encounter and less fearful of others. Ismael and Richard might have relied less on the protection of police after watching a horror movie: "If you are police then you die quick because if you go home then they kill you or like on *Scream*, that other man was a policeman and they shoot him *doef-doef*." But the influence of media images was complex and it may be that Ismael and Richard actively chose this example to reflect, rather than construct their experience. Alex too drew on a cartoon character to illustrate his views about gangs:

Jenny: Why do people join gangs?

Alex: I know, because like on my - that game, like, like with Ash now, if Ash gets into the uh... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...into the team rocket and then, and then...

Robin: Then he win.

Alex: Uh-uh and then, and then he can also steal Pokemon but then he get more stronger and stronger then he, and then he be team rocket.

Jenny: So do you think they join gangs to be stronger?

Alex: Yes...

?: Yes.

Alex:and to get more money.

For Alex, using a *Pokemon* cartoon to illustrate the potential strength and power of gangs could be read as reinforcing the status of violent masculinities, but it may be that the cartoon was just a helpful way to illustrate his point about gangs.

What was clear in this study was that in interpreting the violence in their neighbourhoods, children engaged with multiple discourses, based on their direct experience, and fictional and non-fictional images in the media. Feminist researchers have explored the importance of narratives in women's lives, drawing connections with the reproduction of and reorganisation of dominant social relations (Smith, 1990):

Our narratives are constructed discursively through available cultural scripts so that identities and processes of identification occur within prevailing lines or networks of social power and material interests. The point here is that we both speak our narratives and are spoken through narratives as we shape our identities as social actors and both respond to and constrain the identities of others (Walker & Unterhalter, 2004: 282).

In the narratives based on television, children engaged with "cultural scripts" about the power of violence, which both enticed, as in the fighting skill of *Pokemon*, and which repelled, as in the violence of the film *Scream*. These images were most often used by the

8 year old children, who may have had less direct experience of neighbourhood violence than the older children, and it was not always clear to me in our discussions whether the children recognized what was fact and what fiction. But intertextuality, the blending of fact and fiction, is not specific to children – after all, much of what we know of women’s worlds is learned through the fiction of novels and autobiographies (Walker and Unterhalter, 2004). Children actively listen to and reconstruct stories from multiple sources in making sense of violence. When these stories portray violence as a source of power, they may create the potential for increasing the attraction of violence.

The Magnetism of Gangs

One of the most overt ways in which violence was associated with power in the neighbourhoods of these children was through gangsterism. The widespread membership of gangs in this locality suggests that for young men in particular, there is capital to be gained from gang membership. The children in this study were highly critical of gangsterism:

Tariq: They call you and then they want money and if you don’t give them then they’re going to hurt, then they hurt, then they wanna hurt you.

Nicholas: They rob you and all that stuff and they put tattoos on them and they have guns and knives and they walk around robbing people – almost every day they rob people.

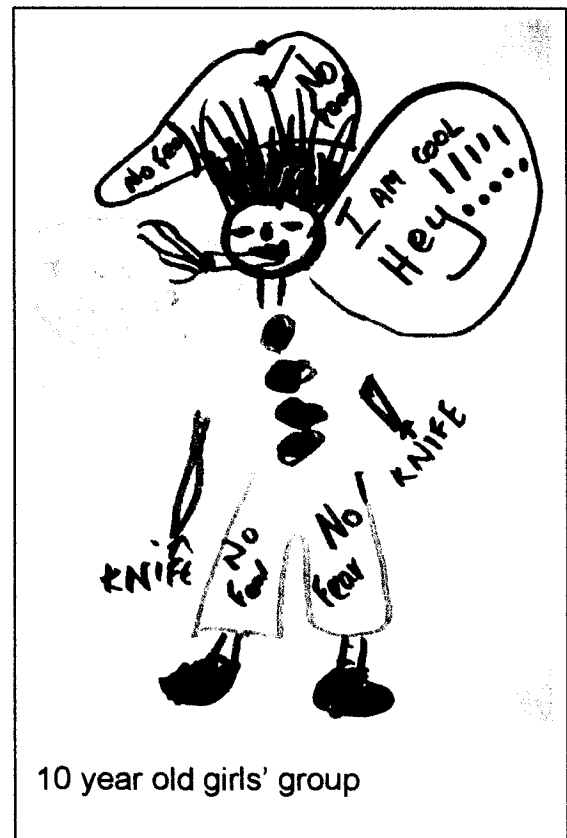
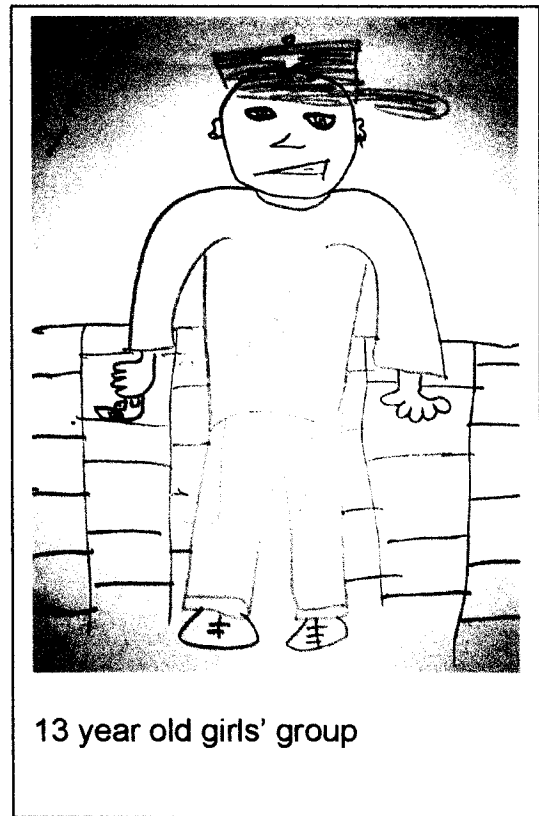
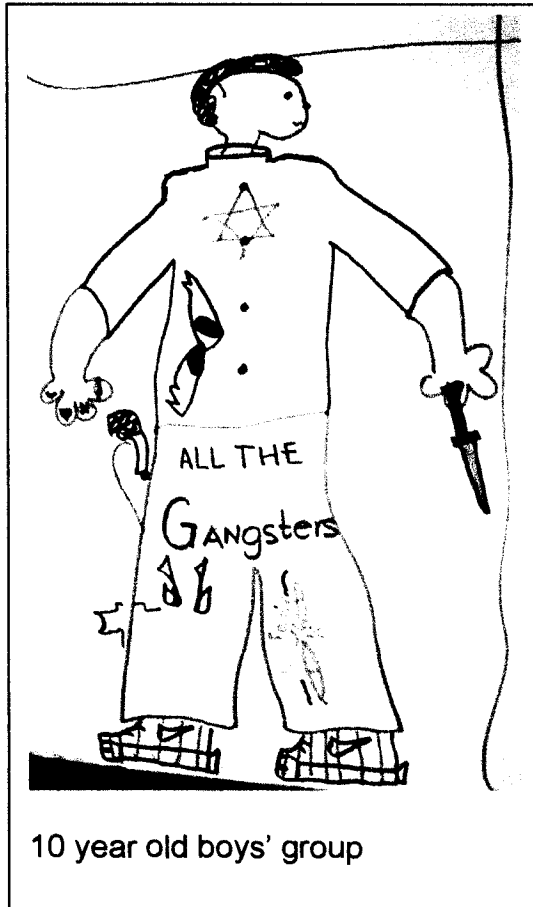
Karen: They shoot people, and they murder and they steal.

But their attitudes were complex and many of the children also articulated the attraction of gangs, whilst at the same time they tried to distance themselves from them. Children suggested many reasons why people join gangs, with the most common being to gain riches, to gain strength to wreak revenge, to be with friends, to be “big” or “cool”:

Shandre: I think that they want to be like the coolest in the area – they want to think that they are the coolest and then they like rob people and that, and then they go to jail and then they’re out again and they think they rough – cool – that they went to jail and then they’re out again and that. And sometimes if you have friends and then the one join the gang just to show his friends that he is in a gang and he can be with the cool guys – as they say.

In an activity in which groups imagined the life cycle of a gangster, most groups drew “cute” babies – rejecting then an innate propensity to violence - but suggested that the signs that he might join a gang could be seen at 10 or 11 when he was influenced by his friends or brother, had been bullied and felt “I’ll get him back” or was “sick and tired of his mommy. She’s treating him like a baby maybe” and wanted to “be his own person”. Their drawings illustrate how gangsters are associated with style, coolness, fearlessness and violence (*figure 2*).

Figure 2: Gangster Drawings



Children's explanations of the attraction to gangs tend to emphasise interpersonal relations and so differ from the research on gangs in South Africa, which explains gang formation in the twentieth century in terms of broader social relations, like poverty and unemployment, changing patterns of family life and socialisation caused by urbanisation (Glaser, 2000) or the dislocation of forced removals (Pinnock, 1984). Like the children, these researchers also talked of social status, style and the sense of belonging or connection fostered by gangs. While the explanations in the academic literature powerfully embed gangs within social structures, the children's explanations seem to offer more choice or agency. For them, some children join gangs, but others, like themselves, in similar economic and social circumstances, choose not to do so. Their explanations are still social, but they are connected with closer, more intimate social relationships and social identities relevant to their own lives. The reasons children talked of varied with age and gender, so for girls, friendship and peer pressure was viewed as a key reason, and for older girls the desire for some independence. For the older boys, the additional strength to fight back was a key reason for joining a gang (Irwin, 2004).

The older boys, in particular, were fascinated by the practices of gangs, and some talked with pride about their knowledge of the local gangs:

Luke: I can name, Jenny, almost all the gangs here, I know all this gangs here. [...] But I know them so they won't try anything with me.

While determined not to join a gang himself, Luke was clearly proud of his association with local gangs, and his disdain for "*gangsterjies*" – literally, small gangsters, who rob but do not engage in all the activities of the true gangsters – suggests his admiration of the 'true' gangsters. The very names of the gangs – the Dixie Boys, the Cool Cubs, the Bad Boys, the Chosen Ones, the Americans – reverberate with 'cool', drawing, for example, on the superpower status of the US. For the older boys in particular, knowledge about and sometimes contact with gangs was a source of status, for though gangs disempowered others in the neighbourhood, they were also associated with bravery, daring and risk-taking, qualities which represented valuable capital in the performance of masculinities.

Gender and the Magnet of Violence

In chapter 2, I discussed the South African literature which traces the historical relationship between masculinity, heroism and violence (Unterhalter, 2000; Morrell, 2001a). In their talk in this study, boys demonstrated the continuing power and status of these masculinities.

It was in the continuing association of masculinity and violence that the magnet of violence was most clearly evident. Men and boys were often portrayed as protectors of the family, using force if necessary to confront crime and violence. Omar, for example, told how when his father's car was broken into: "so my daddy went to find him and then my brother went to help". Alex narrated two versions of an incident where the men and boys in his family were involved in responding to an attempted break-in. The first time he told this story was during an individual interview:

Alex: And the last time and so there was a man there by my sister's window and so she went to go call my daddy, wake my daddy and my mommy awake and so I also waked up and so I went to go take my pellet gun out and my daddy took my brother's pellet gun out because my brother wasn't there... (**Jenny:** Mm.) ...because he always shoots the people with pellets.

The second account of the incident was given during a group discussion with the 8 year old boys about violence:

Alex: And the last time and the last time and so I went into my sister's room and so she was reading and so I wanted – I asked her for a sweet and so I went to go fetch 'cause the cupboard's there by the window and so I saw, so I first saw "what's this by the window" and so I saw a man and so I just took a sweet and so I made like I went out and so I went to go call my daddy and my brother and so my brother went to go fetch his pellet gun and my daddy were – and my daddy did go fetch his shotgun and so he "*pah-pah-pah*" and then he go and my daddy did throw old *wiggles* from the last Guy Fawkes and so he strike it and so throw it just to get him away.

There are some discrepancies between these two versions, in the weapons used (pellet guns, shot guns, even fireworks) and in Alex's own involvement in the defence of his family, suggesting that his story has been modified to present slightly different versions for his listeners. But in both, Alex and his father perform particular masculinities, embodying bravery and strength, to counter violence with force and cunning.

A degree of artistic license is also likely in Ismael's story told to the 8 year old boys' group about his response to another break-in:

Ismael: That man who came into our house, I was still awake and then I was in the toilet and so he, and so I was standing just so still, he thought that I was a shadow but he looked back and so I did hit him and so he ran away.

Whether or not some of these stories are embellished for their audience, their point is to position the boys, and often other male family members, as powerful and heroic.

Occasionally girls and women are also included in protecting the family, as in Robin's narrative, which generated mirth amongst the 8 year old boys:

Robin: ...and they broke in there by my cousin's window and so my cousin did fight with the man and my girl cousin...[.....]

Jenny: And did she frighten the man off?

Robin: And so they did hit him with a pot and so she did hit the man over his head with a pot.

(all giggling)
Jenny: Did he run away then?
Robin: ...and so my uncle went out and my uncle ran so he tripped over the line.
(giggling)
Jenny: Oh really?
Alex: And so his auntie probably said “You have done well my child” *(giggling)*
Robin: No.
Jenny: Probably did.
Robin: And so they did run my auntie over there by the grass.
Jenny: He dragged her? [...]
?: ...did he run over her?
Robin: ...and so he came there out and so he ran her over.
Alex: And so, did ...
Robin: And so all the people did come and so my uncle did say “catch him” and so...
(giggling)
Jenny: Was she alright?
Robin: *(nods – no verbal response)*
Jenny: Yes? Good.
Omar: And so Robin’s did run the fastest.
Jenny: Did your uncle manage to catch him?
Robin: And my cousin he’s four years old – he did go help his daddy to fight.
?: And so...
Jenny: Did they manage to catch him, Robin?
Robin: They got all the money back.
Jenny: Okay so you got all the money back.
Robin: He’s in jail.

In this account the amusement is caused by role reversal - the “girl cousin” defending herself by hitting the intruder with a cooking pot, the uncle who trips over the washing line. But in the end, it is the men who catch the perpetrator, including the four year old boy. Being able to protect families, with force if necessary, was a form of capital for men and boys. Neighbourhood violence could sometimes provide a stage to demonstrate the possession of this capital.

In the accounts of these boys, women and girls were usually positioned as passive, often as victims, and the only time a girl used violence (using a cooking pot), in Robin’s account, this generated humour in its unusualness. Girls’ narratives offer a very different and much more varied perspective on the engagement of women and girls. Sometimes girls and women too used force to defend themselves. Faiza, for example, narrated how her cousin had fought off an attempted rape in school:

Faiza: And my cousin, she was here at the school, she went to the toilet and so she saw in the toilet there was a man, and so she ran... and he pushed her against her against the wall and then he pulled her hair, then he choked her and so she couldn’t breathe so that other girl came in and so, so he looked over his shoulder and so my cousin she kicked him so and so *(demonstrates kicking up with leg)* she ran out the other girl and he chased her round the class...

In another narrative, she told how her grandmother had helped when a boy tried to steal her keys:

Faiza: And when I came from school then we went to the butcher and so it wasn't yet open and so my ma gave me the keys and I opened the door and so a other boy came and take the keys off there and so he threw the keys in the road. So we did tell my ma, so my ma lift him, so my ma shake him, and so he swear me out and my ma. And he kicked me in the face.

In this next extract, drawn from a much longer narrative which I often found difficult to follow, Melissa talked of how the women in her family, including her pregnant aunt, had participated in a gang fight:

Melissa: And so the ambulance came, and so they said, um, and so they went to go fetch my auntie, so she said, "No, no", that she's not going to leave her man alone. She was going to fight. And so my other uncle came and they were shooting gun so my other uncles came and so he put his gun here in [...] And so all my aunties said they couldn't have come out there, there was fifteen men standing there until my other cousins came. So they brang more friends with them, my other cousins, so they had a fight.

In each of these three narratives, women and girls used violence to protect themselves, but unlike the men in Melissa's family, the women and girls in these stories did not use weapons but defended themselves using their bodies – kicking or shaking. Often girls talked of shouting, as when Karen's mother challenged an intruder: "my mommy shouted, "Hey!" so he ran away and so my mommy said, 'Hey, I was scared!'" Chantal told of how she had helped her friend when they were attacked:

Chantal: One day me and my friend were in the shop so we came back, a white car stopped and that man pulled down his pants and he rolled down the window and opened one of the doors and he called us and he wanted to grab my friend and so I pulled her, so we ran away and so that man did turn the car around so he turned until we were in the house, and so we ran into my house.

Jenny: Were you near the house then?

Chantal: (*nods*)

Jenny: That's good.

Chantal: It was on the corner by my house. [...]

Jenny: That was frightening. And what happened after that?

Chantal: And so my daddy did come and so he was gone.

Jenny: Your daddy went out to see – what would your daddy have done if he had found him?

Chantal: I don't know. My daddy say if he grabbed him he will kill that person.

In the girls' narratives, women and girls hardly come across as passive victims and occasionally use their bodies as weapons, but the use of violence to protect themselves or their children does not seem to be expected of them, as perhaps it was of Chantal's father.

In their responses to violence, girls' actions varied, and in the emotions they expressed, they also expressed more varied repertoires than boys and talked freely about their fears. When Jacqueline recounted an incident of police brutality, she said: "and I was crying that night". Karen laughed when describing her own response to a break-in: "so I slept like, so I slept, so I slept with my duvet over my head. The morning when I woke up, I was laying with my, with my whole body under at the bottom of the bed". Shandre, talking of her

feelings after a car accident, said: “so I was shaking from inside”. While boys positioned girls as helpless and as victims, girls did not appear to accept this positioning and positioned themselves in much more fluid and varied ways in relation to violence.

Yet, girls do face dilemmas, as in the following extract:

- Ramona:** We go every day to the shop and then there's this girls that doesn't like me and then they just want to push and (?) but they're also in primary school still but they think they so... because they smoke and everything.. they come. They live way far from us and they walk around and they come and stand there by the river and then they smoke and everything there.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. So what do they do when you go past - when they see you?
- Ramona:** They will say a lot of things but I don't take note of them.
- Jenny:** Yeah. How do you feel then?
- Ramona:** But Stacey will always (*slight chuckle*) say something.
- Jenny:** Okay. So if you're with Stacey she'll say something. And how do they respond to that?
- Ramona:** Well, they will also come after Stacey but Stacey is never scared.
- Jenny:** Is she not?
- Ramona:** (*slight chuckle*)
- Jenny:** Okay. How do you feel when they're saying things to you?
- Ramona:** Very nervous because you never know if they're going to hit you or something.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. And is there anything you can do to stop them or to avoid it?
- Ramona:** (*pause*) I don't know. (*said slowly*)
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. So Stacey tries to by talking back but actually doesn't take much notice... (*overtalking*)
- Ramona:** Whilst we were in the shop and then she just bumped the other girl out of the way and so this girl looked at her until she was out of the shop and she said it isn't her shop and everything and Stacey just said everything to her.

While Ramona is critical of the violence and aggression of the ‘other’ girls, she admires the fearlessness of Stacey, who “will always say something” and “is never scared”. Her own positioning seems less comfortable, admitting that she feels “very nervous” but tries to deliberately ignore the aggressors: “I don't take note of them”. Stacey's bravery, or lack of fear, appears to be a form of capital that is valued by Ramona, suggesting that some of the features of heroic masculinity also generate status for girls. But they do not seem to be required, as they may be for boys, and Ramona has the choice of adopting alternative practices. These more varied responses may protect girls from some forms of violence in the neighbourhood since they may be more likely to avoid physical risks.

But the narratives of Chantal and Faiza above, like a growing body of South African literature, demonstrate girls' vulnerability to gendered violence and coercion (Whitehead, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2002; Wood, 2002). Girls talked about their fears of rape: “the Government must put people in jail, if they do one thing wrong, because they don't – they let people who rape children, they let them go off.... And then they just do it again”. Older girls talked of men's coercion of women and girls through

sexual relationships, as in this account of how girls may be forced into carrying drugs for their gangster boyfriends:

Jenny: So the boys join the gangs in the way that you've already talked about. And how do you think the girls end up getting involved?

Jacqueline: It's when, say your boyfriend belongs to the gang and they want to go fetch drugs at a place and then they know the police won't like search the ladies because they're not allowed to. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And so they'll ask you to do that once and if you want to butt out the next time they ask you to do it, then they will like kill you or something or they hurt your family. So if they ask you once, you must say no because otherwise you will like be there forever.

Ramona expressed her fears about taxi drivers who coerced school girls into becoming 'taxi queens', who exchange sex for a seat at the front of the taxi:

Ramona: But the taxis is a very big problem.

Jenny: How come? In what way?

Ramona: Well this one taxi driver, he liked my sister and so my sister didn't want him and so he shot my brother-in-law now and he got shot in the rib and in the arm but they still didn't take the bullets out because they said they can't. But he's alive now. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And then he again, the taxi driver, and then the other taxi here, this one here behind, he's Alfie, he has many taxis, and then he send men after this other taxi driver and then they bashed him.

For boys and men, violence could attract through demonstrating their potency, but it could also endanger them, as in the conflict between Ramona's brother-in-law and the taxi drivers. For girls, the risks arise through men's attempts to control women's bodies, often within sexual relationships. This can create for girls an uneasy connection between violence and sexuality which will be discussed further in chapter 5.

The Uneasy Alliance of Masculinity and Violence

Though boys at all ages engaged with these masculinities of strength, bravery and the potential to use violence, in the talk of the young boys the enactment of these masculinities more often involved their fathers than themselves. Stories like Alex's and Ismael's, discussed above, in which children added themselves as actors in defending their families, seemed to have more fun and bravado than authenticity. These younger boys seemed to be experimenting in their talk with these practices, but they were not expected to perform them in the neighbourhood context. But the oldest boys, at 13-15 years old, were reaching an age where these practices were increasingly important in their masculine identities. Yet at the same time, in most violent situations in the neighbourhood, attempts to respond would endanger them and, in reality, there was little opportunity for them to perform these masculinities in the neighbourhood context. I will spend some time discussing the talk of five of the older boys in order to illustrate the varied ways in which they managed this dilemma.

Of the five boys, Tariq spoke most often about using force to counter neighbourhood violence:

- Tariq:** There was once this boy shot a man dead. (**Jenny:** M-m.) So he said, this man pulled out a knife and pointed at him, but the man was far from him so he took out his father's gun and he shot the man. [...] When, we just heard "boom" so we went outside, so all the people were standing there. [...] That time when he shot that man, so he threatened us - this boy that shot the man, so he threatened us also. We all.. So the police came so he had to put the gun away (**Jenny:** M-m.) and then, but then I kicked him and I first kicked him then he say, then he say, and he asked me, "Who are you?" So the police came out with their guns. So we.... And then they went to walk in there and this, and then they wanted to arrest the boy so he said no he wanted to stab me with a knife but the man was far from me. [...]
- Jenny:** Okay. And why did you kick him?
- Tariq:** 'Cause he threatened us all there that were standing around the man.
- Jenny:** So he was still standing there with the gun threatening the other people as well?
- Tariq:** Yes.
- Jenny:** Why do you think... What was going on with him? Why do you think he was doing it?
- Tariq:** I don't know. He was probably angry. I don't know.
[...]
- Jenny:** And, so was he still holding the gun when you kicked him?
- Tariq:** No. When the police came I kicked him and he had to hide the gun away.
- Jenny:** Okay. And how did you feel when he did that?
- Tariq:** I don't know.
- Jenny:** Okay. Must have been quite frightening I should think? Were you not(?)
- Tariq:** Mm.
- Jenny:** Okay. I know I'd be frightened if I saw someone trying to shoot people with a gun.
- Tariq:** *Ja*, but there were people with cricket bats and stuff there to hit him also if he had to shoot.
- Jenny:** Okay. So that was afterwards?
- Tariq:** Soccer players also were there watching the man laying on the floor.
- Jenny:** So...
- Tariq:** So he died on the spot.
- Jenny:** So he was dead, and other people were maybe feeling angry, were they? So they started hitting the boy?
- Tariq:** They wanted to hit him so the police just came.
- Jenny:** And took him away?
- Tariq:** Mmm. [*nods*] And then he's free now. He hasn't even.... He didn't even go to jail. Just for one night and then he came home, then, now he's just walking around now.
[...]
- Jenny:** What do you think should have happened to him?
- Tariq:** *Umf (big sigh)* For my part I think we should have hit him.

Tariq's own positioning here was a little ambiguous. His account of kicking the boy who committed the murder positions him first as defending himself and others, but later as attempting to enact revenge. He resisted my efforts to encourage him to talk about his feelings. His intention was to portray himself as able to exert control and order in his environment, through force if necessary, and he is frustrated at the inability of the police to do this effectively. Later in the interview, he again positioned himself as capable of defending himself with violence:

- Tariq:** When we go to the shops there's a lot of children standing around watching you when you come. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Now he know... When I come but I always have a stick on me so... And last time I took my cricket bat so I hit this boy over the legs. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) 'Cause he grabbed me.

For Tariq, masculinity entailed the ability to control the environment, using violence if necessary. David also narrated an incident where the desire to use violence as a form of defence was powerful:

- David:** There was a time they tried to rob my brother and then I here at the house, I went to go look for him because my brother's friend phoned and then I ran up there, I locked up the house, I went to go look for my brother and I came there and my brother was fighting with these guys. It was three guys that tapped him on the back and tried to take his watch and his cell phone. I didn't get it right, and so a other man came to help him, and this... Then I came, then (?) fighting and this guy came and they just ran away...
[...]
- Jenny:** How did you feel when you got the phone call?
- David:** How I felt is like I wasn't scared, I was, I just felt to get these guys.

As he told me about this incident, David clenched his fists, and seemed frustrated about his impotence in not being able to help his brother himself, but having to wait for an older boy to help. This frustration was also evident in another of his narratives:

- David:** And like, one night I heard gun shots going off right there...
- Jenny:** Right near your house?
- David:** Yes. And I just sat and I locked my door.... (**Jenny:** Yeah.)because everyone was sleeping and then I was, I just locked the door and I sat there.

Here the repetition of "just" sitting there seems to signify frustration at his forced inaction. A similar sense of frustration could be found in Luke's narrative about a day in the neighbourhood that was 'not so good':

- Luke:** I had to stay almost the whole day inside because... I don't know if you know Pagad? (**Jenny:** Yeah.) This one guy, he sells drugs, he sells here at the back also... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...from this houses. Now, his wife and them, they live in our road. His name is Alfie. He live in our road. So Pagad came there and then they *dingussed*, looked around in his house. They were sitting the whole road full, just Pagad men just in our road, they sit in the whole road full. And then they were, they looking through his house, cutting stuff open in his house looking in there. That's the worse day I had - I had to stay inside.
- Jenny:** What were they planning to do, do you think?
- Luke:** I don't think they were planning to do anything to the house because his wife and them stay there.
- Jenny:** She was actually there?
- Luke:** His wife and his children, yes. But they were probably just looking for drugs, that's all.
[...]
- Luke:** They shot him in this house also here at the back. (?) the bakkie here, but that was at night, one day... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...during the week.
- Jenny:** So if they had found him, what would they have done?
- Luke:** I don't know. Probably kill him.
- Jenny:** Yeah. And so... Were you around while they were in his house?
- Luke:** No. I was inside, but the next day we heard at school that they shot on this house and, and we came with... Quite a few of us came to the back and we could see the gun holes in the house and the bakkie that was burnt out.
[*Luke explains that Alfie spends time at two houses, one near Luke's home where his wife and children lives, and one by the school where his drug dealing takes place.*]
- Jenny:** How did you know it was Pagad that were coming?
- Luke:** Pagad. They wear that stuff that's so wrapped around their head.
- Jenny:** Okay. So that you can't...
- Luke:** Can't see their face, *ja*, but you can see also how Muslims dress - that long, like a dress. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Like so a thing and then they've got that thing around here, down their head.

Jenny: Yeah. And would they be in a big group?
Luke: Yeah. Some of them are.
Jenny: Yeah. And they'd have guns and stuff?
Luke: Yes. Petrol bombs. Paint bombs.
Jenny: Okay. And how did you feel about them? How did you feel when you knew that they were in that house near by?
Luke: The house there in our road? (**Jenny:** Yeah.) I don't feel anything because I think it's so, that's a drug dealer, then they're just trying to get rid of them. (**Jenny:** Mm mm.) Because most of the children at the young age of twelve, thirteen years old that is already taking drugs. Like here's children live in the bush - I think they were ten or eleven that's smoking *dagga* already, and they do the tablet that they crush and put in the *dagga* - they do that also.

Pagad (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) is a predominantly Muslim organisation set up in 1995 as a popular anti-crime movement, but increasingly seen by the state as an illegitimate vigilante organisation and then as an urban terror group (Dixon and Johns, 2001). At the time the study took place, Pagad members were awaiting trial for several bombings, but the organisation repeatedly denied responsibility for the attacks and said it did not condone violence (BBC News, 13 September 2000).

As Luke talked about this incident when a large group of armed men took over his street in their search for a drug dealer, I could imagine the fear and intimidation engendered in local people. But Luke explained that the reason it was his "worst" day was not fear, but that he "had to stay inside." Rather than repulsion, he seemed to respect their goal of using violence to contest the drug problem. Luke's frustration, like David's, was in the forced inaction, which disempowered him. Like Tariq, David and Luke seemed to be drawn to forms of masculinity which involve holding power, using violence if necessary, but all of them to some extent expressed frustration about the restrictions on them, since they lacked the power to engage effectively. In Luke's case the lack of power was connected with his being only one person faced with a large armed group, David was hampered in his attempt to help by his age and size, Tariq by the (ineffective) forces of law which took over control from the crowd following the shooting incident.

Lester and Clinton expressed different ways of engaging with the violence. Lester, like many of the children, talked about running away and fetching help if he is attacked: "If someone that likes, want to rob you then you just shout and then the people will come out by their houses". Unlike Tariq, David and Luke, he seems to be comfortable with seeking adult help:

Lester: Don't go buy fancy clothes because people can like rob you easily.... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ... just when you bought, buy the clothes, then the people can just rob it off you. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Take it off you. (**Jenny:** Okay.) That's why I rather go with someone to take my clothes. Like my

mother. I will go shopping with her. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) I won't go shopping with my brother 'cause then they can just take all our stuff and run.

Jenny: Why would they be more likely to do that if you're with your brother and not?

Lester: 'Cause they'll think we're young. We can't do nothing to them so they'll just take it and run. With my mother they think we're old because then my mother can just, like my mother can phone the police because she has her cell phone on her and that. My brother we're just going to walk and they think like we're powerless against them and... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...they just take the stuff off us and run.

Like the other boys, Lester was aware that his youth rendered him "powerless", but rather than express frustration he was still willing to seek protection from his mother, other adults and the police. This was in stark contrast to David's narrative, when he went to try to help his brother without even waking his mother: "My mother was at home but she was sleeping [...] I just locked up and ran." Clinton had a different way again of coping with the neighbourhood violence.

Clinton: How do I mostly spend my time?

Jenny: Mm.

Clinton: If I don't go out, I just sit and listen to music or watch TV, that's all. That's mostly what I do. 'Cause I don't, I don't believe walking around, walking around alone, because that's how accidents happen.

Jenny: What kind of accidents?

Clinton: Like kidnapping, raping and that. I just keep calm and sit at home and watch TV and listen to music.

Like the other boys, Clinton was aware of the dangers in the neighbourhood, but rather than express frustration at his impotence, he positioned himself as actively choosing to stay at home, to "keep calm", listen to music and watch TV.

Clinton: Now there's a lot of gangsters *mos* there, now I, I know a lot of gangsters. (**Jenny:** Mm) Now there's one boy who came from Rocklands, he's a, he's also a gangster (**Jenny:** Mm) so he asked me if I like want to be in his gang. (**Jenny:** Yeah) So I said no. Why? Because what's the use of being in a gang if you can be strong (**Jenny:** Yeah) and like do stuff for yourself if you're not a gangster. (**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah) So you don't need to be strong or strong-faced to the other person (**Jenny:** Yeah) in the gang.

Like the other boys, strength and being able to "do stuff for yourself" were an important part of Clinton's construction of his own masculinity, but in this extract he claimed to be able to demonstrate these qualities without resorting to the violence of gangs, and so reinterpreted the meaning of power and strength.

I have looked in some detail at the narratives of these boys in order to illustrate some of the variability in boys' engagements with neighbourhood violence. For all these five boys, desired forms of masculinity were imbued with power and strength and so the potential to use violent practice was present, but only Tariq employed violence. They were all aware that within the neighbourhood context their power was limited, and for some this led to

frustration and shame. The frustration was exacerbated by age, since they were increasingly unwilling to rely on adults for help, and so no longer protected by childhood (with the exception of Lester who was the youngest in the group). Recent analyses of gender relations stress multiple masculinities, so in South Africa: “there are many different masculinities, some of which support violent and exploitative gender relations, others which accept such gender relations, and still others which oppose them” (Morrell, 2001: 33). These five boys performed multiple masculinities, but all of them engaged in some way with a dominant discourse of men as embodying strength and the power to use violence, a discourse which in the context of neighbourhood violence was unattainable. It was impossible for children to live up to these “mythical masculinities” (Field, 2001a), but in their attempts they experienced frustration and shame, for, as Bob Connell puts it: “whatever ideology prevails in the gender order, children grow up in its shadow. They may not embrace it, but they cannot forget it” (Connell, 2002: 84).

Violence, Race and Religion

Children in South Africa also grow up in the shadow of historical racial conflict and discrimination, but when children talked about neighbourhood violence they rarely mentioned race. This may well be because of the continuing association of Uitsigberg with the ‘coloured’ community (see chapters 1 and 3), so that the people children encountered throughout the neighbourhood were likely to be coloured. Within their local area then, race was not usually a marker of difference and both perpetrators and victims of violence were likely to be ‘coloured’. There were some exceptions. Louise mentioned that it was “black men” who murdered a woman in the neighbourhood. When Peter talked about a violent incident in another neighbourhood he described the perpetrators as “South Africans”, probably indicating ‘black Africans’ and when I probed further about why people do these things he replied: “‘cause sometimes they, they don’t have that stuff and the South Africans don’t have that stuff that the white people have, the rich stuff and then the South Africans steal it”. This was a rare example of a child equating crime with poverty and race. Clinton commented on the frequency of gangs in the coloured community:

Jenny: Why do you think gangs develop in some areas and not others?

Tariq: Because some of them...

Clinton: Because most of the gangsters is Coloureds. Most of them.

Tariq: No, because they’re in poor areas and now they don’t have money and they go to the rich people and they probably will go steal.

Jenny: So...

Clinton: (*sharply*) What?

?: Mm.

Clinton: No man, it isn't like that.
Luke: What was the question?
Jenny: That, well, you were saying that one reason, I mean, so that could be a cause is poverty is not having enough money so they get involved in a gang to go and steal.
Lester: No, they go into gangsters to be cool.
Jenny: Yeah. Okay. Clinton, you said you said you think it's mainly in the Coloured community.
Clinton: Yes.
Jenny: Why could that be?
Clinton: Because - for since I'm learning I never even saw a white gang. Just Coloureds mostly.
Luke: I know of a White gang in Wynberg.

Clinton did not offer an explanation for his observation and he and Lester disagreed with Tariq's explanation of poverty as a reason for gang behaviour, perhaps because they would prefer to position coloured neighbourhoods as 'cool' rather than 'poor'. Children from the oldest groups also talked of race in discussions about change. The 13 year old boys' group talked of the need for better policing in coloured areas: "because they're very quick in the White areas but they're not so quick here". The 13 year old girls complained that the President, Thabo Mbeki, is unlikely to listen to their messages about safety since he only gives jobs to "the natives... the Africans" just as "if there was a white President and then he give white people more privileges.... It's never the coloureds, *ja*."

Coloured identities did therefore have significance for children in this study, particularly when they moved in their narratives from the local neighbourhood to the broader South African social context. Children also sometimes drew connections between religion and violence. Robin and Peter narrated incidents in which they described the victims as Muslim:

Robin: That man had a lot of money, so he was Muslim so then gangsters came and so he said...
Alex: Oh yes.
Robin: ...sing, sing, sing or we let the dogs out and so he didn't wanted to sing and so they shot him in front of his parents.
Alex: In his head *né*?
Robin: I know. [.....] No, he was Muslim and they shot him there in the head, they shoot.
Peter: There by my auntie there was a Muslim man... (**Jenny:** Yeah.)...and so, he and his wife and his children did get out of the *bakkie* and so there came a van and so they shot him (**Jenny:** Yeah.) in his head and so they rided, so they ride away there by my auntie in Mitchell's Plain.

It is difficult to interpret the significance of religion in these two extracts, which could indicate racist attacks against Muslims, violence within the Muslim community or perhaps an equation of Islam with wealth, making Muslims more likely targets of robbery. Rushaanah's intention in talking of her uncle's religion is also unclear:

Jenny: And what do you think makes someone think they might want to join a gang?
Rushaanah: Because they want to play with fire and they want to burn people's houses... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...from the inside and they want to mess up their lives. (**Jenny:** Okay.) And they smoke and they drink.

Jenny: And do you know anyone who's in a gang?

Rushaanah: Yes, my uncle. (**Jenny:** Okay.) He's Christian. He also drinks. (**Jenny:** Yeah.)'Cause my mommy was Christian once.

Rushaanah, who was Muslim, may have been associating Christianity with alcohol and gangsterism, but the association may also have been coincidental. In each of these examples, religion seems to hold significance for the children but the nature of that significance is not clear. However, there were occasional group discussions in which the talk of some Christian children generated a clear association between Islam and violence. In particular, in one discussion with the 10 year old girls, there was a heated debate about the involvement of Muslims in violence in the neighbourhood and beyond. The discussion began when I had asked the 10 year old girls what were the biggest problems in the neighbourhood, and Shanelle replied: "and raping children and Pagad". As discussed earlier, at the time of these discussions Pagad's identity as an anti-crime movement, a vigilante organisation or part of a terrorist network was contested (BBC News, 13 September 2000; Dixon and Johns, 2001). These conflicting views were clearly demonstrated in the ensuing discussion. Shanelle's comment quickly elicited a response from the two Muslim girls in the group, Faiza and Ferial, explaining that Pagad stands for People Against Gangsterism and Drugs. Simone at this point (and several times later) began to talk about the bombing of the Twin Towers on September 11th 2001 (the discussion took place on October 9th 2001). The discussion proceeded as follows:

Chantal: Mrs Parkes, my mommy say that the Muslims, that the Muslims...[...] I think it's the Muslims or the *Slamse* [coloured Muslim person] I don't know, but the...

Ferial: *Slamse* is Muslims.

?+: (all talking)

Chantal: I don't know, I don't know - so my mommy say they are all Pagad. *Slamse*, I don't know

Jenny: So some people, I think some people think that Pagad is like a gang and other people I think you were just disagreeing with that weren't you? [look at F who nods]

?: Pagad isn't a gang.

?: Pagad is a gang because two of their group, they ran out of jail and they're supposed to go to court because they killed a lot of people. It's only some of them, but not all the people.

[...]

Faiza: Only some people do that things they go to jail and that, but the other people, but the other that's already in jail they didn't do that stuff but some people are gangsters, other people throw bombs or something or anything and then they blame them, Pagad and then they put them in jail.

[Melissa is trying to tell me something about what Chantal has whispered to her]

Chantal: Mrs Parkes, she say that I said they are Pagad [pointing to Ferial and Faiza][...]

Melissa: Chantal said that you mustn't listen to them [pointing to Ferial and Faiza].

?: Oh.

Chantal: I said you mustn't listen to the Muslims.

?: But Pagad's...

?+: (all talking)

?: But then it's not killing (?)(overtalking)

?+: (all talking)

Jenny: Go then, what do you want to say to that? Ferial what do you want to say to that?

Ferial: But me and Faiza is not killing people.

Shanelle: Fe and Maiza.
?: *(all laughing)*
Jenny: Chantal, what do you want – I think what Chantal was trying to say is...
Chantal: I said...
Jenny: ...something a bit different, go on Chantal say what you were trying to say.
Chantal: I said they're not them, other Muslims.

Chantal's remark, attributed to her mother, accuses all Muslims of being associated with Pagad, and therefore from her perspective with violence. Faiza objects to the suggestion that Pagad is a violent organisation or gang, arguing that Pagad members have been wrongly imprisoned, but Chantal whispers to Melissa: "you mustn't listen to the Muslims". The personal tone of the argument is reflected in Ferial's comment: "me and Faiza is not killing people". Shanelle may be trying to relieve the tension with her joke, and Chantal may also be trying to appease Ferial and Faiza when she says: "I said they're not them, other Muslims", suggesting that she is not referring to her friends when she is criticising 'other' Muslims. Simone again shifts the discussion to the bombing in America:

Simone: But the, but the Americans they wanted to come bomb our country first but then they didn't because they catch them and now, and now they make the Muslims angry and now the Muslims want to do it to them because they like cross with them,
Faiza: 'cause they start first..*(talking in background - not clear)*
Simone: They started first yes, and it was their men and they want to come, but the...*(mumble)[.....]* But they want to come to everybody's door when they're Muslim now and they say you did that. Because it was an important building and that they, they put a bomb, they put a bomb or something up and they put a bomb in the world trade centre where there was stuff in, but then...
?: And the Pentagon.
Faiza: But the Americans they killed ladies and children, and people.
?+: *(overtalking)*
Jenny: What, you mean when they bombed Afghanistan?
?: Yes. *(all talking)*
 [...]
Faiza: But, on TV they show all night about America... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...and that big piece at the bottom America... (**Jenny:** Yeah.)
Shanelle: But when, but when it's - when something happens here in South Africa
Faiza: They will just call it Muslims and then they only show a small piece.
 [...]
Shanelle: When something happens to us here and then they will just show it once on the TV but they won't care about our country but they will just care about their America because they show it over every time and it happened in September and every day show it.
 [...]
Faiza: When the World Trade Centre bomb up and so the first thing they showed and they said it was the Muslims.
Jenny: Yeah. The first thing they said.
Faiza: But they didn't have any proof but
Simone: Proof that the Muslim was.. *(overtalking)*.
Faiza: It could even be people from their own country.
Ferial: Then they say it's America.

The discussion has shifted to less personal ground and Simone seems keen to support Faiza and Ferial in her comments on the USA's unfair blaming and provocation of Muslims around the world: "they want to come to everybody's door when they're Muslim now and

they say you did that.” The USA is positioned as: “the whole America’s country is a gangster” who “killed ladies and children, and people”. The country’s aggression, and high profile in the media is presented as a form of domination, and the gangster analogy brings in a gendered discourse, an association of national domination with aggressive masculinity (Moore, 1994). South Africa, the rest of the world, and, most of all, Muslims are positioned as the victims.

The discussion shows how violence can become embodied in an ethnic group or nation – in this case, Islam and the USA. The children were enacting conflicts repeated in the neighbourhood, the media and even the Government. Just as girls and boys were influenced by the gender order, so too these children lived “in the shadow” of dominant beliefs and practices concerning religion and violence. But within the group, views varied and not always along religious lines. Children did not just reproduce discourses about religion and nationality, but they actively engaged with these discourses, and, through the discussion some may have shifted their positioning (see chapter 5 for a further discussion about this).

Resisting the Magnet

Violence constructs and is constructed by children’s social identities as girls or boys, Muslims or Christians. Discourses about the violence of September 11th, bombings in the Western Cape and the actions of vigilante groups position the Muslim and Christian children as victims, colluders or perpetrators, their interpretation of that violence is connected with how they choose to position themselves within current religious discourses. Gang practices position boys in the neighbourhood as weak and helpless, but how boys interpret these practices depends on their own positioning in relation to current discourses about masculinity. In this chapter, I have discussed some ways in which children are drawn towards dominant discourses, which award status and a sense of control. Violence is sometimes employed to demonstrate and impose control, as in the violent practices of gangs. Where this violence disempowers children, it repels, but when violence is seen as empowering, it entices. When children have so little control over their lives, then these glimmers of power must be tempting. But there are many ways in which, through their talk, children resisted the magnet of violence. A key task for children was to shift the perception of violence as imbued with power, and in this study children were adept in their

ability to do this. I will return to some themes and extracts discussed earlier in this chapter to illustrate.

Children talked about two forms of violence – the *drink-drugs-violence* repertoire and the *predatory violence* repertoire. The *drink-drugs-violence* repertoire awarded little control to the perpetrators, who “catch on all the nonsense”. The perpetrators in the *predatory violence* repertoire were much more clearly exerting control over others, but the children challenged this through emphasising the powerlessness and weakness of their victims. So, when he talked about the girl who was caught in the crossfire of a gang fight, Ryan said “she was a young girl”. When Fatima talked of a robbery in the street, the victim was an old person: “She’s a pensioner, she get pension, and so she was working very hard for this money and so this man just came here and took her bag and she was shivering in the road”. Talking of a boy at school reputed already to have joined a gang, Ramona said: “he even hit the man with his belt, but the man is almost like retarded”.

In their choice of narratives in which women and children are victims, the children disempower the perpetrator, by the suggestion that he is only able to injure the weakest members of society. Rather than the violent act displaying the perpetrator’s ability to exert control over others, the imbalance of power displays his impotence and the futility of acts of extreme violence. But being positioned as weak disempowers the ‘victims’ as well as the ‘perpetrators’ and children are reluctant to position themselves as victims. So in their selection of narratives, children often talked about victims who were deemed to be weaker than the narrator, so boys talked about the victims being girls, while girls talk about victims who are old people, people with disabilities or babies. They then wrest control from the perpetrator, and avoid, when they can, casting themselves as helpless.

In illustrating the attraction of gangs, I used this extract from a discussion with Shandre:

Shandre: I think that they want to be like the coolest in the area – they want to *think* that they are the coolest and then they like rob people and that, and then they go to jail and then they’re out again and *they think* they rough – cool – that they went to jail and then they’re out again and that. And sometimes if you have friends and then the one join the gang just to show his friends that he is in a gang and he can be with the cool guys – *as they say*.

But the extract also illustrates how Shandre reinterpreted the power of gangs. In particular, like many of the children when they talked about gangs, she used the words “they think” to challenge the notion that gangsters are “cool guys”. Ramona made a similar point when

she says: “they think they bosses” and Melissa said: “they think it’s *lekker* to fight, but it’s just not nice”. The coolness then is an illusion.

Frequently children talked about the trap of gangs:

Luke: Like they say, ‘you live a *skollie*, you die a *skollie*’. You can say you’ll lose your life quick if you’re a *skollie*, or you’ll go to prison.

Or, as Clinton put it: “either you go to jail or you go under the ground”. So rather than gain power and riches, the consequence of becoming a gangster, or in Afrikaans *skollie*, was death or prison. Lester clearly explained some of the consequences of joining a gang:

Lester: Okay, I’ll start with the good news. When you walk then you’ll see that this guy got fancy clothes ‘cause he’s stole the clothes then they like, then they ask if you want to join and take you for a ride then they say it’s okay to join the gang and all that then you will join. But when you join the bad thing happen because then you like, then you can’t like abandon the group - you can’t go out of the group - you must stay in that group. Then if you don’t then they will shoot you. (**Jenny:** Mm mm) And then they force you to take drugs and all that stuff, then like, then you’s break in by other houses, then... Like the police, if the police catch you then you will be arrested. (**Jenny:** Mm mm) That’s why the bad thing is never join a group.

Through pointing out that they were stolen, Lester reduced the status of the “fancy clothes”. As well as the likelihood of arrest, gangs trapped their members through the violent punishments preventing movement out of the gang and through forcing their members to participate in crime. So, rather than sources of freedom, control and social support, gangs are reconstructed as coercive and disempowering.

This entrapping aspect of gangs was also described metaphorically as a disease, as in this discussion when I was confused by Odette’s cocktail of drug addiction, violence and disease in explaining gang practices:

Odette: The gangsters kill you. The gangsters have chickenpox and then they have this... a little, um, they have this sick stuff on them and then they get that stuff and then they’re getting mad and all that stuff and then they starting killing the peoples.

Jenny: Okay. Did they have chicken pox? (Nods.) And they get the stuff on them? Is that the tattoos? (Nods) Yeah.

Odette: They first eat the yucky food and then they get this, um, the sores on their mouth and they got it and then they get a chick what’s wrong all over their body and then they give it to the other groups and they kill the peoples the next day.

Odette may here have been combining stories she had heard about drug addiction, HIV/AIDS and drug impregnated tattoos, which had been discussed in school after rumours that they had been distributed to local children. Whatever the source, however, she was clearly associating gangsterism with loss of control. Charles too draws on a disease metaphor:

Charles: Because once they do it, they will like, they won't stop. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) They like... It's in them to do it again.

Through their talk then, children found many ways to deconstruct the power of violence. By stressing the lack of control of perpetrators, the weakness of being drawn into gangsterism and the entrapment of gangs, children resisted the magnet.

Conclusion

What is vertigo? Fear of falling? Then why do we feel it even when the observation tower comes equipped with a sturdy handrail? No, vertigo is something other than the fear of falling. It is the voice of the emptiness below us which tempts and lures us, it is the desire to fall, against which, terrified, we defend ourselves (Kundera, 1984: 56).

Milan Kundera's reflections in his novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, may shed some light on the magnetism of violence, which seems to fascinate at the same time that it repels us. Somewhere hidden in the abhorrence to violence, we find in ourselves traces of attraction – in our desire to watch horror movies, to read thrillers, even to scan newspapers. There seems to be both repulsion from and attraction to violence, like the attraction and repulsion of falling through the air. I contend though that it is not the violence itself that draws us but the social meanings surrounding the violent acts. It is the workings of power that lure us.

Children were afraid, distressed and angry about the violence in their neighbourhoods, but at the same time there were glimmers of excitement, fascination, even relish and sometimes admiration. Children had little control over the violence they encountered in the neighbourhood and in disempowering them, it repelled. But when the violence symbolised power, it could attract.

These children, living in a violent neighbourhood, positioned themselves in complex and varied ways to distance themselves from that violence while at the same time resisting the powerlessness of being cast as victims. Age and generation, sex and religion interacted in complex ways in the dynamics of these engagements. Their positioning as children protected the younger children to some extent from neighbourhood violence, but for the older children, and particularly the older boys, the relationship with violence was 'uneasy'. In their considerations about neighbourhood violence, they engaged not just with the past and present, but with their future imaginings. And dominant notions of manhood entailed the capacity to protect and defend, with violence if necessary, a capacity which though is

unattainable. The consequences were sometimes frustration and shame. But the children also seemed able, through their complex and resourceful positioning, of themselves and others, to deconstruct the power of violence as illusory. For some of the children this had costs, entailing choices about power in which distancing the self from violence may entail giving up valued forms of capital. In the neighbourhood context, the children have made these choices. In the next chapter I will consider how the site of the playground differs from the site of the neighbourhood in children's engagements with violence.

Chapter 5

Inclusion, Exclusion and Violence in the Playground

Introduction

Schools in South Africa can be violent places (Eliasov & Frank, 2000; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Matthews et al., 1999; Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2004; Jewkes et al., 2002; Morrell, 2001b). When I asked children what was the main problem at break time, 31 out of 32 children talked about violence. Yet, almost all of the children also told me of their enjoyment of break times, when they had more freedom than in the classroom: “in interval you can do whatever you want to and have your own time” and when they were able to spend time with friends: “I’m always happy at interval. I have friends to play with and we play games”. How then can break times be so violent and so pleasurable? In this chapter I will show how violence in the playground is inextricably connected with friendship, how friendship is enormously important to this group of children and how processes of inclusion and exclusion in the negotiation of social networks can entail violence. Friendship is a site of both social support and conflict (Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003).

Research on children’s experiences of living in violent contexts has paid little attention to peer relationships. There are, however, some anthropological studies of children’s experiences of living in violent communities which have drawn connections between violence and children’s play. In Sean Jones’ study of children’s experience of hostel life in the Western Cape in the late 1980s, he observed play in which sharpened sticks and pencils, knives, screwdrivers and bottles were used as weapons mimicking the confrontations children saw around them: “Violence was more than just entertainment to children; it was also something in which they tutored another, practised in their play, and sometimes put into effect” (Jones, 1993: 156). In a primary school in a poor, violent black township of Durban, Deevia Bhana observed how some boys, who she called ‘tsotsi boys’, used violence both in imitation and for access to material and social rewards:

Violence is about power and tsotsi boys use their bodies, their loud voices and their age and their size to dominate others forcibly. They learn that violence is a way of getting what they want. In conditions of poverty, violence and the threat of violence are the most effective means to get a material reward, even a small sweet. The boys learn this: that violence is a way to get what they want, as well as respect and deference from others (Bhana, 2002: 264).

In these studies then, violence between children is understood as mimicking violence in the neighbourhood or as a form of problem solving, a means to an end “in the fight to survive” (Bhana, 2002: 297).

In this chapter I will analyse how children in this study talked about violence and conflict in peer relations, exploring patterns in their talk about the nature of violence in the playground, about its sources, development and resolution, and I will consider how processes of inclusion and exclusion are connected with violence between peers.

The Problem of Violence in the Playground

Children’s talk about violence in the playground clustered into three broad and overlapping forms, in which violence was perceived as a *by-product of rough play*, as a *deliberate act against another* and as *conflict*. Violence as a *by-product of rough play* included incidents in which children were hurt accidentally through their proximity to a rough game, and incidents in which children were intentionally hurt within the agreed rules of the game.

Jacqueline and Faiza talked of the problem of accidental injury:

Jacqueline: It’s mostly the boys. They’re not supposed to play like between blocks with balls, but they never almost listen because when we like sit, then they’re forever kicking against the walls and we like scared it’s going to hurt us and then we going to have, then we have to walk somewhere or do stuff but, ‘cause we like sitting and chatting about one another and stuff...

Faiza: Children run around and then they, they fight with each other and then when they run around they make other children sore.

The violence in these games enabled children who were stronger to wield power over others. A game (officially banned) known as Rape, for example, involved children having a ball kicked between their legs, running to the fence: “and if you’re not by the fence they hit you with a belt”. Ramona talked of how such games enabled older boys to exert power over other children:

Ramona: The bigger ones just want to... to just... Like the boys in our class, they just want to fight all the children.

Jenny: Yeah. And what do they do? How do they...?

Ramona: They take their... all their... They take even sometimes their belts off also, and they hit the children.

Jenny: And they do that, they do that like kind of a rough game or more like fighting with them?

Ramona: Yes. They do play it as a game.

In this example, the violence was interpreted as part of a game, in which both players chose to participate, but on many occasions children talked of violence as a *deliberate act against another*:

Feriel: When the boys come and then they push us out of the game, out of the circle, and then we, then we shout at them and then they want to run away, then they every time pull our hair.

Chantal: Every time we have money and we don't want to give him or something (*Jenny: Yeah.*) then he wants to hit you and he throw you on the floor... (*Jenny: Yeah.*) and he say "I don't have money and next interval I want money from you".

Melissa: And if you don't give him then he hurt you.

In these examples, the violence was constructed as intentional and one-sided, in these cases as performed by boys against girls. Violence as a *deliberate act against another* bears some resemblance to the repertoire of *predatory violence* in the neighbourhood, discussed in chapter 4, since this violence is intentional, one-sided and renders children as victims. Violence as a *by-product of rough play*, on the other hand, resembles the *drink-drugs-violence* repertoire, in that it is often uncontrolled with children accidentally caught up in it.

However, the third form of violence in the playground – *conflict* - is quite different because, unlike neighbourhood violence, it is reciprocal. Fights in the playground, for example, entailed protagonists who are matched by strength and size. But this reciprocity was not always clear in children's accounts:

Odette: Childrens were make a circle and then a other boy tell, "Come, come fight with me" and they start hitting theirself and then they fight in a circle and then the other children what is watching them, and then they laugh theirself.

Mikhail: We were playing soccer and so the boy run against me and so, so we were playing a game there and so they, and so all the, and so the one go call his gang and they all come fight. [...] And so they, and so we, we get into a fight. [...] So my nose was bleeding when they were hitting me and my eyes was blue.

Anastasia: We were on a outing in a bus and so this child hit me on my head, so I just lift my hand like that and so it went in her face by accident, so she hit me hard on the... (*Jenny: Mm.*) ...on the head and so when we came out of the bus we just started fighting. So then the next day we had to go the principal.

In Odette's account, about two boys fighting, there are clearly two opponents, but in Mikhail's and Anastasia's accounts, the fights sound curiously one-sided. Unlike Odette's narrative, Mikhail and Anastasia are talking about fights in which they participated, but they make little mention of their own actions. Aware that fighting was usually disapproved by adults, in their discussions with me, children tended to minimise their role and to maximise the culpability of the other.

Narratives about violence were therefore often difficult to interpret and the borders and boundaries between these forms of violence frequently merged. I was often left uncertain about intentionality, reciprocity and whether a violent incident or a conflict escalated into a

physical fight. Often there was an air of ritual in the narratives, as if children were describing routine performances with agreed rules – of when to start a fight, when to hit back, when to gather around and watch – and the children talking appeared to distance themselves from the fights. These rules and rituals will be discussed further in chapter 7. Most of the fights they talked of involved boys. When I asked them to tell me about the last time they saw or were involved in a fight, 27 children narrated fights between boys, 4 narrated fights between girls and 2 girls talked about fights between a boy and a girl. Fights then appeared often to be rituals between boys, acts which performed particular masculinities, as I shall discuss further below. But when I talked with children about their personal experiences of conflict, both girls and boys recounted narratives which offered more nuanced insights into social relationships in the playground, and it is to these that I will now turn.

Sources of Conflict

Although children viewed physical violence as the ‘biggest problem’ in the playground, when they talked about their own experiences of conflict, violence and distress in the playground, children repeatedly talked about social exclusion. Younger boys and girls were more likely than older children to fight and argue about possessions or space – easily angered by infringements on their bodies, personal space or possessions. Often these infringements seemed to generate feelings of shame and humiliation at perceived social rejection, as when Faiza fell over and hurt herself, but linked her distress to: “the children was laughing at me”. Or when Peter was distressed by a boy’s repeated interference with his clothing: “if I walk there by that boy, then he pull my cap every time off.” While the conflicts of younger children were often highly embodied, older children were more likely to argue and fight over insults and verbal abuse. But children of all ages told me about break times where they felt lonely and rejected:

Chantal: When noone want to talk to you; and noone want to smile at you then you feel sad.

Melissa: It’s when I had no friends, so I was like sitting alone on the stairs today.

Ryan: One interval when they said they no going to play with me anymore and so I went to go play at the back of this one man’s field and so they’re all playing with their other games.

There were many similarities in the sources of conflict for boys and girls. Girls of all ages were more likely to fight over verbal abuse – social rejection, name calling or, with the oldest girls, having stories told about them or secrets passed on. Such findings correspond

with other studies of girls' friendships and disputes (Hey, 1997; Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003). But the findings that younger girls also fought over possessions, and older boys over verbal abuse precludes generalisations which stress gender difference.

Social exclusion was also the source of conflicts between participants in the research. On three occasions, children arrived at group sessions wanting to talk about conflicts which had happened before the session and which were unresolved at the start of the group. These discussions were particularly interesting to me because both 'sides' of the dispute offered perspectives – unlike the one-sided accounts of fights discussed above. The patterns of conflict were remarkably similar. Each of the incidents involved one child in the group (Odette in the 8 year old girls' group, Simone in the 10 year old girls' group and Ryan in the 10 year old boys' group) coming into conflict with other group members and each of the discussions began with some disagreement about the causes of the fight or argument and the attaching of blame. Each conflict began with forms of physical or verbal interference. Ryan was accused of name calling, choosing not to play with the group and spoiling their game, but retorted: "I didn't call them names, they was calling me names". Odette was accused of starting the fight by throwing Karen's bottle on the ground, but she argued: "That's not how it happened. At first they ran away from us – so I didn't want to run after them 'cause every day they do that and then I don't like it". Simone was accused by Ferial of physical interference: "'Cause Simone every time hang on me the whole time and then she jumps on me and she ruins your back".

But while the group discussions began by arguing about the forms of interference, in all cases exclusion played a major part. Odette was isolated by the other girls running away from her and calling her names. Simone was rejected by other girls in the group running away from her. In the boys' group, the rejection appeared to be reversed, with Ryan rejecting the rest of his group, but during the discussion it emerged that he wanted to play with the others and felt isolated. Once the focus of our discussions shifted to issues of exclusion, resolution became quite easy. Children became much more willing to take responsibility for their part in the conflict, with Karen apologising to Odette: "I also feel sad because we were calling her names" and Imraan saying to Ryan: "I'm sorry I had a fight with you, Ryan, I'm not going to fight with you again, sorry."

In these discussions of conflicts between group members and in the extracts discussed about children's personal playground conflicts, it was processes of exclusion that generated conflict and violence. These were less public than acts of physical violence, which may explain why they were not referred to when I asked children about problems in the playground. But they were the key source of conflict for both boys and girls in this study, though conflicts then developed in very different ways.

Development of Conflict

Fatima and Luke explained the ways in which girls' and boys' fights and arguments developed:

Fatima: They fight a lot or they, like the Tazzos, you know the Tazzos in the Simba chips, then they play that games and, and they not allowed and then they fight over it because then they say that's theirs and that. Or they fight over balls and stuff like that. They do very stupid stuff when they fight. [...] Boys fight a lot.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah. How do girls sort out their arguments then?

Fatima: (*chuckle*) They just *skell* them and after school some of the girls is like that and they just want to fight after school. Other girls tell teachers and the teachers sort out this thing or that.

Luke: Some children think it's a game to throw stones, but then if the stone hit the other boy *of* a girl and a girl maybe threw it, then the girls want to fight - the one that threw it and the other one that got hit by the stone - the two of them want to fight.

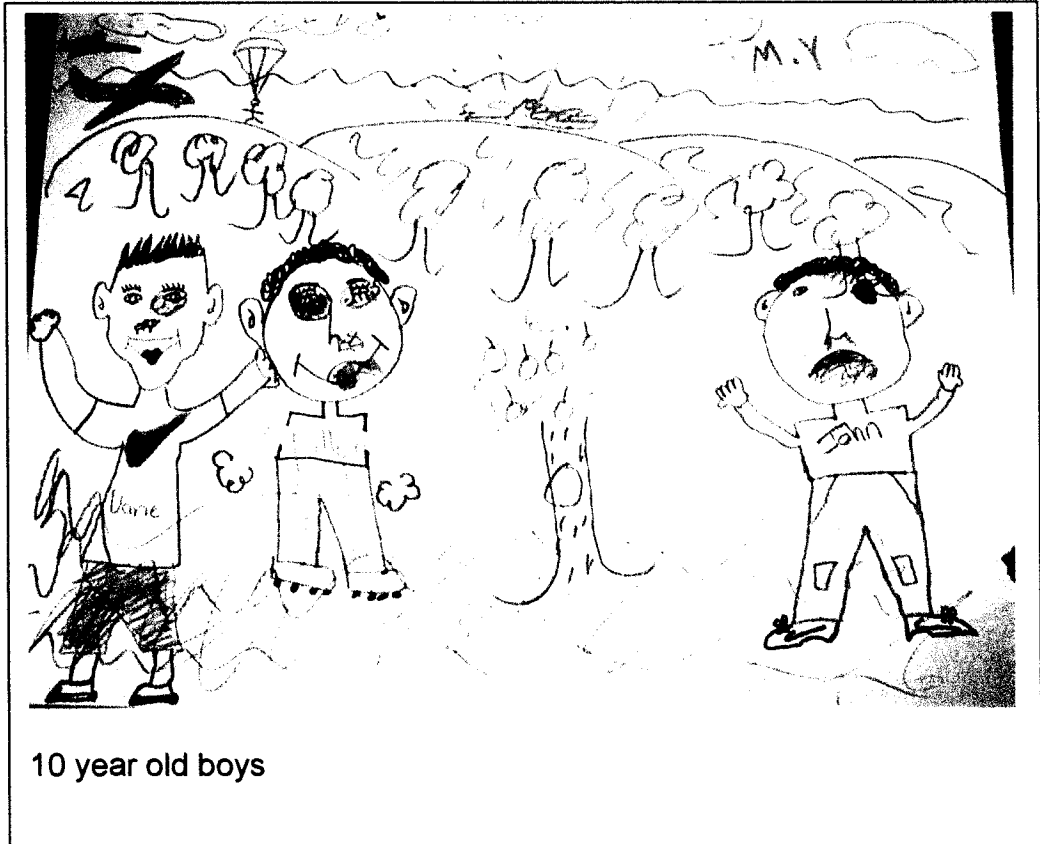
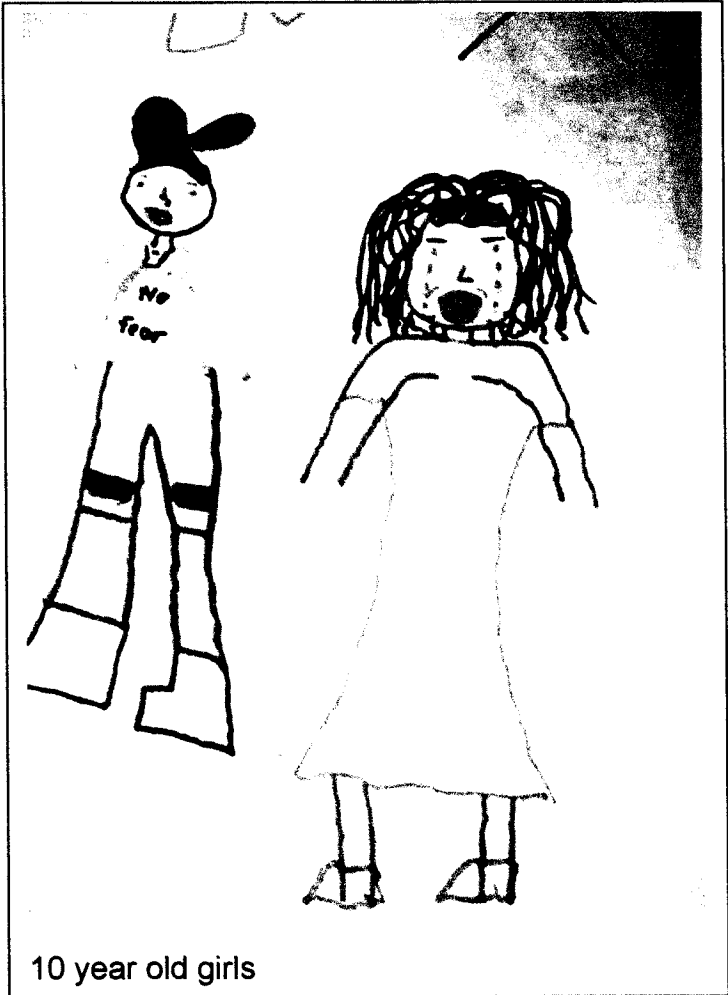
Jenny: Yeah.

Luke: And the boys, then the boys, they don't start *skell*, they just walk up to one another and start hitting.

For Luke, the provocation of being hit by a stone generates the desire to fight in both boys and girls, but while boys "just walk up to one another and start hitting", girls will *skell*, or argue, first. Fatima also suggests that boys fight easily in response to petty disputes over balls or tokens in crisp packets, while girls' responses are more varied – with some girls fighting, others arguing and some seeking help from the teachers.

A group role play generated similar gender differences in children's responses, to a 'typical' incident of being knocked in the playground. In all the boys' groups, the first responses were for the 'victim' to fight back, sometimes with graphic illustrations of subsequent injuries, like a bleeding head or black eye (*see figure 3 - 10 year old boys*). Boys explained that whether or not the knock was intentional, their first reaction would be to fight: "even in the playground it was an accident or not they will just start fighting." Sometimes other children became involved in the fights, and one group even suggested seeking help from a neighbourhood gang. In each case, the immediate response to being

Figure 3:
Drawings of children
after playground conflict



knocked or pushed was to fight back, but the resolution only took place once adults became involved.

The girls' groups constructed this scenario in more varied ways. The most marked difference from the boys was that they did not immediately respond to the violence by fighting. Their first response was to "go tell your teacher". As illustrated in figure 3 (*figure 3 - 10 year old girls*), the 10 year old girls decided to cast a boy as perpetrator and a girl as the clear victim: "She doesn't fight, she just starts crying". Help was sought from a teacher, but one person also suggested that "Tamara fought back" and when I asked what might happen if there was no teacher around, then it was suggested that she "will call some of her friends to come and help". This was seen as leading to an escalation in the fight, with the boy also summoning help from friends: "Then they get rough and they box the girls". While this construction resisted a passive role for girls, they agreed that the girls will be hurt most: "'cause the girls is not so strong like the boys". Even choosing to fight back, the girls ended up submitting to male domination, until they enlisted adults to help resolve the conflict.

For girls, therefore, there were more varied responses to peer violence. Fighting back was an option, but it was not consistent with local discourses of femininity, expressed here in a 'round' in which the 10 year old girls took turns to complete the sentence starting "being a girl..":

Chantal: Being a girl is fantastic you can do things that you want.

Shanelle: Being a girl is to look after yourself and keep yourself beautiful.

Faiza: Being a girl is to look after yourself and to be obedient to your parents and don't fight and then they're friends and share.

Melissa: Being a girl you must listen to your parents and your friends and you must be kind.

Their words highlight qualities like self-care, obedience, gentleness, kindness and sharing. As a girl you "don't fight". But in the discussion above, as in their responses to neighbourhood violence, girls did position themselves as able to fight to defend themselves, so often resisting this passive positioning. They appeared to engage with varied femininities, with perhaps the field of the playground offering more opportunities for agency than the field of adult-child relations, in which "you must listen to" and "be obedient to" your parents. These findings are consistent with the work of Elizabeth Bullen and Jane Kenway, who drew on Bourdieu's work on the proliferation of fields (Bourdieu, et al 1999) to explore what they called 'subcultural capital' for Australian working class girls.

They found that: “contemporary culture no longer universally celebrates passive dependent femininities” (Bullen & Kenway, in publication: 9) and that within girls’ peer groups there were subcultures in which assertiveness and sometimes “being tough” were forms of cultural capital, though these forms of capital at the same time marginalised them in the school community. There may then be multiple competing gendered positions produced in specific local contexts (Cameron, 2004).

For boys, however, the options seemed to be more limited. As discussed in chapter 2, discourses of tough masculinity have a long history in South Africa (Ramphela, 2000; Morrell, 2001a) and in the playground, even more clearly than in the neighbourhood context discussed in chapter 4, strength, bravery and fighting skill were valued attributes for boys. So, in a ‘round’ in which I asked the 8 year old boys to take turns completing a sentence which began: “what I am...”, they responded: “I am big, I am strong”, “I am too strong”, “I am a cool leader”, “I’m big, fearing no-one”. Faced with aggression, boys were expected to fight, as Imraan explained: “If somebody hit me hard then I don’t want to fight, hey, then they hit me, they wanted me to cry, then I will hit them hard”. There were exceptions, so in the group activity discussed above, one of the 10 year old boys tried to ‘step in’ and stop the fight, saying: “Now don’t fight. You are friends. Stop fighting. Make friends again.” But while ‘stepping in’ does not involve violence, it does imply strength and bravery and the potential of violence.

Work on masculinities has burgeoned since the 1990’s in view of what has been seen as a ‘crisis’ of masculinity, for example, in boys’ educational achievements (Renold, 2004). Increasingly, this work has stressed the multiplicity of masculinities that compete in school settings (Connell, 1995; Skelton, 2001; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003; Renold, 2004). But in this setting, tough masculinities appeared hegemonic, and although not all boys performed these masculinities, they engaged with them in some way. For example, in one fight that was talked about repeatedly by the 10 year old boys, their versions of events varied as they grappled with positioning themselves in relation to this discourse of masculinity. For Nicholas, who had been quite seriously injured in a single handed fight against a group of boys in the neighbouring, Afrikaans-speaking class, his status within the peer group was enhanced by his brave attempt to fight back, in contrast to his friends, who, he explained: “ran away”. His friends’ versions varied in terms of their own positioning. Cassiem rather than talking of running away said: “we were just standing aside and

Nicholas, and so they all hit Nicholas”. Imraan claimed: “we were trying to stop them... and so he just said we must leave him otherwise....., we mustn’t get involved”. And Timothy said: “when we saw Nicholas was hurt some of us, we tried to come help him and so they did hurt us, also a little”. He also claimed that he said to the attackers: “I told them, ‘you mustn’t hurt him’. And so they went away”.

Nicholas’s friends jeopardised their tough masculine identities by not standing up for their friend, and even running away, and their discomfort is evident in the varied and contradictory versions they construct of the incident. Their discomfort reminds me of the unease of the 13 year old boys discussed in chapter 4, when, unable to attain the “mythical masculinities” in the neighbourhood, they felt shame and frustration (Field, 2001). While in the neighbourhood, these younger boys were not expected to participate in defending their families, in the playground, where strength was more evenly matched, they were clearly living “in the shadow” of violent masculinities (Connell, 2002). Robert Morrell points out that:

Boys develop a masculine identity which is deficient relative to the adult masculinity of men. The stages by which boys become men – manhood – are a source of anxiety and a rite of passage (Morrell, 2001a: 7).

For these boys then, the impossibility of these masculinities may be in part connected with the “positional suffering” within their neighbourhoods, in which poverty and violence constrain opportunities for agency (Bourdieu et al, 1999), but it is also connected with their ‘deficiency’ as children relative to men in their neighbourhoods. The rituals of fights discussed above represent their repeated attempts to demonstrate, practise and perform these masculinities, to inscribe on their bodies cultural constructions of manhood (Butler, 1999).

Resolving Conflict

Children resolved conflict in various ways – through submitting, negotiating, fighting – but most often, as in the role plays discussed above, they talked of seeking adult help. Even when children did intervene, their involvement was not really expected to stop the fighting, as Jacqueline explained:

Jacqueline: We just told them, just, the boys were also there, they also like, they stopped them and so, we just asked them, like why they fighting. So they said, no this one was calling me names, that one was calling me names, so we said: “But that’s not the way to sort stuff out” and we spoke to them, and, but afterwards so they came back, so we could do nothing about it, because the bell rang, but so they took them to the office.

In Jacqueline's account, the boys broke up the fight and the girls tried to intervene verbally but the fight broke out again, and in the end the children fighting were taken to be reprimanded by the principal. Stacey also explained how the older boys intervene to break up fights:

- Stacey:** *Ja*, boys. [...] from our class - stopped the fight.
Jenny: How did they stop it?
Stacey: I don't know. They just make so - with their hands.
Jenny: They actually...
Stacey: Pushed them apart.
Jenny: ...pushed them apart? So they go in and actually separate them. Okay.
Stacey: Because they always choke them in the neck.
[...]
Stacey: And then they started to fight again. So the bell rang.

This physical intervention did not appear to have been very effective, since the children started fighting again. But it did enable the older boys to demonstrate their strength and power, and Stacey's slip into the present tense and the word 'always' point to the frequency of such events or rituals in the performance of playground masculinities.

When I asked children about their own fights or arguments with friends, teachers were less often involved in girls' than in boys' conflicts. This is not surprising given the more public nature of physical fights, but it does seem to run contrary to the complaint of boys that girls always got help from teachers. In the absence of adult intervention with verbal conflicts, girls appeared to get more practice in using verbal negotiations. Shanelle talked of how she and a friend resolved their dispute: "And then we start arguing after that and we say sorry to each other" and Odette talked of how her friend had given her advice when she had argued with another friend: "Louise told me 'don't worry Odette, she will come back to you' so I feelled better." Carol Gilligan's work on girls' moral development stresses girls' skills with cooperation (Gilligan, 1982), but has been criticised for neglecting girls' competence in other social skills, more usually associated with boys, including competition, argument and negotiation (Goodwin, 1988). In this study, girls in South Africa, like the urban black girls in the USA studied by Marjorie Goodwin, had disagreements and developed extensive negotiation skills (Goodwin, 1988).

Friendship in the younger groups seemed more fluid, with frequent making and breaking, but as with Bronwyn Davies' Australian primary school children, friendships were quickly re-established and the breakages appeared to be part of the positioning and repositioning

which maintained order and stability and helped children to explore the dynamics of social relationships (Davies, 1991). The friendships of the older groups were more firmly established and after conflict, children in these groups were more reticent about making friends again, sometimes taking some time, and sometimes maintaining distance, as Fatima explained talking of someone she used to play with:

Fatima: She repeat everything you say and then you tell her something - me and Ramona used to play with her - then we tell her something then she'll tell... she'll play with a other girl and she'll tell this girl all the stuff and then she's just telling everybody what we told her and so we start arguing and so she (?) they say, like the children say she's "two-face" - then she play with us then she tell somebody else.

[...]

Jenny: And did you make it up with her or not really?

Fatima: Not really but we talk with her now.... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...'cause she's most of the time quiet now... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...since we told her she must stop talking about other children.

Again here Fatima demonstrates the negotiation skills used by girls, though in this instance it did not seem to repair their friendship.

During the group sessions, there was remarkably little overt conflict between group members. This may be because the selection of groups was based on friendship, and because my presence, the choice of activities and the setting of ground rules inhibited conflict. Sometimes though the conflicts were quite well hidden. Children were reluctant to admit to having differing views and sometimes disagreed with me when I pointed out what seemed to me to be sources for lively debate and disagreement. When there were conflicting views, children used a range of strategies to reach consensus. In chapter 4, I explored the discussion in the 10 year old girls' group about the relationship between Islam and terrorism, in which one of the Christian children expressed the view of local Muslims that "they are all Pagad" and that "you mustn't listen to the Muslims", views that were refuted by the Muslim girls in the group. While there was clearly conflict here, there were also a number of strategies to reduce that conflict – the girl who had expressed anti-Muslim sentiments attempted to distance herself from the viewpoint by explaining it was her mother's view: "My mommy says...". She also tried to depersonalise the argument by suggesting that Faiza and Ferial were different from other Muslims: "I said they're not them, other Muslims." Several of the girls made a scathing critique of American foreign policy, which deflected criticisms of South African Muslims and elicited a common enemy for the group: "The whole America's country is a gangster... America's country is against us." Consensus was then reached by shifting the discussion to an area where there is agreement.

In two of the boys' groups, there were minor conflicts over the casting of boys with less status in the role of victims. So for example, when the 10 year old boys role played an incident involving gangsters attacking children, one boy retorted "I'm not soft", when one of the 'tougher' boys in the group proposed he should act as a child as he was "soft" or "*bang*" (Afrikaans: scared). Similarly, in a 13 year old boys' role play the boys who were quieter and more passive in the group were assigned unpopular roles by the more dominant boys: "we can say anything about them and they won't be cross with you." Intended to be a compliment about the good nature of the less powerful boys, I was left with the nagging discomfort that this was a thinly veiled way of reminding them of their subordinate status. On these occasions I was painfully aware that the group dynamics, rather than empowering children and offering space for them to construct alternative masculinities, may have contributed to the reproduction of the power of tough masculinities. In both cases, the 'weaker' boys submitted to the proposals of the 'stronger' ones.

To summarise thus far, violence in the playground took many forms in children's talk, but the violence which most concerned children was frequently related to exclusion or rejection. As conflicts developed, the practices with which they were enacted took on gendered meanings, with boys much more likely than girls to use violence in negotiating inclusion and exclusion. Their fights were often not expected to resolve disputes, and nor were the verbal negotiations used by girls. Children did not view themselves as having agency in solving conflict, though they did have some strategies to do so, and these will be discussed further in chapter 8. More often they sought help from adults, and this will be considered further in chapter 6. To return to the question posed in the introduction, how is it that break time can be both violent and pleasurable? I have argued that the cause of much violence is exclusion. The cause of much of the pleasure, in contrast, is inclusion – the value children attached to friendship.

Friendship, Inclusion and Social Support

Studies of girls' friendships have demonstrated the importance to children of inclusion within friendship groups (Davies, 1982; Hey, 1997; Burman, Brown and Batchelor, 2003). Hey, in her study of girls' friendships in the UK, outlined the central premises of girls' friendships as reliability, reciprocity, commitment, confidentiality, trust and sharing.

Asked about what makes a good friend, the children in this study overwhelmingly talked about sharing – of time, activity, support and possessions. For Shandre, a good friend shares their company: “I mean, if you like sitting alone and then they like talk to you and that and then they have a conversation with you,” while, for Karen, friends share money: “And if you’ve got money to buy you, then you must buy for all your friends also”. Here Timothy talks of his best friend:

Timothy: When Imraan don’t have food, then I give, and if I don’t have food, then he gives me. And if I’m in trouble, or he’s in trouble, then we help each other.

For Timothy friendship was connected with social support, and when I asked children what kind of problems a friend might help with, most of the problems they talked about involved violence – 27 of the 36 children talked about friends helping when they had been hit, threatened or got involved in a fight. Lester talked of how “if someone’s going to like hit you after school and they have a knife on them and they wanna stab you or something”, he would seek help from Luke and Clinton: “ ‘cause like they’re big and that”:

Lester: I’ll like talk to them about this problem that there’s someone like is gonna hurt me after school - a bigger child than me - and all that, then they will walk with me out of school and they’ll wait for that person to go or something then I’ll go with then I’ll wait for my other friends and we’ll walk and I’ll go straight home or sometimes they’ll walk me halfway there.

Strength and fighting skill were sources of status for boys and Luke and Clinton were cited by several boys as the most popular boys in their class, or as Luke put it: “They look up to us probably because we’re the strongest in the class.” But children also talked of their streetwise knowledge, trustworthiness and reliability: “Clinton helps his friends”.

For younger children, social support sometimes took a violent form, so Natalie would seek help from Louise if she was hurt by another child “ ‘cause she *sommer* hit them” and Peter would seek help from Ismael because of his fighting skills:

Peter: On Friday so, so we played a game that other time so that boy wanted to uh, so he ask me for 50c so I, so I called Ismael so Ismael did hurt that boy [...] He let him fall on the floor.

Help also took the form of seeking adult help or ‘stepping in’, where children position themselves bodily between the fighters to break up the fight, as Cassiem explained: “ If he’s in a fight here, you must just try to help him stop the fight [...]then he will come in the middle of the, of that two people.”

Girls at all ages were more likely to talk of help which involved offering advice, rather than strength and fighting skill, as when Odette explained how she would seek help from Natalie:

Odette: She told me that if somebody fight with you, say ‘Don’t, don’t kick my lunchbox over, because I don’t like it. If I do that to you then how will you like it?’ I feelled better then the other day and then the boy kicked my lunchbox and then I done that.

Jacqueline explained how a friend, talking with the perpetrator of an unwanted sexual advance, had helped her:

Jacqueline: Here was this one boy at school, but he like doesn’t go to school no more. He like came to me but then he walked me home and he was rubbing my back and stuff and so I told a friend and so she could help me with that.

Jenny: Yeah. Yeah. And how did she help?

Jacqueline: She like went, she didn’t go to him in, she like just asked him why did he do that. And he mustn’t do that again, ‘cause I’m not like comfortable with it.

For the oldest children, support from friends was still frequently connected with violence, but whereas younger children talked of help with school-based violence, for the older children the site of violence was often the neighbourhood. Jacqueline talked of the emotional support she had tried to give to her bereaved friend:

Jacqueline: Um, it’s when her father died and she was like very sad and stuff so I said she can come sleep by me and I like done a lot of stuff to get her mind off from it. I, we like played cards, we make-upped ourselves and stuff. So just that she can get her mind off from that for a few minutes or so.

Shandre talked of how her friend had helped her after she had been involved in a car accident:

Shandre: And so I told Nicole what happened and so she said it’s okay if I mustn’t feel like that.

Jenny: Yeah. And how did you feel when she said that to you?

Shandre: I felt all right after that. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) I felt a bit better getting it off my chest. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Telling someone.

Jenny: Yeah. So what was it do you think about your talking with Nicole - Nicole was it?...

Shandre: Yes.

Jenny: ...That made you feel better?

Shandre: It’s just like I just wanted to tell somebody but I didn’t know who to tell and so I just told her, ‘cause she was my best friend that time. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So I just told her and so she said it’s nothing to cry over. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) It’s just what happened and it’s over and done with.

For both Shandre and Jacqueline, support involved helping to think about something else, though for Shandre, the opportunity to talk – “getting it off my chest” – was also important. For these girls, as for the 13 year old boys, being streetwise and so knowing how to deal with personal problems as well as maintaining confidentiality, was important. Jacqueline would choose to seek help from girls who: “know more stuff” and who could keep secrets: “I can tell them anything and they won’t blab”.

The older boys also spoke of providing emotional support for their friends. Luke, for example, told me how his cousin spent every weekend with him since the death of his brother, who had been shot outside his own home:

- Jenny:** It must have been hard for you when he died.
Luke: Yes. When they said I must go look at him at the hospital so I didn't want to go. (**Jenny:** Mm.) But I can't cry at funerals - I don't know why - I keep my feelings in.
Jenny: Yeah. And do you feel you're able to help his brother at all?
Luke: Yes.
Jenny: How?
Luke: Just trying to be a brother towards him. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) I know I'm his cousin but I'll try and be a brother.

Clinton talked in detail about the medical consequences of a car accident involving a drunken driver, in which his friend had become wheelchair bound:

- Jenny:** Do you think he kind of comes to share it with you because you're his friend?
Clinton: Ja. We take each other as family. Because I knew him all my life.
Jenny: Yeah.
Clinton: So we take each other as family.

Both Clinton and Luke tried to offer support as a close family member. Exactly what this entailed was less clear in their accounts than in those of Shandre and Jacqueline, but it clearly involved spending time together and for Clinton at least, listening to his friend.

There was then clearly an overlap in the nature of support offered by the 13 year old boys and girls, with both offering emotional support through sharing their company and talking together. The lack of detail about the nature of support in the boys' accounts may have been because displays of emotion were associated with feminine, and not masculine practices, as suggested in Luke's comment about his inability to cry at funerals, and discussed further in chapter 4. These discussions with Luke and Clinton though point to their sensitivity to the pain of others, a sensitivity that was also evident in the support provided by the boys in this group to Charles, who had leukaemia. Charles often had to stay in at break times because of feeling unwell, and the other boys in the group seemed happy to sacrifice their soccer games to keep him company. He also missed school frequently, and his friends visited him and delivered work from school:

- Lester:** He's, he never like, he's never there at school so, he goes to the hospital with his *dinges* (*Afrikaans* for "thingie" [*leukaemia*]). He's a nice friend. He tell me what to do. Sometimes we go to his house and we talk there by his house. And sometimes he will like, on very good days, then he's like, then we go by us catch fish and that then we eat it together just us, and Tariq with us and all that. Just that group that we are now.

They also talked of how they ‘covered up’ for him in the playground, defending him from attack through fighting, or as David explained, intervening verbally to stop Charles being picked on:

David: I covered up for Charles. Somebody wanted to fight with me but then I just told him, “No, I don’t want to fight with you because I don’t feel like getting into trouble.” (**Jenny:** Mm mm.) And I just walked away.

Friendship and violence in this context were closely intertwined. For some children, usually boys, strength and fighting skill were key dimensions of friendship. The qualities Valerie Hey identified as central to the friendships of girls in her UK study – reliability, reciprocity, commitment, confidentiality, trust and sharing – were also central to boys’ friendships, and were articulated particularly in the talk of the 13 year old boys and girls. Much of the social support children talked about entailed the sharing of company, the inclusion within a group of friends. For all children, friendship is important. In this context where violence in and out of school is a frequent problem, inclusion and belonging may have particular resonance.

Friendship and Exclusion

Inclusion within friendship groups entailed demonstration of a range of qualities – loyalty and reliability, reciprocity and sharing – within gendered discourses, so responsibility for a boy might entail standing up for a friend in a fight, for a girl it might entail keeping a secret. These practices required frequent negotiation and performance, as Jon Swain found in his study of year 6 boys in the UK:

Status may be acquired individually, or may come through, or be confirmed by, the sense of belonging to a particular friendship group; it is not given, but is contested through negotiation and renegotiation, and once it is achieved there will be a daily need to defend and maintain it (Swain, 2002: 105).

This negotiation entailed complex positioning, of self and others. Boys could gain status as good fighters, but indiscriminate fighting transgressed friendship rules of reliability and reciprocity. Boys were therefore criticised for fighting too little or too much – one of the 8 year old boys stated that they would not ask Robin for help because “he’s small and he can’t fight”, but two others would not ask Dermott because “he’s just another fighter” and “he’s naughty”.

Children had to engage in a careful balancing act in their manoeuvring of friendships and it is no wonder that conflicts were so common in these negotiations. They had to balance the conflicting dispositions expected as a friend, as a boy or girl, as a child, and when they

shifted the balance, intentionally or not, they could be socially excluded. For example, one way in which children often criticised each other was to accuse others of acting ‘big’ or ‘boss’. As with fighting skill, ‘bigness’ was viewed with ambivalence. In a context where, as I discussed earlier, childhood is seen as ‘deficient’ in relation to adulthood (Morrell, 2001a), then status may be achieved through being ‘bigger’. Being big was also associated with strength and fighting skill, and therefore valued in the performance of masculinity. But it was also viewed as a way to coerce others, positioning them oppositionally as ‘small’. Asked what starts fighting in the playground, Ramona replied:

Ramona: Maybe he doesn’t like you because he just wants to be your boss.

Jenny: Yeah. And what might stop that kind of problem happening?

Ramona: If you can just keep them that their age, on their age, don’t act bigger, your size.

Jenny: So, do you mean that the children should not be acting bigger?

Ramona: ‘Cause now that they’re coming to high school age they’re starting to act differently as well.

Jenny: Yeah.

Ramona: To impress their friends.

Ramona saw this self-positioning as ‘big’ or ‘boss’ as creating conflict and violence in the playground. Children who intentionally positioned themselves in this way were likely to be excluded, like Isis, who was criticised by Ramona because: “she thinks she’s the boss of everyone” and Clinton criticised children who join gangs: “some children join gangs to be big, Mr. Big Stuffs, and they can like just do what they want to do”. In these examples, children positioned these others as intentionally locating themselves outside the norms of the peer group. But when Shandre told me about an argument with a friend, who had been “*skinnering*” – or gossiping about her behind her back – her positioning was unintentional:

Shandre: And so I told my mommy. My mommy said if that is their problem then I just mustn’t play with them anymore. And so the once they came to fetch me at my house, so I said no, I can’t come out - my mommy said I must stay in the house. And so they were still talking about me, that I don’t want to play with them and I get me big. And so I just stayed in the house the whole time.

Shandre’s exclusion from the social group was connected with the perception that she set herself apart, and individuals who did not manage to navigate this complex balancing act were liable to exclusion. But frequently in this study these processes of exclusion operated between groups, in particular groups which were identifiably different by gender or by language.

Exclusion and Gender

This oppositional positioning was clearly evident in the relationships between girls and boys. When I asked girls whether they played or spent time with boys, and boys whether they played or spent time with girls, most children said no (13) or sometimes (22), with

only one girl choosing to play regularly with boys. Looking again at the extracts used at the start of the chapter to illustrate the problem of violence in the playground, several also show how girls positioned boys as violent. So, Jacqueline talked of her concerns of getting hurt accidentally through proximity to the boys' rough play: "they're forever kicking against the walls and we like scared it's going to hurt us" and Ferial talked of boys' aggression towards girls:

Ferial: When the boys come and then they push us out of the game, out of the circle, and then we, then we shout at them and then they want to run away, then they every time pull our hair.

Ayesha explained that girls do not play with boys because: "they will kick them in the face with the ball or play too rough."

Girls' narratives about boys were replete with essentialised images of boys' violence, domination of space and of girls' bodies. There was an implication that boys were unable to curb innate wildness, reminiscent of Hobbes' 'evil' child in need of constraint (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998) "they're very rough, our class boys. They just want to hit and hit and hit the whole time." Girls understood these practices as ways in which boys attempted to subjugate girls, as Faiza explained: "the boys think they are better than the girls". Asked why they thought this she replied: "because they're stronger". Their strength was seen as enabling them to dominate the playground, as when Ferial told of how boys threw sand at them and pulled their hair: "maybe because we were in the way where they wanted to play". Asked to role play gender relations in the playground, girls clearly connected masculinity, violence and domination. In each of the role plays, the girls acting as boys used space and violence to enforce power over girls. While the girl actors talked afterwards about their sadness and distress, the boy actors talked of feeling "naughty", "they laugh every time they see the girls cry", they felt "*kwaai*" and "cool", and Chantal, who had acted as a girl commented: "It was very sad for us but for them it wasn't sad. It was exciting for them."

Boys were equally likely to say that they played with girls either never or only sometimes, but their reasons were predictably different. They readily accepted that they were rougher and more violent than girls, positioning themselves as unable to control and therefore not responsible for their violent practices, as Nicholas explained: "Sometimes I'm also out of control then I can't help hitting the children if.... out of control. You can't stop yourself from fighting with them." Such positioning confirmed desired constructs of masculinity

and their dominance over girls. Ryan told me, for example, that they did not play with girls: “because they cry too quick” and went on: “And my teacher says, I mean boys is stronger than girls. Because the girls die before a boy” and Imraan explained: “maybe the boys don’t want to play with them ‘cause they’re just girls”. The 13 year old boys also agreed that boys were rougher: “because we’re not girls, we don’t play on our toes, we run around and go on.” They argued that girls should not play with boys because: “We boys and they are girls and they’re going to definitely be hurt when they’re playing with us.” Through denigrating girls, particularly stressing their weakness, boys positioned themselves as strong and powerful, but girls’ weakness was also seen as a tool which girls used unfairly to seek adult support in punishing boys:

Lester: If the boy like actually kicks a girl, but not on purpose, then they cry and tell, but then we couldn’t help it. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) They can play, it’s their own decision if they want to play. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) We’re not telling them to play, but they can play if they want to. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) They mustn’t cry if we kick them accidentally... (**Jenny:** M-m.) ...sometimes boys play rough... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...not all boys but some boys.

For the 10 year old boys, this concern led to a proposal that girls and boys should have segregated play areas:

Imraan: ...’cause otherwise then the girls is going to get them in trouble – the boys is going to get in trouble... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...then they’re going to get hiding by their mommy or their daddy.

For the boys then, constructing girls as weak and helpless positioned them as strong, rough and dominant. For the girls, the oppositional positioning of boys confirmed their own ‘feminine’ qualities of non-violence and compliance, but also their submission to male domination. The consequence for both was often choosing to maintain a distance, to exclude the ‘other’.

Sometimes, however, children did choose to play together in games like ‘catch’, with girls on one side and boys on the other. Barrie Thorne, in her study of gender in US primary schools, describes this type of play as ‘borderwork’, illustrating how such play can serve to strengthen rather than weaken gender boundaries because of its oppositional nature (Thorne, 1993). In these games, while both boys and girls could be attracted by the riskiness and thrill of borderwork, girls expressed concerns about the violent practices of boys: “And then they catch a girl and then they pull you and kick you.” Borderwork could generate emotions of both excitement and distress:

Jenny: Do you ever play with boys at interval, or spend time with boys at interval?

Shandre: No, not actually. Only now and again and then we like if we like *lus* to make fun of someone and that. But not teasing them and that, just wanna take the ball from the boys and that and then we like do that.

- Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. (*slight chuckle*) And, why don't the girls play more with the boys?
- Shandre:** It's... Maybe because the girls don't like playing soccer or... But the boys also sometimes play rough games like throwing the ball at the girls... (*Jenny: Mmm.*) ...or kicking them with it; burning them... (*Jenny: Yeah.*) ...and that's why they don't like playing with boys because boys play wild games.
- Jenny:** What's "burning" them?
- Shandre:** Like when we sit and then the boys throw the soccer ball and they kick it against the classroom wall and then it like touches us and it burns you.

Shandre's words hint at the ambivalence of boys' and girls' emotions towards each other. While most of the time they positioned themselves at a distance, it was sometimes possible to detect desire for more contact with the 'other'. The 13 year old boys talked of wanting to talk more with girls because, as Clinton said: "we're hitting at that stage now". The 8 year old boys occasionally talked of wanting to play with girls, as Peter said: "'cause they have nice games to play".

The main reason given by the 8 year old boys for not playing with girls was fear of being called a *moffie* – a derogatory term for homosexual:

- Jenny:** Why don't you play with girls?
- Ismael:** 'Cause uh, if you play with girls then the other children is going to call you names.
- Jenny:** Do they? What sort of names do they call you?
- Ismael:** *Moffie.*
- Jenny:** Yeah.
- Ismael:** And they say you like the girl.

The word 'moffie' was used, like the word 'girl', to feminise boys who were seen to cross gender boundaries. In their use of the term, children were policing the boundaries of gender norms and this policing seemed very effective at preventing cross-gender play.

The term 'tomboy' was occasionally used to police the boundaries of norms about femininity. Peter explained that just as boys playing with the girls were *moffies*: "the girls is going to be tomboys if they play with the boys". Generally, there seemed to be less stigma attached to girls who played with boys, but sometimes this stigma operated in more subtle ways. Anastasia loved soccer and spent her break times playing soccer with the boys. But while, since she was an accomplished soccer player, the boys seemed happy for her to play, she was marginalised within the group of 13 year old girls, who in their descriptions of her said: "she play a lot with the boys, she's almost like a tomboy" and "I don't know a thing about her... so she's very wild. She like playing with the boys". Though they did not appear to dislike her, she was clearly excluded from the friendship group, with one of the girls saying: "she like never sits by us, but she sits near us... she's almost like a friend" and another: "Anastasia is not actually our friend". For Anastasia,

the choice to 'cross' (Thorne, 1993), to resist the dominant gender norms, was made at the expense of social approval.

For girls, though the relationship between Anastasia and the other girls indicates exclusion processes operating in relation to 'tomboy' practices, more powerful stigma surrounded girls who were seen as *sturvy*, a word which Fatima explained means: "She's so full of herself, she's conceited". Like 'big' and 'boss', *sturvy* implies setting oneself apart from the peer group, but it also seemed to have sexual overtones and was only used to describe girls. In a group activity, the 13 year old girls created *sturvy* 'Tammy' out of modelling clay. Tammy was pretty, eye-catching and sexually provocative. She wore short skirts, boots, spaghetti strapped tops and was "a vain person", saying when she saw the other girls: "I'm going to go up to them and then I'm going to talk them, but you, but they mustn't tramp on my shoes". Fictional Tammy seemed to be based on two girls in their class who, Ramona explained: "put their make-up in class. They all do whatever they want. And they just want to talk about taxi drivers and they go out with this and they go to dances - lots of things". *Sturvy* girls talked about their boyfriends and flaunted their sexuality, sometimes they fought. They were the potential taxi queens – high school girls who exchange sex for riding at the front of the minibus with the driver. The girls' groups viewed *sturvy* girls with hostility, since they transgressed rules about friendship and femininity. But there were hints also of envy. During the role play one girl said "wow, she's cool", another: "I wish I could look like her". The comment that "They all do whatever they want" and Fatima's remark that she "wears make up to school and we're not allowed" seem to carry simultaneous hostility and desire – for the freedom that 'good' girls lack. Girls managed this tension between hostility and desire by excluding girls who crossed these boundaries – as Michelle Fine puts it: "Othering helps us deny the changes that loiter inside our homes, othering keeps us from seeing the comforts that linger outside" (Fine, 1998: 134).

While the borderwork of the younger children mainly involved playing on opposite sides, the 13 year olds talked about a different form of contact between boys and girls, as described here by Lester:

Jenny: And what about girls? Do you spend time with girls at interval?

Lester: Sometimes we play with them or like go on with them, but we'll tease them like that. But we don't actually hurt them. No, but we don't play with them. Sometimes they come play with us, but like "on-on" then we play with the girls. Sometimes if they want a game, then we'll give them. And, on a lot of stuff like that. But we actually tease the girls a lot.

Jenny: Do you?

Lester: Tease, ja.

Jenny: Yeah. And why do you tease them?
Lester: Like pulling their hair and that - but not like hard... (*Jenny:* Yeah.) ...just playing their hair - messing it up and they'll tell our teacher and my teacher just say, "You must stop it."
Jenny: And what do the girls think?
Lester: They'll go tell my teacher.
Jenny: Okay. What do they think about having their hair pulled though?
Lester: I'm not sure about them. I can't feel what the girl feels.
Jenny: Okay. And what do you think? Why are the boys doing that, do you think?
Lester: Just to tease them - playing around with them.
Jenny: Yeah. Is it because the boys like them, really?
Lester: Not sure. Sort of like them.

Teasing and physical interference were common ways in which the oldest boys interacted with the girls. The meanings of these practices were difficult to interpret – even the boys themselves, like Lester, seemed unclear about both the intention – though it may be an expression of interest or attraction (“sort of like them”) – and the effect (“I can't feel what a girl feels”). Tariq too seemed confused about the meanings of these practices, which he understood as: “That’s their way of playing with a girl that they don’t know, that they don’t usually play with”. He expressed bewilderment about the popularity of Luke and Clinton, even though “they lose their temper very quickly” and “they always go on with the girls and so and everybody knows them and then the girls know they’re going to touch their hair and stuff”.

The girls too interpreted these practices in different ways, as ways of seeking attention: “sometimes they work on your nerves, they just want to look for attention by you”, or:

Jacqueline: They're trying to make you scared or they want to play but sometimes they play so wild and then they hurt you... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ... but they think they're playing with you.

Minor violence – pulling hair, kicking and hitting – was therefore understood as intending to frighten, to seek attention, to be playful and also as signifying sexual attraction:

Ramona: But there's some girls that like it when the boys
Jacqueline: Go on with them like that
Stacey: If they think they're *kwaai*.
Jacqueline: When they think they're *kwaai*.
 ?+: (*all talking and laughing*)
Ramona: When they think they're cool.

Given the confusing messages in these practices, it is hardly surprising that girls' responses were also ambivalent, and that, if the girls viewed the boys as cool or *kwaai*, then they might then welcome this attention.

In a recent South African study of school responses to gender-based violence, Heather Brookes and Craig Higson-Smith were critical of what they saw as lack of awareness of

teachers, who were therefore viewed as inadequately protecting girls from gender-based violence:

Many educators were ... inclined to interpret harassment of girls as playfulness on the part of boys and simply part of the nature of males. Rather than seeing harassment as symptomatic of a wider pattern of gender violence, oppression and inequality, educators viewed it as a function of boy's nature that, moreover, girls were responsible for provoking. (Higson-Smith & Killian, 2000: 5).

But the confusion of teachers is unsurprising given the complex and ambiguous meanings attached to these practices by the boys and girls who engage in them, meanings which I too as researcher found difficult to interpret. In the context of the very high levels of sexual violence reported in a growing body of South African studies, however, the findings are disturbing (Whitehead, 1998; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1998; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2001). In her study of sexual health and violence of township youth in the Eastern Cape, Kate Wood found that mild kinds of violence were understood as expressions of care and concern and young women sometimes then understood this violence to signify a man's emotional investment in their relationship (Wood, 2002; see also Swart et al, 2002). It is possible therefore that the young people in this study were also learning to associate gendered violence with sexual attraction and that these practices were contributing to the reproduction of gendered violence.

The processes of exclusion I have discussed, between and within gendered groupings, serve to perpetuate inequitable gender relations, constraining the ways in which children are able to act as girls and boys. Judith Butler's work has shown how gendered identities are constructed in tension with the excluded Other:

Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a sort of natural being (Butler, 1999: 43).

These processes of exclusion then construct, regulate and reproduce femininities and masculinities, which appear then as natural, but whose inherent instability is revealed by the need for frequent repetition or reinscription on children's bodies. In excluding the 'other', children sometimes found themselves positioned in unintended ways – girls as weak and passive, boys as unable to find a way to express their interest without physical interference.

Gendered social identities contributed to much of the exclusion in peer relationships, but these were intertwined with other dimensions of identity:

Masculinities and femininities come in multiple varieties, inflecting or inflected by all the other dimensions of someone's social identity – their age, ethnicity, class, occupation and so forth (Cameron, 2004: 3).

In this study, language also emerged as a key dimension of social identity and a site of social exclusion.

Exclusion and Language

Many of the fights children talked about were between children in the English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking classes and most of the children told me they did not play with Afrikaans-speakers:

Peter: 'Cause they don't like that children.

Jenny: Why not?

Peter: 'Cause, 'cause they talk Afrikaans.

This hostility seemed to increase with age, with half the 8 year olds claiming to play sometimes with the Afrikaans speaking children, but only 3 of the 10 year olds and none of the 13 year olds. Of those children who did claim sometimes to play with children in the Afrikaans-speaking class, their play was often 'borderwork', for example, Ryan said that they sometimes challenged each other in soccer or played armies against each other, thus perhaps strengthening rather than reducing boundaries between the two groups (Thorne, 1993).

As discussed in chapter 3, parents were able to choose whether their children were educated in English-medium or Afrikaans-medium classes, and the children participating in the research were all in English-speaking classes. Most children though were bilingual and Afrikaans was the predominant neighbourhood language. Although one or two children claimed they did not speak Afrikaans well, for most children there was no linguistic reason preventing their communication across classes. Kay McCormick, in her study of language in Cape Town's District Six, found that when children were grouped in separate classes, stereotypes and hostility became common:

The experience of parallel-medium education over three decades had led pupils in each language stream to perceive those in the other stream as different in significant ways which made them undesirable or unattainable as friends. The stereotype of children in the Afrikaans classes was that they were rough and less intelligent than English classes. They in turn were stereotyped as snobbish and privileged (McCormick, 2002: 150).

McCormick showed how English in the 19th century became established as the main language of the urban economy, government and secular education: "as a result it was

perceived as the language of upward social mobility, an image it has retained to this day” (McCormick, 2002: 3). The local vernacular of Afrikaans on the other hand, was viewed in District Six with ambivalence:

They know from experience that outsiders stereotype speakers of this variety as lazy, feckless, poor, and streetwise rather than formally educated. But in spite of this battery of negative attributes, it is valued as warm, intimate, expressive of emotions, rooted in the community’s past, and a sign of current neighbourhood bonds (McCormick, 2002: 98).

The local dialect of Afrikaans therefore has covert prestige, while English, associated with greater educational opportunities, with status as an international language and now the language of government in South Africa, has more overt prestige.

McCormick’s analysis is based mainly on data gathered in the 1980s, but similar perspectives were clearly evident in the perspectives of the children in Uitsigberg at the beginning of the 21st century:

Fatima: They say we *sturvy* and all that stuff. And we just want to keep us bossy but they’re the rudest classes of all the schools.

Jenny: Okay.

Fatima: They talk ugly.

Jenny: And what do the English classes think of the Afrikaans classes?

Fatima: We just think they rude and they don’t take note of them of what they say about us.

Here, “*sturvy*” and “bossy”, like McCormick’s “snobbish and privileged”, are associated with English, while “rude” and “ugly” talk, like McCormick’s “lazy” and “feckless”, are associated with Afrikaans. There may be echoes here of the colonial perspectives discussed in chapter 3, in which the poorer sections of the coloured community were racially stereotyped by employers as “shiftless, irresponsible, work-shy and given to drink” (Midland Chamber of Industries Evidence, 10 August 1973, quoted in Goldin, 1987: 146). Perhaps in their talk about the social meanings of language use, children were reproducing these historical stereotypes, taking on as English speakers the production of ‘whiteness’ in opposition to Afrikaans, which is the language of the coloured people. Or perhaps they were taking on the production of the ‘educated’, coloured class as opposed to the ‘poor’ coloured class, reflecting enduring distinctions among coloured people between the ‘rough’ and the ‘respectable’. This study does not answer these questions, but it does illustrate how historical constructions of race and class might enter into processes of exclusion in children’s relationships with each other.

The most common reason children gave for not playing with Afrikaans speakers was connected with violence, and there were echoes of girls’ talk about boys in the ways

English speakers constructed Afrikaans speakers as rude and violent. The 10 year old boys, for example said: “they are so more rougher, ‘cause they’re, they’re wild. They’re wilder than us”. Anastasia, at 13 years old said: “The Afrikaans is like rude to us. They don’t like us and we don’t like them. So we don’t get on with each other.” And Luke: “I think they behave like gangsters”. 8 year old Ismael explained why he thought the English speakers did not play with the Afrikaans speakers:

- Ismael:** ‘Cause they uh, ‘cause they’re rude. (*Jenny:* Okay.) Then they want to hurt you.
Jenny: Yeah. Why do they want to hurt you?
Ismael: You have a sweet, then they want, then you give it to them and then you take it back, and they want to hurt you.

The hostility of the English-speakers was then widespread, and it is easy to see how this could and frequently did erupt into violence. In the group sessions, we explored the relationships in role plays and when asked to enact how Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking children got on in the playground, violence featured in each of the role plays. I will focus on discussions following two of these role plays as they provide a good illustration of the processes of exclusion. The first discussion followed a role play in which Fatima, Shandre and Anastasia had played girls from the Afrikaans-medium class and Jacqueline, Ramona and Stacey had acted girls from their own class. The video shows how the ‘Afrikaans speakers’ asked to join the ‘English speakers’ game, but were rejected. There were raised voices, some shoving and then they walked away. The next scene took place outside the school gates after school, when the ‘Afrikaans speakers’ attacked the ‘English speakers’. This discussion took place immediately following the role play:

- Fatima(Afrikaans):** I just want to play all the time the same stuff and then you can’t play with...
Jenny: So you felt – did you feel a bit excluded then from the games that the English children – the English speaking children were playing?
Shandre, Fatima A: Yes.
Jenny: And what else did you feel? How were you feeling about those girls playing that game?
Fatima A: Mm – jealous (*laughs*).
 [...]
Jenny: Okay. And when they said there’s no game, how did you feel then?
Anastasia A: Sad.
Fatima A: Like we wanted to hurt them.
Jenny: That’s interesting. And then at the end after school when you went and had a go at them how did you feel then?
Jacqueline (English): Cross.
Jenny: Did you feel better having a go at them?
Jacqueline E: They wanted to get revenge.
Jenny: But did it feel like that when you were acting it or did you just sort of feel cross?
Ramona E: And then they say, then they say why did I do it and I’ve got no answers.
Jenny: Yeah. So okay the English speaking group, how did you feel when you saw them coming over?
Jacqueline E: I was scared but we can’t show we’re scared otherwise they will...
Ramona E: Will take advantage..
 ?:
 Mm.

- Jacqueline E:** Otherwise they will take like we are scared of them we will do whatever they want us to do. And so we didn't show we were scared.
- Jenny:** Why are you scared of them? Why are you feeling scared of them?
- Stacey E:** Because they are wild,
- Jacqueline E:** They're very wild
- Ramona E:** The Afrikaans children is more wilder
[...]
- Ramona E:** And English children is more playful than the Afrikaans – the Afrikaans girls just want to sit around and be with the boys. But the English girls they don't just go sit with the boys.
- Jenny:** Are you talking about your age or the younger ones?
- Ramona E:** Our age.
- Jacqueline E:** Our age. They just walk and they don't even bring bread and they just...(*overtalking*)
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay.
- Fatima A:** They just want to *loaf* all the time...

There are several examples of oppositional positioning in this discussion. At the start, the English speakers position themselves as playful, while the Afrikaans speakers have nothing to play, and later are accused of laziness: “they just want to *loaf* all the time”. The Afrikaans speaking girls are constructed as sexual, while the English girls are chaste: “they don't just go sit with the boys”. The comment that “they don't even bring bread” positions the Afrikaans speakers as mean and selfish, and the English speakers as sharing. And the talk of wildness, revenge and of feeling cross: “like we wanted to hurt them”, positions Afrikaans speakers as rough and violent, and the English speakers in contrast as tame and compliant.

In a study of the production of whiteness in working class US neighbourhoods, Lois Weis and Susan Lyons Lombardo identified how ‘whiteness’ was constructed in opposition to a ‘black’ other (Weis and Lyons Lombardo, 2002). In this study, English-speaking femininity was constructed in opposition to Afrikaans-speaking femininity. But there were tensions in this oppositional positioning. In positioning the Afrikaans speaking girls as aggressive and coercive, they found themselves forced into the position of weakness and forced to hide their fear: “we can't show we're scared otherwise they will... will take advantage.” The admission of weakness and fear made them vulnerable. They were critical of the Afrikaans speakers who just want to “be with the boys”, but on other occasions they talked with pride about how “the Afrikaans boys like the English girls now”. And while they criticised the wildness of the Afrikaans speakers, they sometimes appeared to yearn for their freedom:

Jacqueline: They always, they can get everything right, but as us, we can't do anything like, in the Afrikaans classes you will always see them running around making a noise, but if their Sir should come to our class, we can't go so on. But we know we shouldn't go do that.

For Jacqueline the constraint was partly because of the expectations of the teacher but partly also self-imposed. While the behaviour of English speakers had more capital in the school field, they may sacrifice subcultural capital within the peer group (Bullen and Kenway, 2005). In the peer group, where freedom and independence were associated with getting older, then these vied for value and status with compliance. The consequence of these tensions may be that the girls cast the ‘other’ in ever more extreme ways in their attempts to position themselves closer to the middle ground.

The second extract I want to discuss followed a role play in which the 13 year old boys had acted a typical playground conflict, not on this occasion between English- and Afrikaans-speakers but leading to this discussion, when I asked how often there were fights in the playground:

- Clinton:** Every day it happens – they start a argument.
Tariq: And they start fighting.
Jenny: Okay. And is it often like within the same class or is it often between different classes?
Clinton: Different classes.
Luke: Different classes, it’s always the English and Afrikaans classes.
Jenny: English against the Afrikaans classes? (*overtalking*)
Luke: It’s always the Afrikaans class and then they keep them macho..
?+: (*all talking*)
Jenny: The Afrikaans boys start it?
Clinton: Ja.
Jenny: Maybe you say that ‘cause you’re from the English class?
Luke: No.
Charles: No.
Luke: No ‘cause they are jealous.
Clinton: They are jealous of us.
Charles: They – I don’t know really how to say this.
Lester: You can’t say its...
Clinton: How can I say – when they’re like rude and..
Lester: They’re...
Clinton: You can’t call it like they’re rude and we’re not, we are also rude but they just want to so walk around and so and say that they can hurt us and that.
Jenny: So what do you think they think of you?
Clinton: They think we’re ...
Luke: ...fools and...
?: Ja.
Clinton: ...and girls.
?: (*talking in background - not clear*)
Charles: They think the English is like...
Lester: Weak.
Charles: ...weak and they are strong.
Jenny: So maybe they think maybe the English is weak or *moffies* or...
Tariq +: Ja.
Charles: Ja like we’re English and they’re Afrikaans.
Jenny: So is it cooler to speak in Afrikaans then?
Lester: I think English.
Clinton: English.
?+: (*all talking*)
Luke: Okay, Afrikaans – Afrikaans is mostly used for *skollie* [*Afrikaans slang* – ‘gangster-type person’] talk...

Clinton: For *skollie-talk*.
Luke: ...for *skollie-talk* ja...
 [...]
Jenny: I wonder what the – if I was working with – you know I can't speak Afrikaans so it would be difficult for me to work with the Afrikaans classes, but I wonder what they would say if I asked them the same thing?
?: (*talking in background - not clear*)(giggling)
Luke: They *mos* like throwing it in our faces.
Charles: But Jenny you mustn't now just go tell them that we were talking about them like that otherwise they're going to come after us.
Luke: It's not that we're scared.
Jenny: I won't – I don't tell anybody else in the school about what you say in the group.
Luke: Jenny can tell them, it's not that we're scared of them it's just that we don't want to make trouble because...
Jenny: Yeah.
Luke: ...we're supposed to be...
Charles: We're the seniors .
Luke: ...called the senior of the school and now whenever we're in trouble then the principal like throwing that in our face.
Jenny: Yeah.
Luke: And we're supposed to be now seniors...
?+: (*all talking*)
Luke: ...that is why.

Again, in this discussion, there is oppositional positioning. While the Afrikaans speaking boys are positioned as aggressive and rude, the English speakers, in contrast, are responsible: “we don't want to make trouble because we're supposed to be... we're the seniors”. They consider their use of English cool, while Afrikaans is *skollie-talk* (gangster talk). But the tensions in the positioning quickly become apparent. In positioning the Afrikaans speakers as “macho”, “rude” and “strong”, they find themselves positioned as “weak”, “fools” and “girls”. Unlike in the girls' discussion, the qualities attributed to the ‘other’ overlap with the high status, tough forms of masculinity. To some extent, drawing on their responsibilities as the oldest boys in the school addresses these problems and, like the girls, may award them more capital in the school field, but they clearly lose capital in the field of peer relations. Again, this tension generates more extreme positioning, as when Clinton starts off describing them as “rude” but then says “we are also rude but they just want to so walk around and so and say that they can hurt us and that”. In claiming the middle ground of ‘rudeness’ he is forced to reposition the Afrikaans speakers as more aggressive. It is then the ambivalence – that there is desire as well as antipathy - that sometimes creates the need for more extreme positioning, for more marked boundaries and so for more violence.

Conclusion

For the children in this study, the playground could be a violent place. In the field of the neighbourhood discussed in chapter 4, power and control were identified as central to the meanings children attached to violence, with much of the violence disempowering, and so repelling children, but sometimes offering glimmers of power, and attracting. In the field of peer relations, discussed in this chapter, power and control also featured, with violence used to negotiate and impose control within the peer group, but in this analysis inclusion or connection between children also emerged as central. Friendship and social support were highly valued, partly as a source of help to contest violence in and out of school. Violence in the playground did not, as in Sean Jones' study discussed at the start of this chapter, appear to imitate directly the violence of the neighbourhood (Jones, 1993). Nor, as in Dheevia Bhana's study, were material rewards the root of conflict and violence (Bhana, 2002). The conflicts between children in this study were connected with negotiating inclusion within peer groups. In the playground, conflicts arose when children felt themselves excluded, or when they attempted to exclude another. Children negotiated positions much closer to the violence, therefore, than in the neighbourhood, where they were more clearly disempowered and so usually keen to distance themselves from violent practices.

While inclusion was both highly valued and a source of conflict for both girls and boys, conflicts developed in different ways, with boys' conflicts more likely to erupt into violence. The patterns and rituals of boys' fights performed and reproduced tough masculinities, crystallising, or 'congealing' (Butler, 1999), these socially and historically constructed identities, making them appear natural. Both boys and girls lived "in the shadow" of violent masculinities (Connell, 2002). For most boys, these masculinities were both unattainable and competed with other dimensions of social identity, such as responsibility and reciprocity, creating tensions in boys' positioning of self and others. There were tensions too for girls, particularly between discourses of compliant, passive femininity and the desire for agency.

Negotiating inclusion was therefore a complex balancing act, which involved navigating these tensions, and processes of exclusion regulated the boundaries. Children positioned themselves within the boundaries, within friendship groups, by positioning others outside.

Girls positioned boys as wild and violent and in so doing secured their own positioning as compliant. Boys positioned girls as weak and helpless, securing their own positioning as stronger and dominant, and reinforced this with coercive and violent practices which controlled playground space and girls' bodies. Boys and girls who crossed the boundaries were stigmatised – as *moffies*, tomboys and *sturvy* girls. Language was another site of contestation, in which children engaged with local norms about Afrikaans and English, to exclude children in Afrikaans-medium classes. But, again, in positioning the 'other' as violent, they found themselves positioned in opposition as weak and helpless. In the hostility towards the excluded 'other' there were also traces of desire and in re-positioning the self to more comfortable spaces, children re-positioned the other in more extreme ways, so increasing the potential conflict. Relationships between girls and boys, English and Afrikaans speakers were marked by separation, conflict and violence.

But there were exceptions. While processes of negotiating inclusion generated conflict and violence, much of the time they were successful and children spoke of their enjoyment of break times. Though children did not expect to resolve playground conflicts without adults – a theme which will be taken up in the next chapter – they did have the skills to negotiate and to provide emotional support for each other in a context of violence.

While historically produced local discourses about gender and language frequently positioned children in opposition to an 'other', these relationships could be reconstructed in less oppositional ways. While I have mentioned a study by Lois Weis and Susan Lyons Lombardo in which 'whiteness' was produced in working class American men in opposition to 'black' others, in a further study of white Irish American working class men, they found that fostering a sense of 'Irishness' through a community centre enabled social identities to be constructed based on their Irish heritage rather than in opposition to a constructed 'other' and so avoided conflict (Weis and Lombardo, 2002). The fractured and contested nature of 'coloured' social identities (discussed in chapter 3) does not easily lend itself to this solution, but discourses which celebrate South Africa as a 'rainbow nation' and pride in linguistic diversity could perhaps challenge the oppositional production of social identity. The introduction in South Africa of discourses about equity and rights similarly can challenge processes of exclusion and occasionally these entered into children's talk, as in Faiza's challenge to the exclusion of Afrikaans speakers:

Faiza: The English children is making fun of the Afrikaans because if they don't talk right, but then the English children they think they're too right and then they're being racist.

Ramona acknowledged that school processes discriminated in favour of English speakers:

Ramona: They think that we bosses of everything because they get to say nothing in anything.

Jenny: Why is that?

Ramona: They think the English class get more attention than the Afrikaans.

Jenny: Do you think they're right?

Ramona: I don't know. But the Afrikaans class - our Standard Fives - they just run out of classes - they just do whatever they want. They don't listen to their teacher.

[...]

Jenny: When you have assembly at school is it always in English?

Ramona: Yes.

Jenny: And do you think things like that bother them?

Ramona: Because they get nothing in Afrikaans. It's just English, English, English the whole time.

In identifying ways in which school processes contributed to inequities, Ramona moved from oppositional positioning to a more nuanced understanding of social processes by which inequities are reproduced.

Inclusion was not just generated by the exclusion of the other, but also by active engagement with diverse discourses about what it means to be a girl or boy, a child, a friend, an Afrikaans or an English speaker. These engagements, I have argued, generated tension and sometimes conflict and violence, but they also generated non-violent relationships, and this will be a theme of chapter 8. In the tensions that emerge in the processes of inclusion and exclusion, therefore, there are spaces for change. But before exploring these spaces for change, I will, in the next chapter, move from the social field of peer relations to the field of adult-child relations, exploring how the themes of power and control, discussed in chapter 4, and of inclusion and connection, discussed in this chapter, enter into children's relationships with adults in a violent context.

Chapter 6

Regulation and Protection in Adult-Child Relations

Introduction

Children's social worlds entail a complex web of relationships. Their relations with adults include parents and the extended family, teachers and school staff, and other adults in the neighbourhood, including the police and, beyond the neighbourhood, the Government. In a context of violence, these adults face a challenging task in providing for, protecting and aiding the development of children. In this chapter I will explore how a framework is constructed in the relationships between children and adults, which seeks to achieve this task.

Research on children living in violent communities has identified relationships with adults, and particularly parents, as key to how children are affected by violence. In the literature discussed in chapter 2, relationships with adults were seen as the predominant route through which violent practices were transmitted:

It is in the family that men first learn to view violence as a socially sanctioned means of resolving conflict. They learn this in the context of violence by fathers against mothers and children, and the violence of older brothers against their sisters in their socially approved role of policing or guarding them (Campbell, 1996: 213).

Studies have shown that children will cope better when their mothers are coping well, and the converse - that troubled parents produce troubled children (Barbarin & Richter, 2001; Dawes & Tredoux, 1990). Caring relationships early in life have been shown to protect and foster resilience in children (Fonagy et al., 1997). In contrast, parental lack of empathy, lack of age-appropriate expectations, emotional withdrawal, and harsh parenting have been associated with emotional and behavioural difficulties in children (McLoyd, 1995; Patterson et al., 1997; van der Merwe & Dawes, in preparation). Within schools too, studies have shown how violence can be reproduced in adult-child relations (Morrell, 2001; Brookes & Higson-Smith, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2002).

Few of these studies explore in depth children's active contributions to relationships with adults. In this chapter, my focus is on these relationships as they are talked about by children. Through this analysis, I will consider how children position the adults they encounter at home, in school and in the neighbourhood and how they in turn are positioned

within these relationships. In particular, I will explore how children see adults as protecting them through regulating their lives, and I will consider the consequences of this for the relationships between children and adults.

Relationships with Adults in the Home

The United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child specifies children's rights to provision, protection and participation: "when children are respected as active members of their family, community and society, as contributors from their first years" (Alderson, 2000: 23). Parents are the key adults expected to provide, protect and help their children to participate. Children in this study talked little about provision, appearing to assume their parents' ability to provide for them, despite the high levels of unemployment in the neighbourhood. They talked of their active participation in family life, about how they participated in family events, both parties and funerals, and how they helped with household chores:

Fatima: My mommy send me up and down to the shop... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...'til I get mad, because I must walk every time up and down.

But overwhelmingly, their talk about adults at home concerned protection. Their relationships with their parents were closely intertwined with keeping them safe.

This may be partly because of the nature of my questions – asking them, for example, about what adults tell them about safety – but many of my questions were much more open-ended ('can you tell me about your day yesterday from when you first woke up to when you went to bed?'), inviting children to choose how to talk about life at home. Children talked about how adults organised routines, gave advice, told stories, set rules and punished, and each of these was frequently concerned with protecting children. In each, the adults at home, and particularly mothers, protected children through forms of regulation. Children expected and took for granted the rights of parents to regulate and control, sometimes with physical force. At the same time they seemed to have warm relationships with their families, especially with their mothers, understanding that the regulation was connected with care, concern and safety.

Much of children's talk about their families was about daily routines – how the children got to and from school, who cared for them after school, meal times and shopping. Most of the children described how their days were organised in ways which kept them safe. This

frequently involved childcare by grandmothers or aunts, and travel arrangements so that children did not have to journey to and from school alone. Many children were accompanied by adults on their journeys to and from school, and those who were not often walked with older children or travelled in groups to keep safe. With many parents at work during the day, extended family relationships played a central part in efforts to keep children safe through child care arrangements. Children also participated in this task through helping with child care, with girls in particular helping their mothers:

Natalie: And I come home and undress me then I do my homework here and then my mommy look after a child and then I must keep my mommy for the child and then my mommy wash and do her work what she must do.

Jenny: Yeah. And, so you, you watch the child, did you say?

Natalie: I watch the child.

Boys were sometimes responsible for protecting younger children on the way to school, a position that Nicholas did not seem to feel comfortable with:

Nicholas: We three altogether when we walk home.

Jenny: Yeah. And that's back to your ma's house?

Nicholas: Yes. 'Cause we can't walk apart. Just now something happens to them, then they don't *skell* them, they *skell me*.

Jenny: Because you're the biggest?

Nicholas: Yes. I have to actually look after them.

Jenny: Okay.

Nicholas: I do, but the one with the glasses he don't want to listen. He want to walk home alone.

Jenny: Okay. And how do you make him understand?

Nicholas: I just say... "Don't... If your mommy's going to *skell* me when, if something happen to you then you, then you listen." Because sometimes in the morning I walk away from him because he don't..., he eat like this and he takes small bites, then he'll walk around in the house.

But while children participated actively in these daily routines, it was the adults who controlled and managed the routines, in their efforts to keep their children safe.

Children also talked about provision of advice and rules to keep them safe. The night after their home was broken into, Shandre was afraid to sleep:

Shandre: I couldn't sleep that night because every time then I hear something, like somebody scratching somewhere or walking in the house, like footsteps, and so we told my mommy that we couldn't sleep, the next morning, so my mommy... It was, um, it was the night after that also so my, so my mommy said we must now just see if I can sleep. So we said we can't because we hear things happen and I hear a lot of things and that. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So my mommy said we must just try to. Nothing will happen now again.

Shandre's mother offered advice and reassurance, as did Ferial's when she had no-one to play with: "so my mommy said, 'don't worry, you can play with your dolls and stuff, then you're not like alone.'"

Most of the rules children talked about were concerned with proximity to danger, as Ryan explained: “I mustn’t go play very, very far..... And now I can only go play by my friends.”

Shanelle too spoke of rules about staying close to home:

Shanelle: My mother says I mustn’t go very far from the house or I mustn’t go away from the house when she’s sleeping or something because something can happen while she’s sleeping and sometimes when I go, I sit by my friend, and then I ask my mommy if I can.

Staying close to home enabled parents more easily to regulate the activities of their children.

Rules, routines and advice all aimed to keep children safe in the context of a violent neighbourhood and when children transgressed these, adults were expected to *skell*, or scold, with or without physical punishment. Often children interpreted this as protecting them, since it was used to protect them from the violence of other children in the neighbourhood, as Shanelle explained:

Shanelle: They say they’re going to hurt us and they swear us out and stuff like that. And they be rude to us. [...] They got in trouble so my friend told her mommy and so her mommy was *skelling* them out.

While attitudes in Europe have shifted in recent years away from support for routine physical punishment (Hazel et al., 2003), in South Africa physical punishment in the home is widespread (Henderson, 1996; Joseph and Makinana, 2003). Almost all the children in this study expressed support for the use of corporal punishment in the home:

Jenny: And what do you think could stop them from doing something like that again?

Nicholas: They need a good hiding, and then, then they will stop hitting me because I, I was also fighting a little and so my daddy gave me a hiding, so I don’t fight anymore.

Jenny: So, ‘cause you got a hiding you stopped fighting?

Nicholas: (*Inaudible response. Nods.*)

Jenny: Okay. And who should give them a hiding then?

Nicholas: Mmm - yes - their mommy and daddy must give them a hiding.

Nicholas expressed the view that “a good hiding” has a deterrent effect, a view shared by Jacqueline:

Jacqueline: If the parents of the children like tell them don’t do that, that’s wrong. If you do that they’ll like hit you or just something to kind of scare them a bit not to do such stuff and then I don’t think that kind of thing will happen a lot no more, ‘cause most of the children are very scared for a hiding.

Physical punishment at home for almost all children was a practice so taken-for-granted that when I asked children their opinions about it they often misunderstood my question and assumed that I was referring to violence unconnected with punishment. Sometimes physical punishment was condoned by religion, as Ramona, who was Muslim, explained: “Okay, in our religion, if you don’t know any of your work, your parents have the right to

hit you, at the age of seven, if you don't know your work." There were, however, clear borders around acceptable and unacceptable use of physical force by adults, which will be discussed further in chapter 7, but for most children smacking and hitting children "when your children is naughty", "to teach your child manners", when "he's out of hand" was viewed not just as acceptable, but as protective, through controlling and regulating the violence of other children.

The ways in which adults in the home regulated and protected children were frequently gendered and for many children, mothers were the central adults in children's lives:

Feriel: Then we watch Pokemon and then we wait until my mommy comes 5 o'clock and then my mommy come home with a taxi and then we all jump on my mommy (*slight chuckle*) and then my mommy come and my mommy washes up and my mommy take off my mommy's clothes, put on other clothes and then my mommy bath me and then I sit on the bed and play and then, then it's 8 o'clock, then I go to bed.

The frequent repetition of the word 'mommy', signifies Feriel's pleasure at the return of her mother from work each day. When children talked about their families, it was mothers who managed the daily routines, who gave advice and set rules, who punished children. The impression from children's talk was of mothers leading busy lives, in which they go out to work and manage the day to day routines of the family. So from Rushaanah's talk, I learned how her mother organises her large family, is employed running a crèche, and in the evenings goes to Moslem school and visits the mosque. Fathers were talked of much less frequently, and very often in relation to driving - to providing lifts, driving children to school or picking them up from after school care, so Rushaanah's father took the children to school "he like to take me, us with the car because then he can take my mommy to work", and Ramona's father collected her from Moslem evening school:

Ramona: My daddy came to fetch me from there. It starts half past seven in the evening, but I didn't have transport so I went down the afternoon because my mommy doesn't want me to go down the night.

For Ramona, her father kept her safe by fetching her from the evening school, but it was her mother who planned this routine. Mothers were viewed as the key source of support in the family, with only a few children saying they would go for help to both parents and only one boy mentioned just his father. Surprisingly, given the numbers of grandparents and other extended family members involved in caring for children, only one child said he would go for help to an extended family member from a different generation. Even though he was currently living with his grandparents, when I asked Clinton who he would go to for help, he replied:

Clinton: To my mommy, she's, she's the one who's always been there for me. (Jenny: Mm mm.) So, I'll, I'll go to her.

Fathers in contrast seemed to play a much more peripheral role in family life, though they were expected to defend themselves and protect their families, as discussed in chapter 4. While both parents were involved in *skelling* and physical punishment, children sometimes painted their fathers as more volatile. Rushaanah for example, explained how she had been attacked by some other children at school one day:

Rushaanah: So I told my mommy and my daddy, so my daddy said that my mommy must come 'cause my daddy's evil.

Jenny: (*chuckle*) Is that right?

Rushaanah: My daddy's going to hurt them.

Jenny: Oh. So what happened?

Rushaanah: And so my daddy didn't come or my mommy. My mommy refused because every time my mommy must come.

Jenny: Yeah.

Rushaanah: And my daddy don't.

Luke explained how, when a man with a knife had attacked him in the street: "my father took him and gave him one smack and the man just turned around so he ran". Ismael told me how when girls and boys have a fight: "the girls get quick sore" and "then they go tell their mommy or their daddy and then the daddy want to start a fight". Tough masculinities, therefore, entered into children's positioning of their fathers as protectors.

While in their relations with adults, children were positioned mainly as regulated, as passive and controlled, boys were also sometimes positioned, like their fathers, as volatile. In contrast to some South African studies, which have found boys to have more exposure to neighbourhood violence (van der Merwe & Dawes, in preparation), in this study, girls and boys seemed equally likely to be exposed to dangerous situations. Yet, despite this similarity, they appeared often to receive different messages from their parents about safety. While both boys and girls were told to play near the house, for boys this often seemed to be because of the potential danger caused by their own uncontrolled behaviour, so Cassiem said that grown ups say "you mustn't be wild" and Timothy explained: "that they mustn't run across the road when the car come, comes." For girls, the potential dangers were perceived to be from elsewhere – from rapists, or attackers. Shanelle and Natalie voiced their mother's fears for their daughters:

Shanelle: She's worried about... because there's a lake there – a canal or something – and when we walk over there where there's boys and they can catch you and rape you.

Jenny: And do you play out in the street?

Natalie: Nooo!! My mom will hit me when I play outside.

Jenny: Okay. Why does she not want you to play outside?

Natalie: Because someone can catch me...

Jenny: Yeah.

Natalie: ...and rape me also.

While boys also talked of parental anxiety about the danger of attack, rape was not mentioned, and parental anxieties about their sons' safety seemed to revolve around both their vulnerability as children and their susceptibility to danger because of their own wildness, while anxiety about girls drew on discourses of girl children as potential victims. Parental anxieties therefore reflected both the increased possibility of sexual violence for girls and local discourses about childhood, masculinity and femininity.

Reciprocity and Agency in Children's Relations with Parents

Within families, the routines, rules, advice and systems of punishment helped to anchor discourses of adult regulation of children within children's frameworks for understanding adult-child relations. Serge Moscovici writes of how beliefs, ideas and social and historical relations are first 'anchored', or absorbed into known categories, and then 'objectified', or transformed from the abstract into the concrete, or taken-for-granted (Moscovici, 1984; Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). Bourdieu's idea of 'habitus', in which historical relations are "deposited" within the "perception, appreciation, and action" of individual bodies, similarly suggests a mainly uni-directional relationship (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 16). Often, when children talked, it seemed to me that they were voicing a rule they had been told, which had been incorporated or 'objectified' as their own. For example, when we were discussing where it was safe to play, Odette told me: "the gangsters say 'come let's take their childrens', and then they go and then they steal all the childrens and the mothers don't know where's their childrens". In her reporting of 'facts', there are clear echoes of her mother's rules and warnings. But although much of the talk showed how parents regulated their children's lives, the process of adult-child regulation was not one-way and there were signs of reciprocity and active agency in children's engagements with adults in the home.

There were, for example, elements of negotiation in the rules set to keep children safe, which were adapted to the age of the children. While for each age group, parents regulated the places children were allowed to play, the regulated zone changed with age. The 8 year olds talked of rules about staying in or near the house:

Jenny: Yeah. Okay. And where is it not safe to play?

Omar: When you play far from your mommy.

Jenny: Yeah. Why is that?

- Omar:** When somebody elses come, a *skelm* and they take you away then your mommy looking all over for you.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. And what do people do to stay safe?
- Omar:** Sit by my, my mommy.
- Jenny:** Yeah. And what do the grownups tell you about playing in the neighbourhood?
- Omar:** I can't remember.
- Jenny:** What does your mommy say?
- Omar:** We mustn't play far.

Like Omar, Louise also talked of staying close to home: "They say like, 'you and (?) must play here in the front where I can see you, or your mommy can see you'".

The 10 year olds too talked of rules about proximity, but they were also more likely to talk of staying in a group for safety, as Simone explained:

- Simone:** They tell me I must stay in the road. I can't go out of the road. Because if I've - 'cause my friends say they want to go to the big shop then I ask my grandparents and he say no it's not nice to go. But my grandpa say yes that one time but I must stick with all of them and we must stick together.

At 10 years old, social space competed with physical place, with children wanting to extend the areas to play in so that they could play with friends. On this occasion Simone and her grandpa negotiated a rule shift, with the safety of a group compensating for the loss of safety of the home. For the 13 year olds, the places in which they were allowed to spend time were expanded further, with rules relating to staying in familiar areas, avoiding danger zones and going out at night:

- David:** 'Cause they just tell they mustn't play around at night. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And they mustn't go in the rough areas where most the gangsters are.
- Luke:** Like here in Bexhill there's a lot of killings now. There's, I think it's the "Americans" and the "Dixie Boys" that are fighting. They already killed... "Americans" have already killed about twelve "Dixie Boys" - shot them here in... that's why my mommy and them don't want me and my brother near Bexhill. (**Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.) Because we used to go with my cousin a lot to go pick up his wife in Bexhill and they don't want us to go anymore.

Occasionally, the older children were also warned to avoid direct contact, so Ramona was told to avoid taxi drivers, and Clinton to avoid going out because "you can get involved, ja, get involved with gangsters". For this age group then, while the regulated physical space expanded, regulation of social space also became important.

There seems, therefore, to be some flexibility and negotiation in the rules family members constructed to protect their children. Adults faced difficult choices in these negotiations, as Mikhail's mother, Stella, told me:

- Stella:** Like whenever he goes out they know, I normally tell him he mustn't - he must only play where we can - where I can see him and that...(**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...but he never listens, he always go on the other side to the park. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And that, but I don't like him playing there in the park.

Even though there's a lot of children playing there but a lot of things happen. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Like where the gangsters smoke *dagga*, drinking and all that. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And that – and it's not good.

Parents like Stella were charged with keeping their children safe, yet children wanted to play with their friends in the neighbourhood. Some studies suggest that parents living in violent communities deprive children of opportunities to interact with the broader environment (Fick, Osofsky and Lewis, 1997). But in this study, children at all ages spent time out in their neighbourhoods, and negotiated with parents the boundaries or permitted space and place. Even with some negotiation of these boundaries, Stella's concern was that her son did not comply with her rules.

In their talk with me, children positioned themselves as complying with the regulation of their parents, but their compliance was not complete. While criticisms of their own parents were almost non-existent, criticisms of other parents were quite common. Children challenged parents for over-indulgence and for neglect. For example, asked why people join gangs, Ramona said: "because they don't get attention at home, then they think they're going to get more attention there," but Alex's explanation, in contrast, was:

- Alex:** Because they weren't, and so the gangsters wasn't raised properly. The children, their mummies were always spoiled them.
Jenny: They always spoiled them?
Alex: Yes.
Jenny: What do you think they did that spoiled them?
Alex: Their mommy always gave them whatever they wanted.

Ayesha explained children's fights as learned through imitation of their parents:

- Ayesha:** Mm, 'cause they listened to their mummies when they were small, or so.
Jenny: And what would their mummies doing when they were small?
Ayesha: They were fighting and swearing at each other.

In these criticisms of other parents, children drew on local discourses about effective parenting. They also set boundaries around the levels of force acceptable in punishing children, as discussed here by the 10 year old girls:

- Simone:** Mrs Parkes it was like on a Friday and this other lady next to us, we heard it, my friend, I heard my friend crying because she was hitting the child with a stick it was a hard stick and she hit the child.
Jenny: And what do you think about that?
Simone: Unnecessary.
Jenny: Unnecessary. What do other people think? Do think it's okay – did you hear that? What do other people think about that? If you heard someone, hitting their child very hard with a stick, do you think that's okay?
Faiza: No.
Feriel: No.
Jenny: And does everyone think that?
Shanelle: You can only hit with your hand.

Jenny: Only a smack?
Faiza: A slipper
Jenny: Or a slipper?
?+: (*laughter, overtalking*)
Jenny: Does everyone think that? (*overtalking*)
Simone: Or a belt.
Jenny: That's okay if it's a belt.
Faiza: Yes.
Simone: Yes, then it's hard with a belt.

While children accepted the right of parents to regulate children through physical punishment, this acceptance was conditional upon adults also following rules which bounded forms of regulation.

Children did not therefore accept unconditionally the rights of parents to regulate their lives, but there was some negotiation in the rules, some flexibility in the boundaries of the regulatory framework. Parents of other children could sometimes be criticised. Regulation within the family was rarely criticised, but children's talk about their own families sometimes shifted to a more nuanced perspective, departing from the positioning as regulator:

Simone: After that then my gran did died on Good Friday. [...] She had cancer.[...] And then every time then she shouts and the door's locked and closed and nobody can hear her but she shouts and her heart pains and so (*unclear text*) so her heart was going... (**Jenny:** M-m) ...slowly so it stopped and so she died. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So my when my – my father still thought she was sleeping so my father felt her heart but now, my dad was calling her the whole time... (**Jenny:** M-m.) ...”Mommy, Mommy, Mommy” but she didn't want to wake up and so my father felt her heart and she was dead.

In this extract, Simone clearly departs from the construction of adults as regulators. She was not there when her grandmother died, but through witnessing her father's grief and hearing adults talk about the death, she imagined her grandmother's and her father's pain. In the same discussion, Simone told me of several other deaths in the family – her grandfather, her uncle who had drowned, her aunt: “she was stabbed by a gangster..... and then my uncle commit suicide”. Some of children's talk of funerals, visits to graveyards and death seemed to me quite matter-of-fact, as if these are common events in children's lives. But children were not indifferent or de-sensitised to the emotions that accompanied these tragic events, as Simone's words make clear. Parental trauma and distress have been associated with parenting difficulties, including emotional inaccessibility (McLoyd, 1995; Fick, Osofsky and Lewis, 1997), and with increases in stress symptoms in children (Dawes and Tredoux, 1990; Barbarin and Richter, 2001). But in the talk of these children, more evident was the sense that children were not cosseted or sheltered, but through these

experiences they were taught that death is part of life, that adults, like children, feel sadness and grief and pain.

Children's encounters with violence in the neighbourhood were often not direct, or even witnessed, but reproduced the accounts they had overheard within the family. The graphic details of their accounts suggested that such stories were not censored, and that perhaps parents intentionally talked about these incidents in front of children in order to remind children about the dangers and to give children the practical and emotional resources to cope better with such experiences. Studies of urban, working class children in the US found that mothers talked about violence and conflict in front of very young children in order to toughen children and to prepare them for the harshness of life in these communities (Heath, 1983; Miller and Sperry, 1987). Other US studies have suggested that such stories can detrimentally create a generalised view of the world as hostile and dangerous, over which adults have lost control (Garbarino and Kostelny, 1997). The task of parents is a difficult one – to find ways to cope themselves with the stresses of life in a violent neighbourhood, to protect their children, teaching them about the dangers without generating pervasive distrust of adults or anxiety about safety. The regulatory framework of rules, routines and punishments is constructed to achieve this task, but children may learn as much from indirect regulation, in which they learn about dangers and ways of coping through overhearing, and witnessing, often in ways unintended by their parents.

In their relationships with adults in the home, children learned about safety. They were protected through rules and routines, through the intentional and unintentional telling of stories and giving of advice, and through systems of punishment. They engaged actively with this framework which both protected and regulated their lives, sometimes negotiating at the borders. At the same time as they learned how to cope with life in a violent neighbourhood, they learned about social relations between men and women, between adults and children, and they learned that violence and protection can be closely intertwined. Adults in the home were positioned as regulators, and children as regulated. While there were exceptions, sometimes in the positioning of boys, and in the challenges of children, in general, children's talk positioned them as compliant, in need of protection through the regulation by adults.

Relationships with Teachers

In school, as in the home, children's talk positioned adults firmly as regulators of children's lives. Teachers, like their parents, controlled daily routines, gave advice, set rules and administered punishments in ways which children frequently viewed as protective. There were though differences in the ways in which regulation and protection worked in the school. When children talked about their teachers, they talked much less about routines and advice, and more about punishments. The reciprocity and negotiation occasionally found in children's relationships with adults was not evident in their talk about teachers. As in families though, they did engage actively with the forms of regulation, and challenges were more common than they were at home. A further difference was that, while the rules and routines at home were intended to keep children safe from neighbourhood violence, mainly committed by 'others', at school the rules were intended to control and protect children from their own disorder and violence.

When teachers did give children instructions and advice, it was usually to help resolve disputes:

Nicholas: My teacher said she was glad they didn't fight with 'cause else they also had to be in trouble.

Odette: Like my teacher say they's a bit wild [...] and they have ants in their pants.

Rushaanah: So she just ran me over with a other girl in my class. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So she hurt the other girl also in my class. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So my teacher told us not to play with the big children.

Children told me about the rules set by adults to regulate children's behaviour, mostly in the playground context:

David: *Ja*, you must, a person can't run, you can't play wild games. (**Jenny:** Mmm.) And you mustn't run in the corridor.

As with the rules at home, school rules often seemed to have been 'anchored' and 'objectified' into taken-for-granted features of adult-child relations, so that, when I asked groups to design 'the perfect playground', their rules were remarkably similar to the existing school rules – no fighting, "no pushing unnecessary" (8 year old girls), no swearing, "no violence" (13 year old girls) and "You mustn't trip the people, and hit the people and, and hurt, play wild and run them over" (10 year old boys).

But as in the setting of the home, children did not always comply with the rules, as Clinton explained:

- Clinton:** We used to run around and kick ball when we want to and have more fun than you have like now. (Jenny: Mm mm.) Now, it's changed a lot now.
- Jenny:** And is that because you've changed, or because the rules have changed?
- Clinton:** The rules have changed in the school. So, um, now our principal say that we like must obey and now we're going according to the rules and that.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay, so there's not so much running around?
- Clinton:** Yes.
- Jenny:** And what are the other things that you're not supposed to do now?
- Clinton:** We're not supposed to kick ball in the corridors and we're not supposed to run on the passageways and we mustn't like swear and spit.
[...]
- Jenny:** Do people stick to the rules or not?
- Clinton:** No, not most of the children.

Children often told me how they undermined and resisted the official rules, by, for example, taking fights outside the school gate, thereby avoiding the rule about fighting on the school premises:

- Stacey:** They always wait outside for each other.
- Jenny:** (*overtalking*) Is there a lot of that? If people fall out at school that they actually fight outside the school?
- Stacey:** Yes. Then you just see all the children standing outside waiting. (*slight chuckle*)
[...]
- Stacey:** And then they see the principal come and they all run.
- Jenny:** Yeah. So he's aware of those kind of fights?
- Stacey:** Mmm.
- Jenny:** And do you think they do it outside school because they're less likely to get into trouble about it?
- Stacey:** I think so, *ja*, because they're not allowed to do it on the premises *mos*.

As figure 1 in chapter 3 shows (p. 60), the geography of the school made it very difficult to supervise and there was little adult surveillance at break times, making it easy to find places to play illicit games:

- Clinton:** Most of the teachers stand here on the hill by the field, so no one can see us, that's why we can play ball in here in our corridor.

The extent of this flaunting of the rules suggests that it was part of the ritual, an unspoken understanding between adults and children that permitted some flexibility at the borders of the regulatory framework. The systems of punishment also seemed to be part of this ritual.

Easily the most common form of teacher-child interaction talked about by children was 'skelling'. As in their relationships with adults at home, at school children expected and accepted the right of adults to punish them, and often in their accounts this punishment was seen as protective since it was directed at 'others':

- Feriel:** When the boys come and then they push us out of the game, out of the circle, and then we, then we shout at them and then they want to run away, then they every time pull our hair.
- Jenny:** Ooh. Okay. And what happens then?
- Feriel:** And then we tell our teacher, then our teacher *skell* them out that they mustn't do it.

For Ferial therefore, *skelling* protected her from boys' violence. As discussed in chapter 5, children did not usually expect to resolve fights and disputes without the intervention of an adult. Sometimes they suggested that *skelling* by an adult might have a deterrent effect. Imraan, for example, claimed that a fight will not recur after *skelling* by the principal: "other they're going to get *skelled* again", and David claimed they had stopped playing violent games: "now we don't do that 'cause we got into trouble already over that". But more often children expected *skelling* to solve the immediate problem, but not to prevent conflict in the future:

- Jenny:** Okay. And so do people, um, when people see a fight, do they usually go and tell one of the adults or do they often go and try and sort it out themselves?
- Shandre:** Sometimes then they tell the teacher and... But mostly the small ones run... also there run, they gather round there and then one of them tells, go tell the teacher...
- Jenny:** Yeah.
- Shandre:** ...a bigger person, then the teacher like *skells* them out and take them to the office.
- Jenny:** Yeah.
- Shandre:** And then the principal also *skell* them out too.
- Jenny:** And what do you... Do you think they would fight less if they, if they've been *skelled* out? Would it stop them from fighting?
- Shandre:** Not actually. They will still continue the fight after school...

Just as fighting between boys, discussed in chapter 5, contained rituals which were performed repeatedly in the construction of playground masculinities, *skelling* was also part of the ritual of teacher-child regulation, keeping order, maintaining the status quo, but not changing it.

Often children talked of a hierarchy of punishment. At the bottom of the hierarchy were actions taken by prefects, next was *skelling* by a teacher, or following a fight, children might be sent straight to the office to be punished by the principal:

- Lester:** There actually is prefects now that, if children fight then they can take them to the teachers. So the teachers say they must take them to the office, and they have to take the children to the office if they fight - the principal will sort them out.

With the principal and his deputy both being men, and most of the class teachers women, a gendered hierarchy in the system of punishment was constructed. Rules and instructions from the Principal were broadcast through an intercom system throughout the school day, frequently interrupting lessons and regulating both the children and the teachers. Men in this school context exercised power over the women and the children.

At the top of the hierarchy of punishment was the additional involvement of parents. Involving both parents and school staff maximised the regulation by adults, as Jacqueline considered:

Jacqueline: Some parents are very strict. They don't know what their children do at school. But like my teacher wrote one boy a letter in my class and his mother actually thought he was a angel and she wrote how could he do that and stuff. Because my teacher was so angry, she told us what she wrote. And he went to, and he told his mommy a lot of other stuff.

Jenny: Yeah.

Jacqueline: So he actually turned the story around....

Jenny: Yeah.

Jacqueline:so I think if the parents get called in, then they can see really what their child does at school.

One reason for placing parents at the top of this punishment hierarchy was the prospect of physical punishment. The South African Schools Act (1996) and the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act (1997) have together made it illegal for corporal punishment to be used in schools. As Robert Morell points out: "The legal steps are part of a broader national campaign by the state to develop a human rights environment and to end cultures of violence promoted under apartheid" (Morrell, 2001: 140). But, according to the children in this study, as in other recent South African studies, some teachers continued to use physical forms of punishment (Burnett, 1998; Morrell, 2001b). The children in this study had mixed views about the use of corporal punishment in school. The younger children tended to support the teachers' right to hit children, sometimes viewing it as protective. Mikhail, for example, told me how corporal punishment might deter other children from attacking him: "then the principal hit them and then they, then they cross, then they, then they don't um, um, start on us again", and Ismael complained when his teacher did not punish a child he had fought with:

Jenny: And what do you think should have happened?

Ismael: He go get a hiding.

10 year olds also often supported the use of corporal punishment for violent misdemeanours:

Ryan: The boys, me and Cassiem was walking, so this other boy hit Cassiem, Cassiem hit in his head and on my head. It's a Afrikaans boy and so he was hitting me and Cassiem and so my teacher, so I did told our teacher. So my teacher said he's supposed to go to his um, teacher and so they hit him.

[...]

Jenny: So what do you think should have happened to him?

Ryan: Should have given him more hidings.

For Mikhail, Ismael and Ryan, the teacher's use of physical force was seen as protecting them through punishing another. But at 10 years old, some children challenged the use of physical punishment. While Faiza said: "when a child is chasing another child or they're playing throw with a knife or throw stones then it's okay for the teacher to hit a child", Chantal challenged this view: "they must just talk to him, what's the use if you hit him and he will just do it again you must just talk to him".

The oldest groups consistently disagreed with teacher-child physical force, as illustrated in this extract from a discussion with the 13 year old boys:

- Luke:** That's a rule of all the schools...
- Jenny:** ...against the rules.
- (Clinton nods)
- Luke:** ...the Government say you can't.
- Jenny:** Against the law - there's a law about it, okay.
- Clinton:** Ja.
- Jenny:** It's not okay for teachers to hit children. Is there another reason why it's not okay?
- Charles:** Because some teachers still hit children in this school.
- Jenny:** Do you agree with that law?
- Charles:** I'd say the teachers can hit you - you can like complain by the Governing Body or to...
- David:** Or the Coloured Affairs.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Clinton:** But then again there's another change, because in Coloured schools the Governing Body can do nothing and in the White schools they're going to make charge and do stuff.
- Jenny:** So you think that in a White school if a parent complains about it, something would happen then?
- Clinton:** Ja.
- Jenny:** But in a Black school that...
- Clinton:** They won't.
- Jenny:** ...wouldn't happen or a Coloured school?
- Clinton:** Ja.
- Jenny:** That's interesting. Do you agree with that law?
- ?: Ja.
- Jenny:** Does everyone agree that, that law should be there?
- ?: Ja.
- Jenny:** Or do you think children behaved better in the old days when the teachers were allowed to hit?
- ?: No.
- Clinton:** No. Because my brother did come home with two broken fingers and that.
- Jenny:** What - from the teacher?
- Clinton:** Ja.
- Jenny:** Oef.
- ?: When's this?
- Luke:** In Standard 2.
- Clinton:** It seems like..
- Luke:** The teacher hit my hands just...
- ?: ...six of the best.
- Luke:** (*overtalking*) all came around to the school to - want to go sorted it out.
- Jenny:** M-m.
- Charles:** It seems like our teacher is the only one that goes to the rules.
- [...]
- Luke:** The Sirs they want to smack the children all the time.

This discussion shows how the changes in the law have generated a shift in adult-child relations, though these boys raise some interesting questions about the possibility of racial discrimination in the implementation of the legislation. These shifts seemed to have filtered down to the 13 year olds but not to the younger children. The framework of regulation and protection is not therefore static, but changes with shifts in the broader social context, for example, at the level of government. It shifts with age, with older children more likely than younger children to challenge forms of regulation, as they extend their social networks further from the home and school setting. The framework also changes

with the relationships between individuals. The teacher of the 13 year olds has chosen not to use physical punishments and this may enable her pupils to challenge these practices without at the same time jeopardising their relationship with her.

In this extract, the boys suggest that it is particularly the “sirs” who continue the practice of corporal punishment in school, but usually children did not distinguish between men and women in the use of physical punishment. Nor were there clear gender differences in children’s opinions about physical force. In one study of corporal punishment in secondary schools in Durban, the finding that some girls did not welcome the move away from corporal punishment was connected with schools being dangerous places for girls: “the end of corporal punishment has been perceived as the end of the capacity of a school to exert its authority and in some schools has consequently been associated with an increasing disregard for the rights of others” (Morrell, 2001: 146). In this study too, girls and boys often viewed physical punishment by teachers as protective, but there was clear evidence of changing attitudes, of shifts in the framework of regulation and protection.

Relationships with Adults in the Neighbourhood

Outside the family circle, children talked of those adults in the neighbourhood concerned with children’s safety - neighbours and the police - and adults seen as perpetrators of violence. As in their talk about adults at home and school, regulation and protection entered into their relations with some of these adults, but in contrast to their talk of parents and teachers, criticisms of and challenges to these adults were widespread.

Neighbours were sometimes viewed as a source of support, involved in the regulation and protection of children. Luke, for example, claimed to feel safe in the neighbourhood “because I know almost everybody here” and Jacqueline felt that the park was a safe place to play:

Jacqueline: Yes, because there’s like always people outside there and only in the night they will be inside and stuff. (Jenny: Yeah.) And then they can also supervise, and they will supervise anybody’s children, because like I said everybody knows one another...

But both Luke and Jacqueline also talked about times when neighbours were implicated in crime and violence, as in Luke’s account of the attack by Pagad members on a drug dealer who lived in his street (discussed in chapter 4) and Jacqueline narrated an incident when the police injured a neighbour while searching for drugs in her home:

Jacqueline: Because there was, um, yes it was also yesterday when they came, just three houses away from us they came to break in by somebody and after that so the police came to search the house for drugs. And they were hitting this one lady and they stripped the baby.

Mikhail talked of his anxiety about his neighbours: “When they, um, when they, when they drink wine and then, then they drunk and then they throw bottles over your head and then I go inside and they shoot gun and all of that thing.” Often, adults in the neighbourhood were seen as jeopardising their right to regulate children because of their own violent practices.

The adults seen as most central to the protection and regulation of violence in the neighbourhood were police, and children of all ages viewed police and jail as the main way in which to stop problems in the neighbourhood:

Jenny: What do you think should happen to people who are fighting and swearing?
Ayesha: Get punished!
Jenny: How?
Ayesha: Mm. *(pause)* Lock them up in jail.
Jenny: Yeah. You could lock them up in jail. And what would happen to them then do you think?
Ayesha: Then they must stay for twenty years in prison.
Jenny: Okay. And then what would they be like at the end of twenty years do you think?
Ayesha: Old.

Police and prison were viewed as regulating through punishing perpetrators of violence, with or without violence:

Ryan: Only the police can stop them. They can catch the *skollies* and then they can put them in jail. Maybe they can change there - in jail.
Jenny: How would they change?
Ryan: When they give them a hiding with that thick pole, something like that...
Jenny: So you think they should give them a hiding with a thick pole? And then what would happen, do you think?
Ryan: Then they will listen, then they can let them go free, but if they do something wrong again then they can stay in prison forever.

But children, particularly the 13 year olds, were often critical of police, viewing them as ineffective and sometimes as corrupt. When Jacqueline talked of the arrest of her neighbour, for example, she was critical of the use of violence by the police: “and then the mother’s face was like blue all over and she was open with scars and stuff, you could see they really hurt her, but so she went into the station and the baby slept by us for the night.” When Luke talked of a shooting outside his home, he criticised the time it took for police to arrive:

Luke: They must be more awake because like the last time when they shot a guy, they *mos* came down there, there on our *stoep*... so my daddy *mos* called the police, so they never came, they never came like straight away, they can a half an hour after that. So the man did already disappear.

Ramona complained that jail sentences were inadequate:

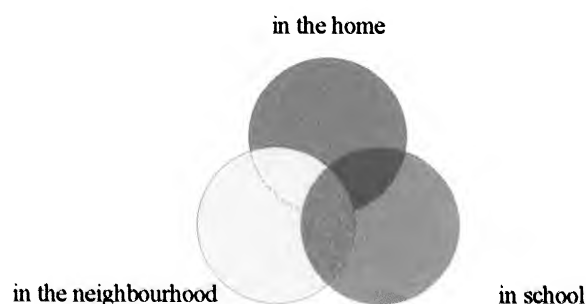
Ramona: The Government must put people in jail, if they do one thing wrong, because they don't – they let people who rape children, they let them go off.

The police themselves and the penal systems in general were therefore viewed as part of the framework in which adults protect and regulate children's lives, but also as transgressing the boundaries of this framework through their ineffectiveness or their abuse of their adult authority. These viewpoints could be traced to a legacy of suspicion of penal systems in the past and continuing concerns in local neighbourhoods about the effectiveness of these bodies (Dixon and Johns, 2001). But the concrete examples, such as those recounted by Jacqueline and Luke, illustrate how, in constructing their understandings of adult-child relations, children blended these neighbourhood perspectives with their own direct experiences, questioning therefore the ubiquity of the rights of adults to have authority and to regulate children's lives.

A Framework of Regulation and Protection

Adults, in the home, in school and in the neighbourhood, were seen by children as responsible for protecting them and, in the context of violence, children's lives were regulated through the daily routines and rules, and through punishment. Children took for granted and largely supported these forms of regulation, understanding that they were intended to protect them. In interpreting the extent of regulation in children's talk about their relationships with adults, I constructed a framework with which to illustrate both the crystallisation of these relationships, and the overlaps, borders and boundaries.

Figure 4:
A framework of Regulation and Protection in Adult-Child Relations



The framework of regulation and protection operates across children's relationships with adults, symbolised as interlocking circles in *figure 4*. The overlaps show how children construct discourses across all the circles, while the areas that do not overlap symbolise the variations in these relationships. The depth of shading indicates the emotional proximity to the child, with heavier shading of relations in the home signifying the most intimate relations with family members, and in particular with mothers. Within that circle, parents regulate and protect their children from the violence of others in the neighbourhood. Also protecting children from neighbourhood violence are other adults in the neighbourhood, represented here by the lightest shading. Usually these adults are positioned at some distance from the children and perhaps they will not be known personally, as in the systems of police or prison. The third circle represents relations between adults and children in school. Teachers, like other adults, regulate and protect children, but mainly they are protecting them from the violence of children – other children and themselves. While there are differences in the workings of regulation and protection in the three contexts, the overlaps centre around rules and punishments - the most commonly talked of ways in which adults and children communicated.

Within this framework of regulation and protection, the borders and boundaries were fluid and mobile, adults varied in their regulatory practices, children did not always comply. In the changing relations between adults and children as they grew older, negotiations and challenges increased, and the boundaries seemed to loosen as children practised positioning themselves within the world of adults. But in general, adults were positioned as regulators, and children were expected to respect adult authority. The framework relies on a hierarchy, often gendered, in which adults had power over children, and in each circle physical force was sometimes used to cement the framework. Violence therefore became associated with forms of protection in children's relationships with adults.

Tensions and Instabilities in the Framework

Tensions emerge in the framework because of the ways in which it positions children and adults. Positioning adults as regulators simultaneously positions children as regulated, as helpless, vulnerable and passive. Such positioning absolves children of responsibility for their own safety and, in chapter 4, I showed how this could protect children from feelings of frustration and shame at being unable, like their fathers and uncles, to protect and defend

their families. But this positioning also makes children vulnerable. A key underlying dynamic of child sex abuse, rape and violence against women and children in southern Africa: “is the inclination of men to assume that women and children are naturally subordinate to them and are bound to serve their needs” (Dawes et al., 2004: 16). The regulatory framework of adult-child relations perpetuates an expectation that children submit to adults, and where violence is incorporated in the practices of some adults, this is potentially dangerous for children.

But the framework does not always position children as passive and compliant. Sometimes, particularly in the school circle, children were positioned simultaneously as wild and violent. As in the peer relations discussed in chapter 5, in their relations with adults too, children may find themselves uneasily positioned and have to manoeuvre between these positions through presenting themselves as simultaneously compliant and transgressive. This may explain Luke’s positioning of himself in relation to school rules on a day when he was wearing a non-uniform top and had dyed his hair green:

Luke: The children are not supposed to run on the *stoeps*, not supposed to throw stones, not supposed to do come to school with dyed hair. [...]or come with the other colour uniform because... I, my, I’ve got the other colour on because my school top is too small for me.

Jenny: Okay. So what I’m wondering is whether you agree with all those rules?

Luke: I agree with them.

He positions himself as both supporting the rules, and flagrantly transgressing them, thus perhaps performing particular masculinities which entail resistance and challenge to adult regulation. The repeated rituals of rules, rule breaking and punishment seem to enable children to perform this uneasy balancing act. But the need for this complex self-positioning might also contribute to the processes of exclusion discussed in chapter 5, positioning ‘other’ children in more extreme ways in the attempt to position the self more comfortably.

There are tensions too in the positioning of adults as regulators since, in a violent neighbourhood, this positioning is inevitably imperfect. Some adults perpetrate violence in these neighbourhoods. Other adults do not successfully protect children. In a discussion with the 13 year old girls about a horrific rape of a baby by a group of men, which received a lot of media attention (Bird and Spurr, 2004), the girls talked of the failings of the men who had committed the rape: “so they thought that so if they had, had sex with the baby

and then the AIDS will go away... that's stupid," and of the justice system, which "must stop giving chances also".

These tensions in the positioning of children and adults expose the fragility of the framework of regulation, and one consequence is a harshening of the framework. The discussion about the rape of the baby, for example, generated a proposal to reinstate the death penalty: "because they know there is a execution and they won't do so much violence". When children felt the regulation was inadequate or ineffective, they sometimes proposed harsher forms of punishment. Adults too may be more likely to respond to transgressions with harsh responses, as in this discussion about Tariq's friend's father, who is a drug dealer:

Tariq: Mm. But this one that has the place here around the corner by opposite the Steenberg High by the park, that's my friend's daddy, that sells the stuff. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) So he told his - his mommy left his daddy, and he told his daddy already but his daddy smacked him.

Jenny: Yeah, and what did he tell his daddy that his daddy smacked him?

Tariq: He did "Daddy you must stop this stuff", and uh.. "Why?" He say "it's good money." He said, "no it's not you're doing something wrong" and he smacked the boy.

Jenny: Okay. So he can't really bring his father to be different really.

Tariq: Mm.

While the father jeopardises his right to regulate through his drug dealing activities, his son's transgression is a rare instance of a child challenging their own parent. The consequence is physical punishment.

Challenges to the framework were much more common in the more distant relationships of the neighbourhood and children were able to draw on widely held discourses about police ineffectiveness and corruption in supporting these challenges. The distance of their relationships with these adults meant that the voicing of criticism had little impact on their everyday relationships. Within the school setting, children sometimes criticised other teachers, but rarely their own. Their challenges related mainly to the use of physical punishments. Again they were supported in these challenges by changing discourses about the legitimacy of corporal punishment, but their relationships with teachers were much closer than those with authority outside the family circle in the neighbourhood, and voicing of criticism, particularly of their own teachers, was therefore risky in children's everyday relationships.

Within the family, challenges were almost non-existent. Simone's passing references to family conflict and alcoholism were unusual:

Simone: Jenny, my mommy and daddy got a divorce because my daddy is a alcoholic and we don't want him to be and (?) she can't stand it anymore. (Jenny: M-m) .. that's why they live in separate houses.

The closest another child came to telling me about the years of domestic violence recounted to me by his teacher was to describe his father as “over-protective”. Teachers and parents told me much more about the problems in family relationships than the children did, and there was no mention to me of the sex abuse, domestic violence, murder and imprisonment of parents that adults reported to me. Violence within families is frequently a taboo subject, and studies in South Africa have revealed how deeply entrenched is the view that intradomestic violence is not open to public view or outside intervention (Angless and Maconachie, 1996). But the openness of the parents I interviewed made me wonder whether the distinction between private and public space was a sufficient explanation for children's silences. Perhaps, in staying safe, children needed to position the adults closest to them well within the framework of regulation and protection. In these intimate relationships contesting the boundaries could be profoundly unsettling, and children therefore stayed silent.

Luke challenged the framework more than other children and he was the only child seriously to challenge the rights of parents to use physical punishment, which, in a group discussion, he viewed as a form of child abuse:

Clinton: (*overtalking*)... do you think if my mom must just give me a nice (*demonstrates smacking motion with hand*) hit on the bum, it's abuse?

Luke: It's abuse – she's hitting you.

Clinton: No.

[...]

Luke: She's hitting you still. Your parents are not allowed to hit you. If she hits you it's child abuse.

While the other 13 year old boys criticised parents who “over-do it” or hit you “for nonsense”, all of them supported hitting for “discipline” or “when their children's out of hand”:

Luke: So if you tell me now *né*, when you do something wrong then your daddy come *wha* (*smack hands*) and he hit you hard you're not only going to get cross you're going to take it as child abuse, *stry* [*Afrikaans - “argue”*] *né*.

Charles: Ja, I'll take it as that but I then I won't do it again, because otherwise I get another hit.

Luke: You know Charles, Charles you are old enough to think you won't take a [*unclear word*], why didn't they talk it out with me, they just come and *wha-wha*, right or wrong now?

Charles: Ja, I can but he's right

[...]

Charles: That's why if he's going to give you a one shot with the belt and then you'll say, can you think now you're going to throw the window in. (*overtalking*) Then you say, no, because then you're going to get a hiding with a belt.

Despite Luke's argument that a young man of Charles' age should be able to challenge his father, Charles insisted that "a hiding with a belt" is an effective deterrent and so justifies the practice. The firm support of physical punishment by Charles and the other 13 year old boys, in spite of Luke's powerful arguments against these punishments, may well have been connected with his reference to their own parents. In criticising the use of physical punishments, he was inviting them to criticise the practices of their own parents, and they refused to do this.

Luke had more direct exposure to violence in his life than most children, and it may be this experience that led him to question the rights of adults to hit children. His views seem therefore to challenge reproductive theories of the cycle of violence, like the comment quoted in chapter 2 that: "it is a sociological fact that people treated inhumanely can only treat others in the same way" (Malepa, 1990: 47). Luke's experiences of intradomestic violence, in contrast, seemed to strengthen his resistance to such practices. But while he was quick to criticise adult violent practices, his own engagements with others incorporated tough masculinities:

Luke: You can ask anybody here I - if someone must hit me, I hit them back. (*giggling*) A teacher must – I'll hit her back and if she's not happy in the end she knows the rules of the schools.

For Luke, violence in the circles of adult-child relations generated resistance, but the forms of resistance could both perpetuate and contest violence. While violence could be reproduced through these relations, the connection was complex and certainly not inevitable.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that adult-child relations in Uitsigberg were defined by a framework of regulation and protection, which was intended to protect children from violence, but which, in so doing, sometimes employed violence. I then seemed to refute my own argument by considering ways in which children challenged the framework. My argument is though that the borders and boundaries of the framework were fluid and mobile, and that a degree of challenge was permitted and indeed integral to the framework. There was a clear hierarchy, with adults distinguished from children and exercising power and control over them, but in this context, with the high levels of violence, such power could be a burden and children's freedom from this power was both liberating and endangering. In this context where, unlike in many African communities, there were not

rituals or rites of passage marking entry into adulthood (Field, 2001a), challenges by older children could be part of the negotiation into becoming a man or woman.

The framework is not static, but changes over time and space. Changing cultural constructions – about physical punishment, and about human rights and equalities – extended the boundaries of the framework and enabled children to contest adult regulation, as when the 13 year old girls pointed out that: “Thabo M’beki say so much, young children have rights, children have rights but then he doesn’t listen to our... what they have to say.” Where known adults also engaged with these changing cultural constructions, collaboration between children and adults in contesting violent practices may have been facilitated. This was evident in the relationship between the 13 year old girls and their teacher, who did not use corporal punishment – “it seems like our teacher is the only one that goes to the rules” - and, despite having to teach a class of 47 12-15 year olds, was viewed as a source of support:

Jacqueline: And my teacher like always, um, my teacher will never say no to help us. She’s more, she’s not like the other teachers. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) She’s open with us and everything, like I asked her to help me with my Maths and so she helped me and after that I understood.

The boundaries of the framework were not, however, endlessly fluid and transgressions destabilised the framework, and exposed its weaknesses. Challenges to the regulation of adults outside the family circle were frequent, and within school were also common, though children only occasionally criticised their own teachers. As the adult-child relations became more intimate, the freedom to challenge reduced and children stayed silent about violence that crossed the boundaries within their own families. Transgression at this level could jeopardise children’s inclusion or connection within their families and was too risky. When adults or children stepped too far across the boundaries of the framework, there were harsh, and often violent penalties.

Families, however, were also the spaces in which the most active and reciprocal negotiation of adult-child relations took place, particularly in the warm relationships between mothers and their children. The emotional withdrawal, lack of empathy and understanding, associated in the literature with poor child outcomes in high violence neighbourhoods, were not evident in children’s talk about their own parents, though harsh punishments clearly featured. Whether and how these harsh punishments might be reproduced in children’s social relations is a theme of the next chapter. Children’s relationships with adults were

complex and carried many meanings – about care, concern and protection, belonging and control. But in their efforts to keep children safe, adults were positioned as regulators and children as regulated, and this relationship conveys a message about regulation of the weak by the strong, and the use of force cements this relationship. In this way, violence was intertwined with protection in children’s relationships with adults.

Chapter 7

Making Sense of Violence: Narratives and Rules

Violence carries meanings, it performs, mirrors and negotiates social relations. Children are repelled by violence which casts them as victims and renders them helpless, but they actively strive to make sense of it, to acquire some feeling of control, of coherence. This process is the focus of this chapter.

Coherence has captured the attention of feminist and critical social theorists, who ask how we gain a sense of unity of the self in the context of the poststructural emphasis on the dispersed and contradictory self. If we are merely a product of multiple discourses, or Foucauldian docile bodies, then is there such a thing as selfhood? Lois McNay addresses this question through elaborating a “generative paradigm”, which stresses the creative and imaginative dimensions of agency in the structural, institutional and intersubjective constraints of the material world (McNay, 2000). Key to the construction of agency, she argues, are the notions of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and narrative. While the concept of habitus views the body as a site where social controls are exerted, it also encompasses the moment of ‘praxis’ or living through of those norms. Habitus is the “system of durable, transposable dispositions that mediates the actions of an individual and the external conditions of production” (McNay, 2000: 36). These dispositions include actions, perceptions and emotions, but in this analysis, I am focusing on a dimension of habitus as rules, or principles which regulate practice. The ways in which children construct rules about violence are, therefore, products of their social and historical relations, but these rules are also enacted creatively within a web of social relations and are capable of producing a range of effects within that web. The integrative effect of rules has also been developed by Helen Haste in the field of developmental psychology:

[Rules] are a model for ordering and organizing one’s experience; they reflect, and prescribe, a range of explanations of the social and physical world. In acquiring these rules, the child learns the basis for interaction with others, and the shared cultural framework for making sense of the world (Haste, 1987: 163).

While Bourdieu’s interest is to understand how social relations become incorporated within the rules and practices of individuals, Haste is interested in understanding how children construct these rules through their relationships. In a sense, Bourdieu’s starting point is

social groups while Haste's is the individual child, but both are interested in how rules are constructed at the meeting point of the individual and the social.

Also at this meeting point are narratives, which we construct to interpret experience, placing events in temporal and spatial relationship with other events. McNay develops Ricoeur's analysis on the coherence of self through narrative:

The idea of narrative shares the poststructural emphasis on the constructed nature of identity; there is nothing inevitable or fixed about the types of narrative coherence that may emerge from the flux of events. Yet at the same time, the centrality of narrative to a sense of self suggests that there are powerful constraints or limits to the ways in which identity may be changed. Unlike the poststructural account of constraint as an exogenously imposed force, the notion of narrative indicates that constraints are imposed from without and are also self-imposed. Individuals act in certain ways because it would violate their sense of being to do otherwise (McNay, 2000: 80).

In our engagements with the world, we assume a degree of stability of identity and act in accordance with this imagined coherence. According to McNay, narrative reproduces beliefs and values, and is at the same time a source of agency since our narratives of self can enable us to resist meta-narratives which conflict with our past, present and future imagined self. Jerome Bruner argues that this way of organising experience is so central to human interaction that there is a readiness or predisposition in young children to use narrative forms:

What makes a cultural community is not just shared beliefs about what people are like and what the world is like or how things should be valued.... But what may be important to the coherence of a culture is the existence of interpretative procedures for adjudicating the different construals of reality that are inevitable in any diverse society... In human beings, with their astonishing narrative gift, one of the principal forms of peacekeeping is the human gift for presenting, dramatizing and explicating the mitigating circumstances surrounding conflict-threatening breaches in the ordinariness of life. The object of such narratives is not to reconcile, not to legitimise, not even to excuse, but rather to explicate (Bruner, 1990: 95).

For Bruner, therefore, narrative is the "interpretative procedure" that helps us to organise, frame and make sense of our experience. While Bruner and social constructivists focus attention on the developing child and how narrative brings the child into culture, McNay is interested in how narrative both constructs gender and awards agency to resist these constructions.

Today's South Africa is in a state of flux, in a process of reconstruction from its history of fractured relationships under colonialism and apartheid. In Uitsigberg, with its legacy of residential and employment discrimination, and fragmented and contested 'coloured' identities, families face the stresses of unemployment, overcrowding and neighbourhood violence. How does this fractured social environment affect the quest for coherence?

In this chapter, I explore how children construct rules and narratives to make sense of violence. In looking at rules and narratives which span the different social fields – of neighbourhood relations, peer relations, and adult-child relations – I will draw on elements of preceding chapters. Two rules dominate children’s talk – the rule of *retaliation*, and the rule of *retribution*. I will explore how these rules function to justify or make sense of violence, focusing particularly on violent forms of retaliation and retribution, since there is most contestation in children’s narratives about these issues. I will consider the borders and boundaries, the spaces where rules are reinforced, negotiated, challenged and how children strive for coherence in these negotiations. I will reflect on how gender and age interact with children’s use of rules and narratives, considering key psychological literature on moral development. Finally, I will ask what happens when violence breaks the rules, and when children seem unable to generate coherence in their interpretations.

Retaliation: “You hit me, I hit you”

Central to children’s attempts to make sense of violence was the notion of retaliatory justice. In discussions about ‘when it is okay or not okay to hit’ all the groups justified violent responses to aggression:

Karen: When someone hits you, you must hit him back.

Luke: When it’s okay to hit is when someone lifts his hand towards you.

Across age and gender, children voiced their support for hitting back, and in contrast, all agreed that violence without such provocation was not justified, so that Nicholas gave as an example of when it is not okay to hit: “when someone don’t start with you and then you just hit him”. Retaliation then framed justifications for and against violent practices. The provocation for violent retaliation was always perceived as aggressive, but could be verbal as well as physical, so Lester narrated a fight in which he retaliated when his mother was insulted. Accidental inflicting of pain was not usually deemed a worthy justification, while repeated or more serious acts of violence justified more violent response:

Imraan: If somebody hit me hard then I don’t want to fight them, then they hit me very hard to cry, then I will hit him hard.

Retaliation was bounded in space and time, but boundaries are fluid. For some children, retaliation should be immediate, but others thought that retaliation the next day was justified. A common practice was to arrange for fights after school, and some boys

suggested that if the fighting took place outside school, then the usual boundaries were not needed: “outside the school grounds then you can, then it is okay to fight”.

Children used the retaliation rule to explain their own violent practices and those of others – other children who might fight in the playground in retaliation for conflict out of school, or people might join gangs to retaliate when they had been attacked. Here they were not condoning the use of violence, but interpreting or making sense of violent practices within their established frameworks for making their experiences coherent. Even narratives of the most extreme forms of violence were sometimes explained using the retaliation rule, as in Tariq’s account of gang members retaliating when some of their members have been killed (though here retaliation, which implies payment in kind, blurs with retribution, which implies punishment or revenge and may not be ‘in kind’):

Tariq: Like the gangsters then they fight and they kill some people there of the gangs and they wanna get revenge and there every time until the whole gang is wiped out.

Most often, however, retaliation was connected with violence between children, with adult violence, in contrast, explained either through the rule of retribution or through the *predatory violence* and *drink-drugs-violence* repertoires discussed in chapter 4.

Although children frequently saw retaliatory violence as justified, there was some ambivalence in their views, as indicated in the euphemistic ways in which they talked about retaliation (the italicised sections are my emphasis):

Jenny: So Brandon kicked you?

Ismael: And he hit me.

Jenny: And then he hit you? And then what happened?

Ismael: And so *I got him back*.

Jenny: Yeah. What did you do, kick him or hit him?

Ismael: Hit him.

Richard: Then sometimes I fight but now only if they first *start with me*.

Anastasia: We were on a outing in a bus and so this child hit me on my head, so I just lift my hand like that and so *it went in her face by accident*, so she hit me hard on the...

Jenny: Mm.

Anastasia: ...on the head and so when we came out of the bus we just started fighting.

Frequently children used euphemisms, replacing a blunt or harsh word or expression with a milder and less precise term, which often made it difficult to assess the nature of violence or, indeed, whether there was any physical force. The use of such figures of speech to mask violent practices suggests a continuing resonance of the repulsion of violence

(discussed in chapter 4), countering the justification of retaliation, or at least uncertainty about my possible ‘adult’ judgments of such violence.

One of the most easily justified forms of retaliation was self-defence:

Faiza: And my cousin, she was here at the school, she went to the toilet and so she saw in the toilet there was a man, and so she ran... and he pushed her against her against the wall and then he pulled her hair, then he choked her and so she couldn’t breathe so that other girl came in and so, so he looked over his shoulder and so my cousin she kicked him so and so (*demonstrates kicking up with leg*) she ran out the other girl and he chased her round the class.

The 10 year old girls wholeheartedly supported Faiza’s cousin’s use of violence to “protect herself” during this attack in a neighbouring primary school. Self-defence was mentioned by all but the youngest children as a justification for violence, with girls justifying force to defend themselves from potential rape and boys talking of the need to defend themselves from attack in the street. They talked of how their fathers and uncles sometimes used force to protect their families, as when Robin’s uncle intervened to catch a burglar, described in chapter 4, or when Luke was attacked by a man with a knife: “my father took him and gave him one smack and the man just turned around so he ran”.

But there are often other possible readings for violence justified as self-defence. So, for example, when Luke spoke of hitting when someone “lifts his hand towards you”, he justified this as “self-defence” or “protecting myself”. But later, he gave me a different account of his routine for managing threats to him and his friends:

Luke: I ask him do you want to fight and if he’s willing to go argue then I’ll take him on, ‘cause I’m a person I’m scared of nobody.

Jenny: So why are you – when – so why are you fighting then – you’re not fighting in self-defence really. What’s your reason?

Luke: No, I always wait for the person to make a move.

‘Protecting himself’ here seemed more connected to his reputation than his safety. He positioned himself as fearless and always willing to fight, but most definitely not the aggressor. There is an air of ritual about this narrative, which was often evident in children’s accounts of retaliation. Luke was displaying his tough masculinities and the euphemisms – “argue”, “take him on”, “sort it out”, “make a move” – signify an undertow of regulation, with Luke apparently feeling he could achieve control by fighting.

For boys, violent retaliation negotiated social relations, reinforced and challenged hierarchies. It could establish authority, control and power over others – over girls, over other boys. But the paradox of violence is that it can be associated with power and control,

and with disorder, chaos and powerlessness, as illustrated in chapter 4. For boys to use violence to control, then they must find a way to disassociate their engagement from the features of violence which repel. The rule of retaliation, with the stress on not being the one to start a fight, enables them to do this.

Since violent retaliation is a form to negotiate social relations, it usually occurs between protagonists of matched size and strength:

Clinton: When you see – when you see that person isn't worth hitting, then it's not okay to hit.

Jenny: How do you mean?

Clinton: If, if for instance we – me and – he hit me and I see that he's not worth hitting and then I'm not going to hit him.

Jenny: Is that...

Lester: 'Cause I'm smaller than him.

Clinton: Ja, because he's smaller than me.

Clinton was taller and stronger than Lester, and they agreed that the uneven balance of power between them makes fighting unjustified. At the same time Clinton's use of the word "worth" clearly attributed a value or capital to strength and size and denigrated Lester. They went on in the discussion to talk about others who are not "worth" fighting – younger people, and girls. Hitting girls, whatever the provocation, was tabooed by boys at all ages, and boys who did this were emasculated – labelled "*moffie*" or "girl". These constraints on retaliation set boundaries which could restrict violence. At the same time though they reinforced power relations in which masculinity was associated with the potential to physical force, a potential which generally was not used but which powerfully asserted superiority over girls and other boys.

When there was an uneven balance of power, a common playground practice was to seek help from an older or stronger person:

Peter: On Friday so, so we played a game that other time so that boy wanted to uh, so he ask me for 50c so I, so I called Ismael so Ismael did hurt that boy.

Jenny: So he asked you for some money?

Peter: Yes.

Jenny: And what did Ismael do?

Peter: Ismael, he let him fall on the floor.

Jenny: He hit him?

Peter: Yes.

Ismael's size and reputation as a fighter enabled him to stand up for his friend, retaliating – or euphemistically, "let him fall on the floor" – on Peter's behalf. Fatima too told how other boys retaliated on behalf of Charles:

Fatima: Like it's, this one boy, Standard Two or One, when he, like, brought a knife to school, like a butter knife, and so he wanted to stab this boy in my class, Charles - that tall boy.

- Jenny:** I know Charles, yeah.
Fatima: And so, um, Charles *mos* don't have a lot of strength anymore because he was in hospital...
Jenny: Yeah.
Fatima: ...and so, um, they... He like tried to stab him and so, um, Charles told my teacher and so this boy, Edward in Grade Seven, being Afrikaans class and *mos* this boy's friend in Standard One and so he, Edward, came to *skell* Charles out and so Robin jumped in, so Robin and he fought here on the school grounds.

Because of Charles' leukaemia, fighting on his behalf was an accepted practice and on this occasion Robin retaliated when Charles was threatened by Edward. At the same time, Robin was able to demonstrate his tough masculinity, practise his fighting skill, and to manage the ambivalent meanings surrounding violence.

Retaliation therefore enabled boys to perform tough masculinities, but it also generated problems for those boys who did not want to or who were unable to live up to these masculinities. So, for example, in chapter 5, I discussed the various ways in which 10 year old boys tried to explain their failure to support Nicholas when he was outnumbered in a fight, pointing out, for example, that if they retaliated, the conflict would become "a big thing" or they would be punished by their parents being called in. One or two contradicted the stories of the others by suggesting that they did retaliate and "they did hurt us, also a little" or "I told them, you mustn't hurt him, and so they went away". The contradictions and variations in their accounts signify the discomfort they experienced in their positioning during this incident. None of them mentioned their fear of being hurt, though Nicholas was hurt so badly he had to be carried away from the playground by the caretaker. In chapter 4, I discussed the shame and frustration of some of the 13 year old boys who were unable to live up to desired masculinities embodying strength, power and the ability to retaliate in the neighbourhood context. As their narratives of violence in the neighbourhood make clear, children were well aware of the dangers inherent in such retaliation, but this awareness did not seem to prevent feelings of shame when they chose not to intervene.

The notion of shame has been explored in several studies of men's violence, with violent rage viewed as an outcome of shame when masculinities are thwarted (Moore, 1994; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Ray, Smith and Wastell, 2003). Larry Ray and his colleagues, for example, employed the notion of shame to account for racist violence in the UK, when young white men, marginalised economically and culturally, were deprived of the material basis for enacting a traditional conception of working-class masculinity (Ray,

Smith and Wastell, 2003). For these young men, a disjunction between young men's self-identity and material conditions evoked shame, resentment and hostility towards an 'other', in this case South Asians. In the talk of the boys in this study in South Africa, their own violence was not usually associated with rage, but appeared more controlled, performing particular masculinities within the retaliation rule. But there were signs of shame in the disjunction between tough masculinities and the disempowerment of the violent neighbourhood.

Girls also justified violent retaliation, but they spoke much less about these boundaries of space, time, consequences and intention. For girls, violent retaliation was justified against boys because of boys' superior strength and more extensive use of violence. With boys stronger and more powerful, girls could hit back without worrying about the consequences. After all, girls were seen as 'naturally' less violent, so Jacqueline said that when a boy hit her she might "just give him one (*demonstrates swiping hand*), but you don't fight like boys do". For girls then, violent retaliation was justified, but not embedded in social constructions of femininity. The complex boundaries were not so evident in girls' narratives because they did not have to negotiate violent masculinities:

- Jenny:** What about girls to hit boys? Is it ever okay to hit a boy?
?+: (*giggle*) Yes.
Jenny: Yes?! What, in what circumstances is it okay for a girl to hit a boy?
Fatima: When they, they think they're think the ones hit us...
?+: (*all talking*)
Jacqueline: Sometimes they work on your nerves, they just want to look for attention by you.
Jenny: Okay. So what are they doing when they want your attention?
Jacqueline: They go so (*demonstrates slapping with hand*) so they hit you
Anastasia: They tease you.
Jacqueline: Yes, they tease you.
Jenny: So they tease, so they're teasing you in some way? It's okay to hit them. Yeah?
?: (*laugh*)
Jenny: So its okay to hit, girls to hit boys when they tease you (*writing on board*) What about for boys to hit girls then when girls are teasing? Is that okay?
?: ...no we never tease...
?: ...they always...
?: ...we never tease them...
Jacqueline: ...they always start with us first.

Retaliation did not of course always entail violence. Both girls and boys sometimes "talked it out" and for girls in particular, verbal forms were an important part of the retaliation rule. "Stepping in" did not always entail violence, though its potential was there, but boys and men supported each other also through verbal intervention, as in Kirsten's account of her cousin, who was stabbed in a bar and restrained from retaliating by his friend: "he wanted to shoot so his friend said no he can't shoot". But dominant masculinities were closely

bound up with violent retaliation. Femininities, seen as weak and vulnerable, sometimes involved retaliation in the form of self-defence against a stronger other, and, in chapter 4, I discussed how girls used their bodies, rather than weapons, to retaliate. The perceived weakness of girls and women also justified retaliation by another – a brother or a male cousin - and so femininity, like masculinity, constructed retaliation as a boys' practice. Retaliation was performative, repeated in playground rituals between boys and girls, in ways which perpetuate these inequitable social relations (Butler, 1999).

More often though, girls and boys took the option of switching to the rule of retribution.

Retribution: “They must feel before they listen.”

Retribution is closely connected with retaliation because both represent justice in response to violence or other violating practices. Like retaliation, the rule of retribution spans social fields – in school and at home its most usual form is verbal *skelling* and physical punishment, in the neighbourhood it includes forms of community justice, arrest and imprisonment, with at its most extreme, support for the death penalty:

Jenny: And what could stop the children doing that?

Natalie: By hitting them.

Jenny: Pardon?

Natalie: By hitting them.

Jenny: Hitting them? So if you hit them it will stop them from hitting somebody else, will it?

Natalie: Yes. When they're hitting every time.

Jenny: And who must hit them?

Natalie: His teacher.

Jenny: Aaahhh.

Natalie: Or his mommy.

Ramona: She said, “*as hulle dood gaan dan moet hulle net maar dood gaan*” – if they die they must just die.

Jenny: Okay. Okay.

Jenny: And so does everyone here think that they should introduce the death sentence?

All: Yes. Yes.

Jenny: Why?

Jacqueline: Because the people are scared to die.

Fatima: So there can be fewer crime in the country.

Whether in school, at home or in the neighbourhood, retribution was deeply embedded in children's common sense views about justice. Retribution took many forms – both violent and non-violent. Like retaliation, when it took a violent form it paradoxically both resisted and perpetuated violence. Sometimes the rules overlapped – children talked of hitting other children because they were “naughty”, they talked of the need for police to hit both to

punish and to protect themselves. But generally children clearly distinguished between retribution and retaliation, as these extracts with the 10 year old groups show:

Nicholas: Don't hit younger children.

Jenny: But it's okay for parents to hit their children when they're naughty.

Nicholas: Yes.

Jenny: Okay. What about for a bigger child to hit a smaller child. Is that ever okay?

?+: No.

?: No.

Jenny: No do you all agree? (*not sure*)

Chantal: No because a smaller child don't have a lot of energy to hit a bigger child.

Jenny: Okay.

Faiza: (*all talking*) 'Cause they're only little...

Faiza: ...and they're not so strong

?: They're not so strong.

Jenny: Okay. So something to do with the strength. But a grown-up, parents kind of have got a lot more strength than the child but it's okay for a parent to hit a child. Why is that?

Shanelle: Because (*giggle*)

Faiza: Because, children and you have to teach your children manners.

In these groups, the children supported the use of corporal punishment between adults and children, but they did not support the use of physical force on younger children. What seemed to me a contradiction was not acknowledged by them. For them, there was no anomaly because while physical force between children was usually interpreted within the retaliation rule, and so required an even balance of power, physical force between adults and children for disciplinary purposes was interpreted within the retribution rule, so inequity of power was assumed. This was the key difference between the rules.

The rule of retribution sanctioned use of force on unequal terms, but like retaliation it was closely bounded. These boundaries about retribution were based on judgements about firstly, its disciplinary function, second, the accepted form of power relations and finally, the form of retribution. Each of these can be identified in this extract from a discussion with the 10 year old boys:

Ryan: That other time that, that lady, that other man there was, was drunk and so he start hitting that other lady. So they were fighting with "*pangas*" [*kind of big knife*] there in the [...] yard

[...]

Ryan: And so this other man he hitting the girl against her leg the whole time so the girl hit him against the leg and so he picked the "*panga*" up, so he hit the girl against...(*points to right cheek*)

Jenny: Ooooh.

Ryan: ...hit the girl here and so all her teeth fell out one side...

Jenny: Oooh.

Ryan: ...and so we went inside so we wanted to go fetch a knife and my daddy phoned the police and the police came and so, so he wanted to stab the police. So the police took him away and the police gave him a little, a little bit of hiding and one day in jail and he came again.

Jenny: What do you think about that then? The police, is it okay for the police to hit people?

Imraan: Yes.

Cassiem: Yes.

Nicholas: No.

Ryan: Yes, that's okay because they...
?+: *(All talking at the same time)*
Jenny: One at a time. One at a time.
Imraan: Because they're trying to protect you...
?: Because they...
Jenny: Let's just hear Ryan first.
Ryan: Because they're hitting girls but then, then they don't get hidings, that means it's right for the police to hit them because they were hitting the girls.
?: ...bad man um...
Cassiem: ...the police is also trying to protect us
Nicholas: But sometimes the police bully the people. Like you...
Jenny: Yeah.
Nicholas: ...do nothing and then the police they will be doing it and hit you, *(demonstrates beating with fist)* they do, do that.
Jenny: Okay.
Imraan: And there by us in the road there, there they sell wine and sometimes the police come buy wine and that people they just come there and they're drunk and the police start hitting them and say, "*Gaan uit, gaan uit*" [*"go out, go out"*]
Jenny: And is that all right do you think? Or not okay?
Imraan: *(shakes head)*
Nicholas: ...the police also do the wrong thing.

Ryan's narrative contains two forms of violent punishment, both of which are seen by some as crossing the borders of the retribution rule. The drunken fight crosses this threshold with the man's use of a weapon, and the horror of the injuries marking the woman's body. The excessive violence demands retribution and, positioning his father and himself as protectors, Jason mentions both the desire to "go fetch a knife" and to call the police. The boundaries here between retribution, self-defence and retaliation are blurred. In the end retribution takes the form of "a little bit of hiding" from the police and "one day in jail". The children differ in their support of violence used by the police, with Ryan, Cassiem and Imraan emphasizing the protective function and the inability of "girls" to defend themselves requiring more powerful men to punish on their behalf. Nicholas though questions the authority of the police to do this, since they sometimes misuse their responsibility – a view which Imraan illustrates with a narrative about police, alcohol and unprovoked violence. The variability in views revolves not around whether there is a need for retribution, but around the form of retribution and the power relations. Certainly the excessive force of the man is viewed as crossing boundaries of acceptability and Ryan, drawing on a discourse of adult authority, awards the police the power to use violent punishment. But Nicholas challenges this on the basis that police have jeopardized their right to regulate others through their own abuses.

Judgments about retribution therefore involved a series of questions about discipline, authority and violence. Questions about discipline focused on the intentions of those

engaged in retribution, so the person carrying out the retribution must be acting for reasons of punishment and a parent must not hit a child “for nonsense, just to get things off their chest”, an adult can hit when children are “rude or swearing”, or “when naughty”, but there must be a clear retributory intention, and one boy complained: “my teacher hit us for nothing”. The child should not be punished for unintentional misdemeanours, like “when you break a glass” or “if your child get lost and then the moms is cross”. The view that physical punishment is an appropriate form of discipline differs from the views expressed in recent studies in the UK. In one study, for example, about 40% of parents rejected all forms of physical punishment, and most of the remaining 60% supported minor physical punishments to avert danger, but rejected physical punishment for retribution (Hazel et al., 2003). A UK study of children’s perspectives found that the vast majority of children disagreed with parents smacking children (Willow and Hyder, 1998). As discussed in chapter 6, within this South African context, in which violence was widespread, retribution was seen as a form of protection and support for these practices was therefore common.

Children’s talk of retribution was replete with well worn phrases – police hit gangsters because “they must feel before they listen”, “they deserve it”, “to teach him a lesson”; parents hit children “to teach them manners”. There seemed to be many more of these platitudes in children’s talk about retribution than about retaliation, perhaps because retribution was sanctioned within the community so children heard their parents and teachers saying them, whereas retaliation was more closely embedded in peer cultures. At the same time, talk of retribution used fewer euphemisms than retaliation. With retaliation, when the children were talking about their own violent practices, the use of euphemism demonstrated their ambivalence about violence, their awareness that there were alternative readings of their actions. But with retribution, the violence was more clearly sanctioned, and more likely to be implemented by another, usually an adult, and so did not need to be cloaked in figures of speech.

As well as questions about discipline, retribution entailed judgments about the authority of the person carrying out the punishment, and these questions generated lively discussions, especially in the older groups, who, as I discussed in chapter 6, were more likely to challenge forms of adult regulation. Although children generally respected adult regulation of children, they were hostile to what they viewed as the illegitimate seizure of power.

Gangs, for example, were seen as misusing the retribution rule in their control over the neighbourhood and in their coercion of their own members:

- Luke:** And it's hard to get out of a gang.
?: *Ja.*
Jenny: Okay. So you can get trapped in it.
Charles: Like the people say when they leave they're going to kill you.
Luke: No, they won't kill you so.
Lester: Some of the gangs.
Clinton: Some of the gangs.
Luke: No. No one said any of the gangs are all the same.
Jenny: Why is it hard to get out?
Luke: I don't know. But that is their rule. It's like they draw a line now.
?: A line. What line?
Luke: All the gangs like, like the gangsters now, you see here's a group and here's one group and they divide themselves up and they all stand on the side of the line and here and here. (*points to two spots on the floor*) And maybe all of them have got, maybe (?) the outside, and then if you want to get out of there then you must walk over that line.
Jenny: Yeah.
Luke: Because when you come into gang you walk forward (*points*) and when you go out you move backwards in the line and then they hit you. They don't worry where they hit you.
Jenny: Is it?
Luke: Even if they hit you dead they want to hit.
Jenny: So they might not kill you but they hurt you.
Luke: *Ja.*

While there is some disagreement here, which seems to relate to Luke's desire to demonstrate his superior knowledge of gangs, the boys agree that gangs exert unjustified retributory violence – possibly fatally – over members who want to leave. A similar form of illegitimate retributory violence, in the playground context, was discussed by the 10 year old girls:

- Chantal:** So they were playing the game and so a other boy want... didn't wanted to play because they tossed to you 'I dare you'. So he didn't want to play, so they threw him with a brick here by his face. [...] So all the children have to hit him. [...] Because if you play the game then you have to stay every single day 'til they say you play other game. [...] I felt very sorry for him.

'Tossing in' was a playground practice in which children contracted to join a friendship group or play activity, usually ended by 'tossing out'; but in this narrative, renegeing on the contract evoked violent retribution. The rules of the game, like the rules of the gangs, sanctioned this violent retribution, but the children or gangsters who constructed the rules had seized this authority, and in children's views this rendered their practices illegitimate. In a similar way, children criticised the retributory force used by the USA in Afghanistan after the bombing of the Twin Towers on September 11th, since the USA was not viewed as a legitimate authority over another country:

- Shanelle:** The whole America's country is a gangster.
?: America's country is against us.
Faiza: Some people only have stones to throw and the Americans have the big cannons and guns.

In each of these examples, actions justified by some as retributory justice, were viewed by children as coercive. Retribution was condoned within accepted power relations – between adults and children, the law and the criminal – but when these forms of power were seized forcibly, retribution was not sanctioned.

As well as asking questions about discipline and authority, the third way in which children made judgments about retribution was related to the form, in particular the levels of violence involved. In each of the examples above, as well as illegitimately seizing authority, the perpetrators were criticised for using excessive force. Children took the view that the punishment should match the crime, so whereas *skelling* was the most appropriate punishment for minor misdemeanours, more violent offences merited violent forms of retribution. This was clearly expressed in a discussion with the 13 year old boys:

- Luke:** What's that place that the Muslim always go to?
Tariq: Afghanistan and ...
Luke: No man.
Tariq: In Mecca
Luke: In Mecca yes, where if you steal then they chop off your hand.
Tariq: If you steal they chop off the hand.
Jenny: Yeah. What do you think about that?
Luke: Ja, they must do that if you break into someone's house...
Tariq: And if you steal – and if you steal something very expensive, like if you steal a gun then they keep you in jail for 5 months.
Jenny: So it's okay – okay to chop off a hand...
Clinton: Ja.
Jenny: ...as a punishment for...
Tariq: Stealing.
Clinton: And if you kill somebody they can kill you...
Tariq: And if they say you swear, they chop off your tongue.(*overtalking*)
?+: (talking to each other –not clear)
?: And if you rape someone then..._(?)(*mumble*)
?: (giggling)
Jenny: And do you think – does everyone think that they should bring back hanging?
?+: Yes. Ja. (*all nodding*)

The common sense logic that harshness of punishment should match the crime cut across fields, with the hierarchy of punishments in school, like the hierarchy of penalties for crimes discussed by the 13 year old boys, connected with the seriousness of the misdemeanour. Retribution for more violent misdemeanours was more likely to include violence – physical punishments at home, the death penalty for violent crime. In this way, retribution, intended to contest violence, perpetuated it, reinforcing violence as a means of problem solving.

But there were competing discourses that entered into children's talk. Several children, for example, talked about abuse, expressing the view that certain forms of violence, which crossed the boundaries of both the retribution and the retaliation rules, were 'abuse' and therefore were not condoned. Jacqueline, for example, said: "I think that is called abuse if you hit your child for nothing and there's marks". For her, the threshold of when retribution becomes abuse is twofold – when the injury caused leaves marks on the body, or when the disciplinary purpose of the violent act is missing. Ramona took up this theme, saying "it's mostly men that abuse women", a view also expressed by the 10 year old boys:

Jenny: Is it ever okay for a man to hit a woman?

All: No.

Cassiem: No that's abuse.

In chapter 6, I discussed how Luke tried unsuccessfully to persuade the other 13 year old boys that any physical punishment by parents was abuse. While children's definitions of abuse varied, the term offered children a language with which to challenge violent retribution.

Luke was the only person to argue that physical punishment of children was abuse, but for most children, while they expressed antipathy towards men's violence against women, in relation to children it was the level of force, the authority of the adult and the perceived need for discipline that determined whether the boundaries of retributory justice have been crossed. This distinction between the rules of retribution for women and children differs from Kate Wood's finding that in the relationships between young men and young women in the Eastern Cape, men exercised the authority to exact retribution over women as a form of care and love:

The idea that young women have to be supervised and corrected is a dominant one among many young men..... The extent to which violence is directly linked to 'love' is contested among men and women alike – particularly the latter. Nevertheless, its clear importance as an idea and the evidence that socially sanctioned discipline in other relationships (notably parent-child) is related to putting someone on the 'right track' shows that violence is believed at times to be constitutive of love – in other words, a way of constructing rather than destroying relationships (Wood, 2002: 245).

Children in Uitsigberg did not sanction the use of force by men over women, or by boys over girls, but, as discussed in chapter 6, the idea that physical punishment is a sign of love and care in parent-child relationships opens up the possibility that uneven gender relations which, like the relations between parents and children, award boys power over girls, have the potential to permit violent retribution. In this study, however, this potential was not realised, with separation and exclusion of the 'other' a more common consequence of the

different ways in which children constructed and performed masculinity and femininity, as discussed in chapter 5.

The narrative of retribution begins with a misdemeanour, often an act of violence which is perceived as challenging the existing order in some way – through a playground fight, breaking a rule at home, or committing a robbery. For order to be re-established, retribution is required and the narrative reinforces established power relations. The level of violence in the act of retribution relates to the nature of the perceived threat to the social order, which in turn relates to the stability of the social order. So, when social relations are unstable then narratives of retribution are more likely to resonate with this. In this way, when Ismael was attacked by a boy from another class and his teacher did “nothing”, this inaction violated the rule of retribution and Ismael proposed a violent form of punishment: “he go get a hiding.” In the neighbourhood, the perceived instability of the penal system could generate the desire for violent retribution, as when Tariq suggested that community justice would have been more effective than the police in punishing a boy who had shot a man: “for my part I think we should have hit him”. Luke reflected on the problems of prison as a form of punishment for gangsters:

Luke: They must be put in prison.

Jenny: Yeah. And do you think that would change them? They would not do it again when they come out?

Luke: Some of them - I don't think it will because there are gangsters in prison also. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Like the ‘*Ses-en-twintig's*’ [26's], ‘*Sewe-en-twintig*’ [27's] en ‘*Agt-en-twintig*’ [28's]. Now they're cleaning in the prisons - the ‘*Agt-en-Twintig's*’ they're the main guys over there in prison. So I don't think anything will happen to the ‘*Agt-en-Twintig's*’. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) I think they will stay gangsters.

Jenny: So do you think they should stay in prison for a long time?

Luke: Yes.

Jenny: All right.

Luke: My mother said they must bring the death sentence back. [...] I think they should because most of these gang members they hurt a lot of people; they kill people; the drugs that they give people kill the people. So I think it's time that they take their lives away from them.

Luke was reflecting in this extract on the prison gangs, in which gang members were assigned numbers according to their duties within the gang (Clinton explained this further to me: “There's a ‘27’, that to say um, you can kill, and a ‘26’ is you steal, and a ‘25’ in, how can I say it, you're a teller [...] and there's a ‘30’, that is a person who um, who wants money”). Luke initially proposes prison as the appropriate form of retribution for gangsters, but then questions its effectiveness as a space where gangs are rife, and proposes instead the death sentence.

Retribution and retaliation rules maintain order, they reinforce accepted power relations. In a context where these power relations are unstable, breakages and challenges may be common and children's responses sometimes entail a harshening of the boundaries, with retaliation and retribution taking violent forms. These rules of retribution and retaliation helped children to make sense of the violence in their lives, but there were variations in how they were interpreted and these variations are important because they illustrate tensions and conflicts in the construction of rules and narratives, and spaces for change. I will consider first variations with age, then variations between groups and finally variations in the narratives of a single child.

Shifting Perspectives with Age

Rules of retaliation and retribution were constructed alike by girls and boys, by 8, 10 and 13 year olds, but as I have discussed above, gender sometimes contributed to variations, and there were also changes in the construction of rules and narratives across the three age groups. Cognitive developmental psychology offers an interpretation of these changes through the work of Lawrence Kohlberg who, influenced by the work of Jean Piaget, developed a stage-theory of moral development. He argued that children make sense of experience through cognitively generating increasingly complex theories of how the world works, moving from a 'pre-conventional' level, in which moral reasoning is associated with immediate rewards and punishments, to a 'conventional' level, in which interpersonal concordance and obeying law and order dominate, and finally to a 'post-conventional' level, in which people attempt to live by more universal ethical principles (Kohlberg, Levine and Hewer, 1983). Kohlberg's work has generated criticism, notably for its essentialist stress on universal stages, which privileges the moral reasoning of American middle class boys (Woods, 1996). Contesting the finding that boys appeared to reach a higher moral stage than girls, Carol Gilligan undertook studies which showed that women's moral development follows a different trajectory, with an emphasis on care and responsibility (Gilligan, 1982). While her work highlights a major bias in Kohlberg's model and adds some important dimensions to a framework of moral reasoning, it can similarly be criticised for the assumption that there is a single pattern of moral development shared by all women, ignoring the variations between women in different social networks. Marjorie Goodwin, for example, working with urban black girls in the USA, found that

girls, like boys, had extensive negotiation and competition skills, skills that Gilligan's work suggested that girls lacked (Goodwin, 1988).

In a review of literature on the effects on children of political violence, Andrew Dawes criticised studies in Northern Ireland and South Africa, which used Kohlberg's framework to assume that under conditions of political violence, levels of moral reasoning were lowered, since "children in political conflict situations are exposed to a moral discourse which is highly polarised and replete with militaristic rhetoric" (Dawes, 1994: 202). He argued that the relationship between political violence and moral orientation is more complex, and bound up with social context: "if at the centre of our investigations, we place the idea that moral conduct occurs within social contexts and is enacted by persons with social identities, our understanding is likely to be advanced" (Dawes, 1994: 216).

The work of Kohlberg and Gilligan alerts us to possible differences over time in the ways in which children think about moral issues. Applied to this study, these theories would predict that the younger children would be more likely to make judgements based on whether an action is likely to be rewarded or punished. Older children would be more likely to talk about loyalty and care of those close to them, or to refer to institutional rules and laws. It would be unlikely that children would have reached the post-conventional stage whereby universal ethical principles, like social conscience and the welfare of unknown others, take significance. In some respects, the differences between children in the three age groups did correspond broadly to these stages. So the 8 year old children were more likely to relate their justifications to their own immediate experience, saying for example that a parent should not hit a child "when it's his birthday" or "when you break a glass". Ryan, at 10 years old, argued that because you are safe from punishment, then fighting off the school premises is justified: "And outside the school grounds then you can, then it is okay to hit". The older children were more likely to refer to legislation and human rights, corresponding to the conventional level, but all age groups talked about the local 'laws' of school rules, suggesting that children at all ages operated at this level with the difference lying in children's experience rather than changes in internal processes. The 10 and 13 year old children showed more awareness of the needs of others, so 10 year olds justified the right of police or the President's bodyguards to use violence: "then it's okay to hit him, because you try to keep other people safe". They also considered the intention of the perpetrator, so whether the violent act was accidental or deliberate influenced the justice of

retaliation. The older children became more adept at anticipating consequences, so for example the 10 year old boys argued that men should not fight because their strength meant that “they will kill each other”.

There were also changes which do not fit neatly into stage theories. While adult authority and law and order were valued at all ages, the older children challenged the effectiveness of systems of law and order and the rights of adults to hit children: “they [police] don’t have the right to lift up their hands for other people – other children”. The older children were most likely to accept that there may be more than one morally correct position, as when Clinton said “you get different kinds of police that hits and do not hit” and that the moral justification of police using violent retribution on gangsters: “depends what they did and how they did it” or when Tariq argued that there are different, but equally justifiable, ways in which parents can raise their children, with or without corporal punishment: “that deal with them different”.

There were then some broad patterns relating to the age of children, but many similarities across the age groups and many variations within each age group, and the changes did not correspond neatly with Kohlbergian stages. The patterns that did emerge could be much more clearly connected with children’s experience of social relations than by internal processes, so in relating to others in their social worlds they developed more complex communication skills, so, for example, the older children often appeared more adept at linguistic gymnastics, or use of rhetoric, expressing the same moral stance with greater complexity at 13 than at 8. They developed more sophisticated awareness of the perspectives of others and they had more experience of discourses outside their immediate experience, such as the human rights discourse. For example, Luke’s argument that all forms of parental punishment are abuse could be interpreted as indicating that he is at the ‘post-conventional’ stage, using a universal ethical principle to challenge a local convention. But as I discussed in chapter 6, his perspective could be traced more clearly to his own experiences of violence, which have transformed his existing understandings. The 13 year old girls also discussed issues of human rights, through their social identities as coloured children. They reflected that their views were unlikely to be listened to because “they won’t listen because we’re only children”, and suggested that the President would not listen to them because he “just think of himself” and only gives jobs to “the natives”: “but also if there was a white President and then he give white people more privileges”. When I

asked what would happen if there was a coloured President, they said pragmatically: “we don’t know because we never got any”.

Through engaging in social interaction, perhaps in their families, these girls heard discussions about politics and racism and they blended these with their existing understandings to develop increasingly subtle views about rights and social relations. The social constructivist perspectives discussed at the start of this chapter offer a more persuasive way to interpret this talk than cognitive stage theories, since they show how children’s mental activity is acquired through their active participation in social interactions (Bruner and Haste, 1987; Dunn, 1988; Haste, 1992). This body of work has tended to focus on relationships within families, and families may well be the sources of these perspectives about racism and abuse, but key to these children’s perspectives is their own location within power relations and the more sociological concept of habitus helps to explain these complex processes. For example, when I discussed Luke’s views about abuse in chapter 6, I also pointed out that his own violent practices were not consistent with his views about adult violence, that his own gendered habitus engages in complex ways with different social fields, some of which generate violence, others which contest violence. For Luke, and the 13 year old girls, were positioned in particular ways by their social fields. The girls showed in this discussion an awareness of their subordination and “social suffering” as children and as coloured people (Bourdieu and et al, 1999). While their cognitive processes and their family relationships were important, their location within the structures of social relations was also critical to understanding their perspectives.

Children’s construction of rules about violence may vary because of changes in their bodies and brains, because of their relationships with family, friends and teachers, and their increasing sphere of experience, and they will change because of their location within fields of social relations, which position them in particular ways, constraining and enabling them in their efforts to make sense of violence. Understanding the shifting perspectives with age needs to encompass these multiple layers of experience.

Fragmented Narratives

Rules and narratives varied with age and with gender, but there were also variations between children during a group discussion and within the talk of a single child. Here the 10 year olds disagree about the best form of retribution:

- Cassiem:** Maybe it's okay to hit if someone break in your house and the police doesn't want to come then you can hit him.
- Jenny:** Okay. What's going to happen then do you think?
- Cassiem:** And then they'll go
- Ryan:** And never break in your house again.
- Cassiem:** Or when uh, you uh, uh a security there by the shop and someones trying to come there and take other people's money then it's okay to hit him, because you try to keep other people safe.
- Imraan:** No, you don't have to hit him, just say he must leave and they don't want to...
- Cassiem:** (*unclear*)
- Jenny:** Just a minute. Imraan, tell Cassiem what you said.
- Imraan:** If they don't want leave then he will just call other security guards they can call the police. The police will sort it out and you don't have hit them.
- Cassiem:** And what if the police doesn't come?
- Ryan:** Then it will go on.

While the rules are historically and socially rooted, this extract illustrates how their application is fluid and flexible. So while Imraan was able to draw on discourses of adult authority, Cassiem blended self-protection and cynicism about police effectiveness. Here, it was the instability of the retributory rule, in the failure of the police to protect, that generated a more violent response. Sometimes the same discourses wove through one child's talk on different themes, so Imraan often referred to adult authority for retribution, as he does in the extract above and in his support for the deterrent effect of retribution by the Principal: "other they're going to get *skelled* again". But at other times, like Cassiem, he expresses cynicism about the effectiveness of the penal system in providing effective retribution, so although he proposes jail as retribution for neighbourhood violence, he also told me that in jail: "They will just get more worse and worse". He talked with me about fighting back when faced with aggression, but also argued against fighting back: "you mustn't again interfere with them otherwise they're going to do it again."

Is the sense of coherence then an illusion? For Imraan, his various views made sense in his attempts to reconcile discourses about masculinity, obedience, the weakness of the penal system, caring for friends. It was not the actual coherence, but the striving for coherence that enabled him to select, blend and discard the multiple discourses he encountered. It is not without costs, and sometimes he seemed uneasy, as in his ambivalent words when he chose not to fight with Nicholas: "I did feel cross. I was going to hit them, 'cause they can't hit my friend." For Imraan, the process of striving for coherence enabled him to cope

with contradiction and disjunction. There were though times when children were unable to create coherent narratives through the rules of retaliation and retribution.

In chapter 4, I discussed the competition for ‘good’ stories about violence and how these sometimes linked to the magnetic attraction of violence. The best of the narratives used a range of narrative features, as in this extract, when Rushaanah tells the 8 year old girls’ group about how, following a robbery one night, her father and uncles resisted an attempted robbery the next night on the home they had been building:

Rushaanah: The last time before we was finished with our house behind our old house, and so somebody broke in and so they stole all the water pipes and things and so the next day so they came again for the geyser and so they uh, kicked off the burglar bar... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...and it’s the same people. First there was one and so there was two and so we saw the, there was a small footprint and a big footprint... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) and so we thought it was a drum that was moving in the house and, but so, because my daddy was listening to music, cassettes in the car and so when he came back and so we told him and so my uncle went with a gun... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...and so (*others interrupting*) and so the other one went with a, a iron in the car and my daddy went with a broomstick...

(*all giggle*)

Rushaanah: ...and so they went, there was nobody and so the, my daddy saw the cap of the boss. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) And so my daddy told my uncle he could have shoot through the wall, and so he said, no, no just now he damage the walls.

Jenny: You don’t want to damage the walls.

Rushaanah: So... (**Jenny:** So.) So my daddy and my brother and daddy’s boys started to sleep there.

Jenny: Yeah. Did they? That was when you were building the house was it? So then they had some people...

Rushaanah: So they were all three...

Jenny: So very...

Rushaanah: ...getting scared because...[....]...of the plastic was moving.

This narrative clearly demonstrates the retaliation rule, with a clear challenge in the form of the first robbery, followed by the family’s retaliation, in which the men finally successfully protect the family. Rushaanah uses narrative features like setting the scene, creating an atmosphere and sequencing very effectively but the most entertaining feature is her use of humour, making the incident almost like farce, with her father defending himself with a broom, her uncle not wanting to shoot the perpetrators in case he damages the new paint work and the men and boys in the family being fearful of the creaking plastic when they try to sleep in the new house. Humour and laughter can be an important feature of discussions about sensitive issues (Moran et al., 2003). For Rushaanah, it is possible that humour helped her to cope with the emotions that may have been generated by the incident. Over time, the incident seems to have become a family story. Of course, it is only in retrospect, once the endings are known, that such positioning is possible and I can write only of the stories children chose to tell, of the violence which may ‘attract’ storytelling because it

lends power to the family, not of the silences where violence has not been ‘controlled’ in this way.

There were though other narratives which contrast with these ‘good’ stories. These are difficult narratives to write about because the transcripts are fragmented and difficult to follow. 10 year old Melissa, who in group sessions was usually very quiet, talked with me at length about a fight between her family and another gang. Here is just a fragment of her narrative:

Melissa: Um... And there, then there was other children, like small children calling the whole time the big men names and they say, then they say, “Paul you know” and, then and so we just said, “Stop it” and so, so all the people came and so they did phone my mommy and so they, and so their mommies and their daddies and the whole Steak and Fantasy (?) was smoking and they want to break that house and smash it. And so my mommy came to... My mommy came to help fight and so they hit my brother with a *panga*, ja, and they hit my mommy with a stick or a *panga* on the back and then they hit my auntie who was pregnant with a spade at her back and then they wanted, and so they wanted to stab my uncle and *mos* hit him just like this with a marble stick and so, because they want to stab my uncle. Then they hit my cousin almost on the back of a neck and so my mommy went so, so they hit my cousin and so there was a other man behind my brother and so, and so he hit my brother’s arm with a *panga*. (**Jenny:** So who were these...) So my brother went to hospital. So we said he’s going to faint now. And so, and so he fainted, and so they had to carry him, and rush him to hospital, and so the ambulance came...

Many features of spoken narratives are missing from this story (Cameron, 2001). The narrative is not a response to one of my questions but flows on from another and there is no abstract offering clues as to the point of the story. The characters, location and time are not introduced, so as the listener I found it very difficult to become oriented. The story relies on the complicating action, the sequence of clauses which represent the order of events. The frequent repetition of the word ‘hit’ (repeated 7 times here) seems to illustrate the emotional impact of this violence, which went on and on, and the lack of distancing phrases gives a sense of the propinquity of events. In contrast to Rushaanah’s narrative, there is no humour, no scene setting, but a sequence of events which seem to tumble out in an unplanned torrent.

In another narrative, in which Robin told me about the murder of his uncle, even the sequence was missing and I had to piece together the story from clues he left. The conversation began with my asking him to tell me about his day yesterday:

Robin: We went to the funeral and so we came back.
Jenny: Okay. So first of all when you woke up in the morning, what happened then?
Robin: So we went to school, then after school then we went to the funeral.
Jenny: Okay. So whose was the funeral?
Robin: My uncle.
Jenny: Your uncle died?

Robin: They shot him.

It was some time later, after I had asked him about who shot his uncle, where it had happened and the feelings of those in his family, that he said:

Robin: ‘Cause there was blood.

Jenny: Pardon?

Robin: There was blood.

Jenny: Was there? Yeah, what, when he died?

Robin: (*nods*)

Jenny: Yeah.

Robin: So then he was dead.

Jenny: And did you see the blood?

Robin: In the game shop.

Jenny: It happened in the game shop? Were you there?

Robin: Yes.

Jenny: When it happened? So you were in the game shop?

Robin: Yes.

Jenny: With your uncle? And then ...

Robin: So I ran and so they shot me miss.

Jenny: They shot...?

Robin: They shot, they never get me *raak* [*hit the target*]. So my cousin did wake up and my cousin did hit him there for....

[...]

Robin: I ran to go fetch more big boys.

My own slowness and rather inane questions in this interchange demonstrate my perplexity. His comment about the blood made me wonder for the first time whether he had been present as there had been no earlier indication that he had witnessed this event, let alone been shot at and run for help. The talk of Robin and Melissa was quite different from Rushaanah's 'good' story and this may be because of the proximity – spatial, temporal and social - of the events narrated. Temporally, the funeral of Robin's uncle was only yesterday and Melissa did not say when the family fight happened, but later told me "they still want to kill my uncle and my auntie [...] There they're coming and they're going to hit our house also." Melissa's events involved her close family and even at home they were not safe. Both children were present during the violence, and witnessed family members being attacked: "and I was crying for my brother" (Melissa). Verbs connoting violence: "shot", "blood", "hit" repeatedly stress the ongoing impact of the events on the children and their sense of bewilderment and powerlessness. Though there was some effort in both families to retaliate, the children were unable to draw successfully on the rules of retribution or retaliation since the families had been unable to find resolutions which restore social relations. There had not been the passing of time to help create distance from these events, to select memories, to turn them into family stories, and so to regain some sense of control.

When people remember traumatic events, the memories are sometimes fragmented, and the stable sense of identity is threatened: “trauma survivors are frequently unable to construct narratives to make sense of themselves and their experiences; the sense of self collapses” (Brison 97, cited in McNay, 2000: 88). Two unconnected case studies of young South African women in contexts of social dislocation, have traced connections between fragmentation in the sense of self and social relations. In a historical study of the relationships between three women living in South Africa in the mid-twentieth century, Shula Marks documents how Lily Moya, a young Xhosa girl, experienced severe mental health problems following numerous social stresses, connected in part with colonialism. Reflecting on the connections between psychiatric and social ‘breakdown’, Shula Marks concludes: “despite the undoubtedly pathogenic nature of her environment, a frightening amalgam of the cruelties structured by colonialism and individual circumstances, to environment must be added the unknown quantity of her personal frailty” (Marks, 1987: 204). Lily’s alienation from her own culture, her lack of social support and perhaps her ‘personal frailty’ seem to have undermined her attempts to create coherent narratives of the self.

Patricia Henderson, in her anthropological study of children living in a township of Cape Town in the 1990s, discusses Lelezi, a 16 year old who developed an “affliction” in which she heard voices (Henderson, 1999). Lelezi’s experiences, like Lily’s, seem to have generated fragmented narratives: “an embodied frustration with trying to tie together the threads of different and conflicting social contexts” (Henderson, 1999: 191). Both Henderson and Marks describe how the ‘symptoms’ were explained through *amafufunyana*, a form of spirit possession common in southern Africa, and Lily was diagnosed within a western medical model as schizophrenic. These diagnoses are imposed forms of coherence, interpellations into particular narrations. But both authors also linked the fragility of mental health with the fragility of social relationships in a context of social discontinuity and institutional incoherence.

Striving for coherent narratives enables children to make sense of violence. Violence can though threaten that process, as it seems to for Melissa and Robin, generating fragmented narratives. I discussed earlier studies that have shown how disjunctions between self-identity and material conditions can generate violent rage (Moore, 1994; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997; Ray, Smith and Wastell, 2003). Could it be that while for some

children, fragmentation may generate shame and rage, for others, that rage turns inwards, fragmenting the sense of self? Studies have found that, following exposure to violence, girls are more likely to internalise pain, exhibiting depressive symptoms, while boys may externalise pain, participating in aggressive acts (Lorion and Saltzman, 1993; Seedat et al., 2004). Local constructions of femininity which stress compliance, caring and connectedness, and tough masculinity, construct rules and narratives in overlapping but different ways within a violent neighbourhood. When violence disrupts these social identities, could fragmentation of the self and rage be possible consequences? Breakdowns in mental health and violent rage were not features of this study, but do the ways in which the younger children strove for coherence shed some light on the processes by which children may be resilient, and the ways in which violence sometimes threatens this resilience? These fragmented narratives illustrate both the importance of narrative in rendering coherent our experience, and also how violence can threaten that coherence despite the rules of retaliation and retribution.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the concept of coherence to try to understand how children make sense of violence. In particular, I have explored how children use rules and narratives in their quest for coherence. They tell stories of retaliation and retribution, sometimes to justify violent practices and at other times, not to condone, but to find meaning in violence in the playground, classroom, at home or in the neighbourhood. While both rules cut across context, retaliation is repeated daily in performances in the playground in peer relations and retribution is repeated in regulatory adult-child relations. In these everyday performances, social relations are negotiated and reinforced. This striving for coherence generates a sense of control over events, a sense of agency. Through creating narratives, adjusting the rules, setting permeable boundaries which enable them to be applied in complex and nuanced ways, children are engaged in co-constructing the rules. But at the same time, the process of coherence can be seen as perpetuating the unequal social relations which generate violence. So, the emphasis on stories of men and boys protecting their families and friends valorises the performance of violent masculinities. Stories of retribution often cement the inequity of adult-child relations, making possible violent forms of punishment. Striving for coherence is then both enabling and constraining in children's engagements with violence.

In resourceful and creative ways, the children construct rules and narratives which bring coherence, helping them make sense of and come to terms with 'senseless' experiences. Sometimes, despite children's ingenuity in striving for coherence, they fail to make sense through their rules, because, like Melissa and Robin, there has been no time or space to distance themselves from the fragmenting consequences of violence. Sometimes there were tensions in the strivings for coherence, in coping with contradiction and disjunction in rules and narratives, and this could create feelings of uneasiness and shame. But perhaps too these tensions can be a source of change. Perhaps it is through helping children work with the contradictions and the incoherence that we can find non-violent sources of resilience. This is the theme of the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Changing Violent Relations

I opened this thesis with the question, what are the active and creative ways in which children engage with others when their social worlds are riven by violence? I suggested that answering this question can help us begin to change violent social relationships, and in this chapter I will try to consider how this may happen.

Structuralist and some poststructuralist analyses account for continuity in social relations more easily than they account for change, whether the continuity lies in the “interpellation” of ideology on the body through mechanisms of the state (Althusser, 1971), the “docile bodies” produced through social practices (Foucault, 1979) or through “performativity” – the daily repetition of practices, reinscribing onto bodies and so reproducing social orders (Butler, 1999). For Althusser, change happens at the level of state upheaval and there is little room for individual agency. For Butler and Foucault, the inherent instability of norms creates possibilities for resistance, subversion and change. Butler argues, for example, that the instability of dominant forms, revealed through performativity, generates the possibility for change at the margins: “it is this constitutive failure of the performative, this slippage between discursive command and its appropriated effect, which provides the linguistic occasion and index for a consequential disobedience” (Butler, 1993: 122). Lois McNay argues, however, that these poststructural theories produce a ‘negative paradigm’, and a partial account of agency, with the negative and uni-directional moment of subjection accorded theoretical privilege. Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ also accounts more easily for continuity than for change, since the habitus represents the ‘depositing’ or ‘sedimenting’ of historical relations within individual bodies (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). But McNay argues that since the habitus engages with multiple fields of social relations and since it anticipates as well as reacts, then there is space for improvisation, creation and invention: “individuals may respond in unanticipated and innovative ways which may hinder, reinforce or catalyse social change” (McNay, 2000: 5). Bourdieu’s recent work on social suffering, however, also shows that the proliferation of fields can enhance the awareness of powerlessness, multiplying the sites of suffering, subordination and continuities in gendered or class inequities (Bourdieu and et al, 1999).

In each of the fields explored in this study – the neighbourhood, the playground, the home and the school – violence has entered into children’s relationships and much of this violence can be traced to the historical legacy of violent and conflictual social relations in South Africa. But South Africa today is a nation in the process of radical change and transformation. How are these broad changes reflected in changes at a more local level? It is possible that when societies undergo rapid social change: "traditional practices may be transformed or even replaced from one generation to the next" (Miller & Goodnow, 1995: 12). In contrast, Bourdieu points out the “radical disjunction” that sometimes occurs when broader social relations change, but local practices remain unchanged – what he calls the “inertia” of the habitus:

Another example is given by historical conjunctures of a revolutionary nature in which changes in objective structures are so swift that agents whose mental structures have been molded by these prior structures become obsolete and act inopportunistically ... and at cross purposes (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 130).

Changing social formations do not then automatically translate into changing beliefs and practices at a local level, a point that has also been made with regard to masculinities in South Africa, where, though changing formations of masculinity can be identified following the end of apartheid, some of these “re-semble” previous forms (Unterhalter, 2004).

Despite the upheavals of recent years in South Africa, therefore, change in people’s beliefs and practices cannot be simply assumed. Yet, in the juxtaposition of old and new forms, and the multiple fields in which children engage, it is possible that, in engaging with complex and contradictory discourses within and between fields, there may be space through children’s habitus for changing engagements with violence.

In this chapter, I explore three social-psychological processes that have recurred in children’s talk about violence throughout this study: these are control, connection and coherence. Revisiting the analyses of earlier chapters, I will consider how these have been employed by children in their engagements with violence, drawing out in particular how they resist violence. I will go on to construct a framework to illustrate these relationships and to generate questions to inform interventions with children. Through identifying tensions in the framework, I will then explore goals for change. Reflecting on changes that took place in the course of the study, I consider how adults can support these change

processes, reflecting finally on the consequences for changing violent social relations in South Africa.

Control

In Uitsigberg, violence disempowered children, who already have little control in a world dominated by adults (Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup, 1985). Violence in the neighbourhood cast children as potential victims, rendering them helpless. Within relationships with adults, children's lives were regulated, sometimes through physical force. Violence in the playground determined where children could play. Sometimes this lack of control could ironically keep children safe, since they were protected from the dangers of resistance. Faiza's narrative of the murder of her uncle, who ran a pizza shop, illustrated these dangers:

Faiza: So he said he's fine, nothing can happen to him, so he said 'I'm not paying protection money unnecessary' and so – and so in the night and so they came to him. (**Jenny:** Yeah, yeah.) And so they shot him.

In refusing to comply with payment of 'protection' money to a local gang, Faiza's uncle lost his life. Passive compliance could be a safer option.

But compliance also endangered children. With adults, it created a relationship in which children were subordinate, expected to submit, which made children vulnerable to abuse. For girls in particular, compliance was incorporated within local discourses of femininity, leaving girls vulnerable to sexual attack (Wood, 2002; Dawes, Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004). For boys, dominant discourses of masculinity entailed strength, fighting skill and the ability to defend and protect others. Boys practised these skills frequently in the playground in retaliation for attacks or threats by others. In all fields, violence and conflict made these masculinities unattainable for many boys, and there were tensions for boys in their inability to exert control, which generated frustration and shame. For girls too there were tensions between the desire for agency and the expectation of compliance.

Managing these tensions sometimes generated practices that perpetuated violence, in, for example, supporting violent forms of retribution. But the tensions also generated resistance to violence. In chapter 4, for example, I discussed how, through their talk, children deconstructed the power of violence. For example, they wrested power from perpetrators by describing them as out of control, or as only able to injure the weakest members of

society. They reconstructed gangs as coercive and disempowering, offering entrapment rather than power or control.

While violence is associated with forms of power, this process of wresting control can be at best partial. While femininity is constructed as weak, compliant and passive, masculinity is constructed oppositionally as strong, aggressive and agentic. Agency is thus closely connected with violence. Children's talk goes some way towards shifting these relations in the neighbourhood context, but alternative constructions of agency are also needed in the relationships between boys and girls and between children and the adults closest to them. As discussed in chapter 6, there were times when children talked of more reciprocal relationships with parents, or with the teacher of the oldest class, with whom they felt listened to and valued, and in which violent punishment did not play a part. One cost for children in wresting more control however, may be that they take on some of the burden of responsibility for their safety.

Connection

As well as disempowering children, violence disconnects, excluding children from friendship groups, disrupting family relationships (Campbell, 1996). In this context, where children identified a need for support of friends in violent interactions, friendship, social support and inclusion had particular resonance. Friends provided social support through sharing company, offering advice, keeping secrets and listening when children talked about their problems. They 'stepped in' to break up fights and sometimes fought to protect each other. Families too were sites of support, with mothers in particular offering advice, managing daily routines, setting rules to keep children safe. Through connection within families and friendship groups, children resisted violence.

But, as with control, striving for connection generated tensions. In chapter 5, I showed how playground conflicts were frequently associated with negotiating inclusion in friendship groups, and in these negotiations children excluded 'others', generating conflict between girls and boys, and between children in Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking classes. Children navigated pathways between what it means to be a girl or boy, a daughter or son, a friend, an Afrikaans or an English speaker. In positioning an 'other' oppositionally as wild or violent, they found themselves positioned themselves as weak and helpless, and in re-

positioning themselves to more comfortable spaces, they re-positioned the other in more extreme ways.

These tensions generated separation, conflict and violence, but they also generated change. Girls, in particular, used verbal negotiations, “talking it out”, and when there were disagreements in group sessions, girls and boys were able to reach consensus. In a discussion about whether parents hitting children was abuse (discussed in chapter 6), some of the 13 year old boys tried to negotiate a compromise with Luke, who was adamant that all such hitting was abuse. Although all the other boys disagreed with Luke, they tried to find common ground:

- Charles:** Or another way without hitting a child you can also talk it out and then if he does it again, then maybe ground the child also.
- Lester:** Ja.
- Luke:** Now that’s what I’m trying to say but you can’t get in your thick skulls.
- ?+:** *(laughing)*
- Clinton:** But there’s different, different parent...
- Charles:** That deal with it.
- Clinton:** ...and different children.
- Jenny:** Yeah.
- Clinton:** ...that do their own thing.

A disagreement in the 10 year old girls’ group, about the relationship between terrorism and Islam (discussed in chapter 4) was similarly resolved through finding common ground, in this case in directing hostility away from groups within South Africa and towards the USA. In chapter 5, I discussed three occasions when, at the start of group sessions, children wanted to talk about conflicts between the group members. Though children disagreed about what had started the conflict, when processes of exclusion were reflected back to the group, children easily resolved the conflicts. They seemed able to understand the significance of inclusion for each other, and were quick to apologise when it became clear that a friend was feeling excluded. Although children frequently relied on adults to solve disputes, they were often able to negotiate and to compromise.

Sometimes children resisted the oppositional exclusion of the ‘other’, considering instead the injustice of exclusion. Ramona was able, for example, to associate what she saw as frustration and anger of the Afrikaans speakers, with the dominance of English within the school organisation: “It’s just English, English, English the whole time”, and Faiza viewed the practice of teasing employed by the English speakers as racist: “the English children they think they’re too right and then they’re being racist”. For these children, reflecting on the tensions generated by striving for connection enabled them to construct ways to resist

the processes of exclusion. But these were exceptions and for most, the legacy of racial, class and gender inequalities ran deep in the processes of exclusion.

Coherence

Violence can sometimes defy children's attempts to make sense of their social worlds, as illustrated in the fragmented narratives of violence involving Melissa's and Robin's families, discussed in chapter 7. Yet frequently, striving for coherence, through the construction of narratives and rules, gave children a sense of agency, of having some control over the violent neighbourhood, and so was a source of resilience.

While violence associated with power could attract, children constructed narratives and rules to resist this attraction and to emphasise repulsion. Rules about retaliation and retribution were used to justify forms of violence, but they were carefully bounded, rejecting extreme forms and restricting the circumstances in which physical force was sanctioned. Children rejected all forms of men's violence towards women, and engaged with discourses about human rights and equity. Narratives respecting adult authority in the field of the school or at home competed with narratives about adults as perpetrators of violence in the field of the neighbourhood. Narratives within a field also competed so, for example, in the playground field, narratives about masculine dominance through fighting competed with narratives of friendship involving sharing, trust and reciprocity.

Narratives of the past competed with narratives of the present, and also of the future. Several studies have observed that living in war torn or high-violence communities can generate pessimism about the future (Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow, 1991; Cairns and Dawes, 1996; Jenkins and Bell, 1997; Garbarino, 1999). But in this study children were optimistic about their own futures – imagining themselves as mechanics or drivers (9), doctors or nurses (9), hairdressers and shop assistants (6), lawyers (4), air hostesses (3) or teachers (3). Children's future imaginings combined dreams and practicalities:

- Clinton:** I want to be a stockcar racer. That is my...
Jenny: Really?
Clinton:that is my dream and the, mostly, either a motorbike racer or a V-12... (**Jenny:** Mm mm.)
....racer, and I want to own one day my own panelbeating auto shop. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) That is my
dreams.
Jenny: So you'd do both those things?
Clinton: Ja. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) My uncle, he's, he's a manager of a, of a panelbeating shop, so he told me all
what you need and that, so I'm like convinced now what I must need and what I must do... (**Jenny:**
Yeah.) ...to succeed this dream.

Just before this discussion, Clinton had told me:

Clinton: Now there's one boy in Stonecroft, he's a , he's also a gangster. (Jenny: Mm.) So he asked me if I like want to be in his gang. (Jenny: Yeah.) So I said no. Why, because what's the use of being in a gang if you can be strong.. (Jenny: Yeah.) ...and like do stuff for yourself if you're not a gangster.

When Clinton reflected on whether to join a gang, he was managing tensions in constructing a coherent sense of self, perhaps considering the control and connection that being in a gang could offer, but at the same time perhaps he was reflecting on his future imaginings of himself running a panel beating business or driving fast cars – being “strong” without violence. While dominant narratives of masculinity were heavily imbued with the potential to use violence, narratives for the future entailed responsibility to have a steady job and earn money, as well as freedom and ambition. These future imaginings, seen in the context of striving for coherent selfhood, could be seen as competing with and resisting violent masculinities.

But there were fears for the future, particularly around high school narratives, as discussed here with the 13 year old girls:

Jenny: And what are you worried about at high school?

?: That I'm going to change.

?: And me.

[...]

Jenny: Mm. Other people worried that they might change? (*Ramona nods*) You mean because of being influenced by other people at the school?

Ramona: 'Cause I've got a lot of friends there.

Jenny: Yeah.

Ramona: And all of them's changed already.

Jenny: Really. How have they changed?

Shandre: (*mumble*)...friends

Ramona: Exactly they have...

Jacqueline: And smoking.

?: Mm.

Ramona: And some of them go to discos every day and that.

Shandre: Every weekend.

Fatima: Every week, every day – every weekend.

Narratives of high school children were associated with endangering practices, which clearly conflicted with the discourse of compliance so familiar to girl children. Girls were anxious about their ability to resist these discourses, saying “I hope I don't change in a bad way”. There were then tensions in their future imaginings. Narratives of the self involve striving for coherence across fields, and sometimes managing contradictions within a field, but also striving for coherence over time. The neighbourhood violence and the multiple social pressures experienced by families in Uitsigberg did not seem to have dampened

children's hopes for the future in the longer term, but the tensions in striving for coherence were clearly evident in the anxieties of the 13 year olds for the years immediately ahead.

In making choices between these multiple narratives, tensions are inevitable, and it is the management of these tensions that both perpetuates and resists violence. The rules of retaliation and retribution, for example, are constructed to resist violence, whether retaliating when attacked in the playground, or punishing violent crime in the neighbourhood. But, as I showed in chapter 7, both rules often take violent forms, thus perpetuating relationships in which the ability to use force is a source of power.

A Framework of Children's Engagements with Violence

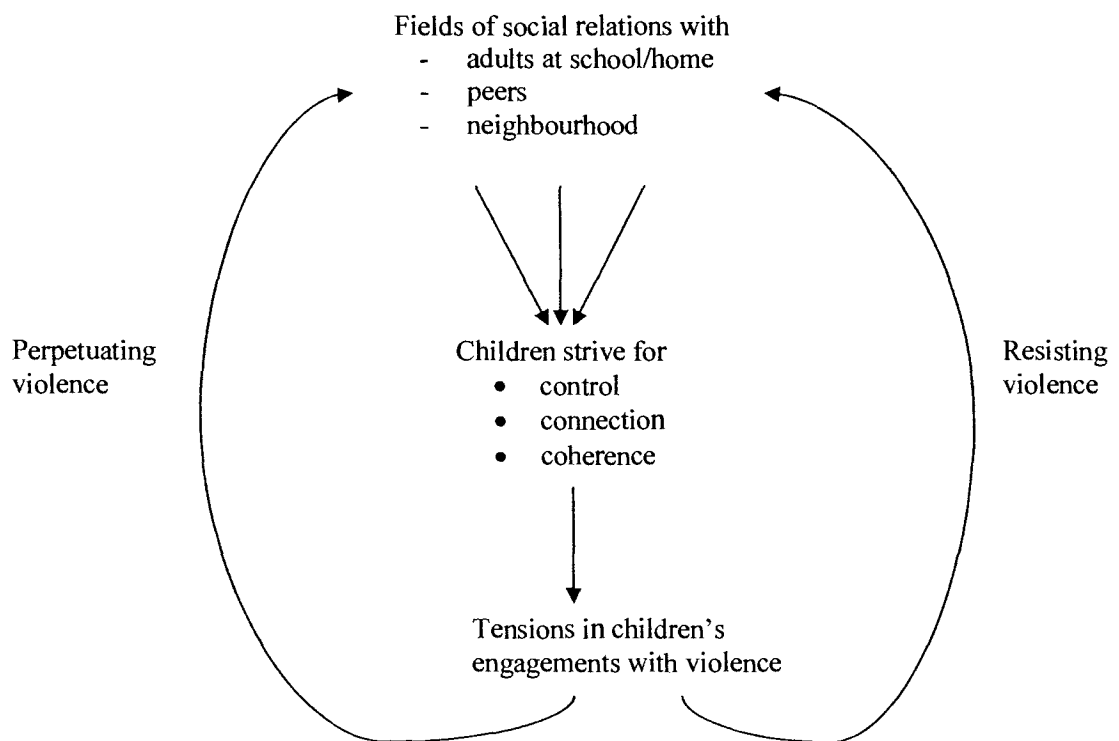


Figure 5:
A Framework of Children's Engagements with Violence

Striving for control, connection and coherence have emerged in this study as key processes through which children made sense of violence. At the risk of over-simplifying the complex processes, I have constructed a framework to illustrate how they may work (*figure 5*).

The framework draws on Bourdieu's habitus-field relation to stress how the social-psychological processes of control, connection and coherence, associated here with the habitus, are embedded in and expressed through the broader social fields of home, school, playground and neighbourhood (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Through these processes, children tried to make sense of, and so gain some agency in relation to violence in the fields. They generated rules and narratives to bring *coherence*. They strove for *connection*, to belong to networks of people who supported and protected them. They strove for *control*, to have some kind of agency in managing social relationships. But striving for control, connection and coherence generated tensions, conflicts and contradictions within and between fields, and in relation to the past, present and future. Some studies have suggested that such tensions can create shame, rage and violence (Ray, Smith and Wastell, 2003), but this seems to belie the inevitability of ambiguity and contradiction in our lives, and the children in this study navigated these tensions with skill. There were sometimes traces of discomfort and shame, but these did not in this study generate rage. However, in managing the tensions, children sometimes colluded with, reproduced and perpetuated processes of exclusion, conflict and violence, and inequitable social relations. The habitus embodies, reinforces and conserves the social order, but it is also generative and has the potential to transform the social field. In their strivings for control, connection and coherence and the tensions which emerged from these strivings, children also found ways to contest violent social relations.

The challenge for interventions supporting children in violent contexts is to build on these ways of contesting violence, to help children to navigate these tensions in ways which do not perpetuate, but which contest violence. The framework generates questions which could valuably inform and underpin intervention:

- What are the key social fields in which children live and how does violence enter these fields?

- How do children strive for control, connection and coherence in these social relations?
- What are the tensions in these strivings and how do these tensions sometimes perpetuate violence?
- What are the ways in which children are already changing violent relations?
- How can interventions work with children to construct social relations with control, connection and coherence which might reduce the possibility of violence?

In this study, particular areas of tension constrained children's efforts to resist violence and I will explore these in greater depth, since they may be critical for intervening with children to change violent social relations. They include disrupting the association between violence, agency and power; loosening the coupling of regulation and protection, especially forms of regulation which employ violence; challenging oppositional processes of exclusion; and finally, revising rules of retaliation and retribution. Perhaps it is through helping children work with the tensions, the contradictions and the incoherence that we can find non-violent sources of resilience. For this group of children, there were ways in which the research process itself seems to have begun to address these tensions and I will reflect on this before considering the implications for interventions. In the discussion I will draw out how processes that emerged in the research might help form other interventions.

Navigating the Tensions further through the Research Process

Over the eight month period of school-based research, there were some changes in children's perspectives. These may have been connected with experience and maturation, but they were also connected with their participation in the research. Since talk is a form of action, it is not surprising that the process of talking about violence changed perspectives: "the holding of views is also a form of thinking, not just a product of thinking already occurred. So a family arguing is joint engagement in the process of thinking about the topic in question" (Billig, 1991: 191). Through their reflections as they articulated experiences and perspectives, through dialogue and discussion with me and with each other, and through group participation, children sometimes changed their ways of making sense of violence. In that sense, the research itself inadvertently became a form of intervention. I will consider four ways in which the research began to address the tensions

identified above: through generating alternative sources of agency, more reciprocal adult-child relations, connections between children, and coherence without violence.

Seeking alternative sources of agency

A key goal of intervention stemming from this study would be to disrupt the association between violence, agency and power. This means challenging for example, violence as a way to solve problems, the status for boys of strength and fighting skill, and the association of femininity and helplessness. It means helping children to find non-violent sources of agency.

In the course of the research, children's talk about solving violence-related problems became increasingly agentic. Some of the post-group interview questions repeated questions from pre-group interviews, enabling me to explore changes in perspectives in the course of the research. There were clear changes over time in children's responses to questions about how to solve problems of fighting in the playground, and of gangs in the neighbourhood. For both questions, when asked at the post-group interview, children were much more likely to offer talk as a solution to the problems. When in the initial interviews I asked how to stop problems of fighting in the playground, 22 children talked about forms of 'skelling' by an adult, whereas only 7 children suggested this in the post-group interview. In contrast, 'talking it out' was mentioned by 4 children at the initial interview compared with 26 at the post-group interview:

Jenny: And what could stop these kind of problems happening?

Olette: Of saying please don't do it because I don't like that and I want you to stop doing it.

Cassiem: They must just talk to one another, talk about and then they can be friends again.

A similar shift took place in talk about how to solve problems of gangs in the neighbourhood, with none of the children suggesting talk or verbal persuasion in the initial interviews, compared with 17 in the post-group interviews.

In the playground context, the shift in control or agency from adult to child was marked, with children seeing themselves as much more able to solve the problems without adult intervention, but this did not seem to be the case in the neighbourhood. Similar numbers of children mentioned police or jail as possible ways of solving neighbourhood problems in the pre- and post-group interviews (14 and 16), and similar numbers also expressed doubt that there was any solution to these problems (7 and 6). What seemed to change was the

belief that gang members, through support of others, might be able to find alternative sources of agency:

- Jenny:** And what could stop that kind of problem?
Jacqueline: Maybe if they should tell someone older who can handle the problem and then... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...maybe they can help and they don't need to go out and get – do... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...mischief.
Jenny: So when you say someone older, do you mean another grownup or it could be...?
Jacqueline: It can be your friend also but that can handle it.
Jenny: Yeah. Or maybe a friend who is a little bit older?
Jacqueline: Yes. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) 'Cause most children don't always want to talk to grownups.

For Jacqueline, talking with a friend or trusted adult could help a child with their own decision-making. Cassiem and Clinton also proposed talking with adults, suggesting adults with particular authority or expertise:

- Jenny:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay and what could stop that kind of problem happening?
Cassiem: They must just – no one can do nothing about it, they must just – they must just stop it by themselves.
Jenny: Mmm. And what could help them to do that?
Cassiem: They can go to a social worker or whatever... (**Jenny:** M-m.) ...then maybe that person can help him... (**Jenny:** Yeah.)...get out of that stuff and... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...and not be a gangster anymore.
Jenny: So what would the social worker do, do you think? I know...
Cassiem: He will just talk...
Jenny: ...it's a hard question.
Cassiem: ...to him.
Jenny: Yeah. And maybe make him think or...
Cassiem: Yes. Then he will maybe come right.

Clinton: Uh, if-if-if – how can I say – if the police will or the headmaster or the Government can just get all the gangsters into one group and maybe they can talk them out of it. (**Jenny:** Mm.) Talk some sense into them. I reckon it's like that. If you can make it so.

Tariq's reflections also emphasised talking with others, though his forms of persuasion were closely linked to retribution:

- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay. What could stop those kind of problems?
Tariq: To stop a gangster is difficult to get out of a gang.
Jenny: Yeah.
Tariq: As Luke explained. And I don't know how you're going to get out because you won't get out of a gang alive if you want to be and stop. Now if you want to stop fighting you must stop going out a gang a friend might come and you say if you're going to go in a gang then I won't be with you – won't be your friend anymore...
Jenny: Mm.
Tariq: ...and he can threaten you also.
Jenny: Yeah. And if you were going to like – if, say the Government came along and said, what shall we do to stop the gangs – what would you say to them?
Tariq: I'd say go into each and everyone's house and just tell them if we catch you again we'll take you – we'll send you all to prison and you should bring the death sentence back.

In these extracts, the children seem to be acknowledging the complexity of the problems, but for all of them there is a belief in the persuasive potential of talk, and connection, as well as agency, is central.

There may be a number of reasons for these changes. Perhaps the interview context was different, or they knew me well enough by the later interviews to anticipate the kind of responses I might welcome (despite my attempts at impartiality). A closer look at the responses in the post-group interviews shows how children's responses often echoed or developed from group discussions. So, Odette's solution above to playground fights closely resembles the solutions generated in a group discussion about her own conflict with other group members. Lester seems to be echoing Clinton's words from an earlier group discussion when he proposes redistributing the police service:

Lester: Bring the police, here in the – you see the White areas there's a lot of police there - in the Coloured areas there's not a lot of police here.

Faiza's suggestion that a gangster can ask his friends for help when "they don't want to shoot people anymore... they want to be a normal person" reminds me of an earlier role play about gang practices.

If I had asked children (as I did naively on occasion) if they had changed their mind or learned anything new, they would probably have denied it. They did not just discard their former views, but seemed to develop and reconstruct them. So Louise at the pre-group interview proposed police and jail as the solution but in the post-group interview, expressed a different view:

Jenny: What could stop those kind of problems?

Louise: By telling the people that it's dangerous to shoot around... (**Jenny:** M-m.) ...and people go quick dead and then they will go to jail for all that.

Jenny: And who must tell them that then?

Louise: The children or the parents or the people.

Louise would be unlikely to view this as a change of opinion, but what seems to be happening is that she has constructed an additional layer of meaning. She is reconstructing the narrative for the gangster. Shanelle does something similar in this extract:

Shanelle: And somebody - somebody can warn them and can put signs up and the people will believe it and they won't – then it won't be so much crime anymore.

Jenny: Okay, what could it say on the signs do you think?

Shanelle: Don't be gangsters it's – it's dangerous.

Jenny: M-m.

Shanelle: Or the people can die, there's too much people dying.

Jenny: Yeah.

Shanelle: And crime is not fun.

Here the community, in creating signs, reconstruct the narratives available for gangsters. Shanelle is combining control, connection and coherence – it is the gang member who must

decide to change, through heeding the narratives offered by the neighbourhood, in which they belong.

Throughout these examples, there are shifts in the sources of agency, with verbal reasoning and problem solving and social support increasingly seen as sources of agency for girls and boys, victims and perpetrators.

Seeking more reciprocal adult-child relations

A second goal of interventions arising from this study would be to loosen the coupling of regulation and protection, especially forms of regulation which employ violence. This means creating more reciprocal adult-child relations in which children share some responsibility for their own safety.

As discussed in chapter 3, one of my intentions in using participatory research methods was to create a more dialogic research relationship or 'research conversation' (Mayall, 2000), in which children's perspectives were actively used to shape the research process (Christensen and James, 2000) and the power differential between myself, as adult researcher, and children was reduced. This shifting of agency from adult to child may have contributed to the changing perspectives discussed above, with children increasingly viewing themselves as able to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Through the group structure and organisation and through group activities designed to be action-oriented, a consequence may have been an increase in children's expectations that their perspectives will be listened to and acted upon by adults.

For example, children constructed plans to improve their own play space. Their proposals related to improving the environment (planting grass, providing litter bins), distribution of space (opening access to the field which was out of bounds at this time, designating areas for ball games or games requiring playground markings), provision of equipment (climbing or access to PT equipment) (*Appendix 14*). Though the children were unused to being asked their opinions as part of school decision making, their ideas were mostly highly practical and low cost, with suggestions for fund raising, rules and procedures for borrowing equipment, signs to be made by children. Only one group mentioned security (suggesting a security camera and automatic gates), reinforcing the perspective that school is seen as a relatively safe context. A weakness of the activity was that it was planned by me without

consultation with school staff, so although it reflected the priorities of the children, I could not anticipate any commitment to change on the part of teachers and indeed could rather predict some suspicion of my interference in school affairs. The children, possibly with similar doubts, refused to take their suggestions to the Principal, but enthusiastically proposed that I do so on their behalf. I had two subsequent meetings with the Principal, who then made an announcement in assembly and soon after, access to the field was re-established, but there was no feedback to me about whether this was directly connected with the intervention. The timing though suggests a relationship, and I suspect that the absence of an explicit link was designed to position the principal as in control of decisions and to, quite reasonably, marginalise me, though at the same time marginalising children, and reaffirming the regulatory adult-child relationship.

This then illustrates a key dilemma of participatory research, since, in its goal of empowering usually silenced voices, it threatens existing power relations. One effect of threats to these relations, discussed in chapter 6, is a firming up of borders, or reinforcing of existing social relations, but this research has also illustrated how it is at these borders or points of tension that change can happen, so perhaps the risks are worthwhile. And indeed in this case, the children were able to play again in the field, though not to take credit for it.

A second action-oriented activity involved groups generating ‘messages’ to make the neighbourhood a safer place (*Appendix 15*). Like the ideas for playground improvements, there were some practical suggestions – so children were advised to fetch help from a “responsible and reliable person” if they were abused, to avoid the company of gangsters and to refuse drugs, or sweets from strangers. Parents were advised not to smoke and drink in front of children, to protect the home with burglar bars and dogs and “don’t come out when gangs are around or you will get hurt”. Children demanded quicker response from the police service which “must be just as good here as in the white areas” and proposed restricting access to guns. They also constructed more general messages about respect and care – so children should “respect yourselves”, parents should “be careful with the children”, police should stop “being scared” of gangsters and the Government should “listen to the children”. Adults were still awarded a regulatory role, but within this narrative children were granted much more agency, with an emphasis on value, respect and rights.

Some of the messages for violence prevention employed violence as a form of resistance, in, for example, the message to the Government to “bring back the death sentence”, or to parents that: “you should have a weapon”. I was then faced with a dilemma about conveying messages with which I disagreed. In the end, I passed on the messages to teachers and to the NGO staff, with a somewhat treacherous disclaimer that “these are the young people’s messages, and do not necessarily reflect my views”. In the end therefore, I was reluctant to give up control as an adult over the research.

In planning these activities, my intention had been to increase children’s agency, but I had not really anticipated the obvious outcome that I would at the same time be reducing the control of adults – both teachers and myself. Involving children in setting ground rules also shifted these power dynamics, but with one group (the 8 year old boys), my approach created difficulties for me in behaviour management and I found myself positioned again as regulator. Shifting control a little in the direction of children disrupts the equilibrium and the reverberations may extend beyond the safety of the research room, unsettling both adults and children. Since regulation is bound up with protection, then what is crucial in making this shift is not to leave children unprotected. But, in the end, more reciprocal relationships can protect children from violence and abuse.

Building connections

A third goal of interventions would be to challenge the oppositional processes of exclusion. This means supporting the sense of belonging, or inclusion within peer groups, since it is in the tensions and instabilities of inclusion that exclusion processes arise. It also means challenging the exclusion of ‘others’ – girls or boys, Afrikaans speakers or children who ‘cross’ boundaries.

When, in the post-group interviews, I asked children what they had enjoyed, often they talked about relationships. Younger children referred to their enjoyment of adult company, while the older children talked more about their relationships with each other:

Jacqueline: We never argue, like say if you used to work in the class then somebody always trying to be bossy, but nobody wanted to be bossy, all of us was just.

Jenny: Why do you think that was?

Jacqueline: I don’t know, maybe because we’re all friends.

Luke: We were talking open to one another.

Children saw the groups as facilitating cooperation, fairness and openness. The group structure fostered a strong sense of pride and belonging. Although children invited to participate were already friends, the invitation seemed to represent public acknowledgement and endorsement of the friendship group.

In chapter 5, I proposed strengthening connections that are not constructed in opposition to an excluded 'other', but whether the group identity fostered in this study influenced processes of exclusion is difficult to evaluate. I did not ask in the post-group interviews specific questions to illuminate changes in the exclusion of the 'other', but there did seem to be some changes in the relationships between boys and girls in the oldest groups. In the post-group interviews, several of the oldest girls and boys reflected that they were becoming more interested in spending time together. While Clinton put this down to their age: "we're hitting at that stage now", Luke suggested several reasons:

Jenny: Do you think it's changed at all since being in the group, do you think the girls in the group and the boys in the group have changed at all or?

Luke: Ja. Change – we changed a lot...

Jenny: ...from being in the group.

Luke: ...we're more closer now.

Jenny: Is that because of being in the group?

Luke: Yes, I think that and of the, of the-the prom also.

Jenny: Yeah.

Luke: We even - we closer now.

Jenny: Yeah. So part of it's the prom and your age and...

Luke: Ja.

Jenny: ...that kind of stuff and part of it is...

Luke: And being in the group.

Their teacher too noticed a change during these months:

Agnes: The girls and boys seem to have relationships. Now they are very good friends. Those groups, I noticed definitely because they're the ones who talk a lot. The boys have calmed down a lot, they are more prepared to sit. They are quite close now. Before they go home they must shake hands or hit each other or do those funny things that they do. Initially when they year started, they were scared, self-conscious about their bodies, but they've gotten used to each other more.

Their awareness of the imminent transition to high school, marked by the school dance (prom), seemed to offer them new ways of relating, but the particular development of relationships between the children in the two groups may also have been linked to their shared, through separate, engagement in the research process. This desire for connection seemed quite fragile, still often expressed through boys' physical interference, but there was clearly some erosion of the gendered exclusion, in part through the connections established through research participation. A danger of this, discussed in chapter 3, was the creation of a new social grouping which excluded all those not participating in the research.

Co-constructing coherence without violence

The final goal for interventions would be to revise the rules of retaliation and retribution, so that children construct narratives and rules which resist, rather than perpetuate violence.

I have already discussed children's reconstruction, in post-group interviews, of narratives about solving problems of violence. Children talked less of retaliation in the playground and more of solving problems through talk, and in the neighbourhood, added to retribution was a layer of verbal reasoning. A group activity which was particularly effective in encouraging children to co-construct narratives was the performance by each group of a 5 minute play or presentation about children in the neighbourhood or playground. The performances, which marked the end of our work together, were videoed and shared with the other research participants. The activity proved highly effective as a way to hand over control to the children for translating reflections which had been private to the group into more public co-constructed narratives (*Appendix 16*). The youngest groups, using puppets and masks they had made, constructed plays about friendship, conflict and sharing. The 10 year olds role played narratives with the messages "Watch out for gangsters" and "There's more to life than being a gangster". The oldest groups directed their presentations to a teenage audience, with messages about avoiding danger. The 13 year old girls, particularly sensitive, as I discussed above, to the temptations of sex, drugs and gangsterism they associated with high schools, created a play called: "Don't drop your standards for others", and ended the play with these messages for other children:

*Don't drop your standards for anybody.
Think twice.
It's your choice.
Don't turn your back on your friends...
Because you'll need them in the end.
Life is precious.
And that's the end.*

The process of co-constructing these narratives seems, at least for some groups, to have generated coherence, a strong sense of control or agency and an affirmation of their inclusion or connection with the research.

Sometimes it was not the group participation, but the one-to-one discussions with me that seemed to help children construct more coherent narratives, particularly when children were positioned very close to the violence and, like the fragmented narratives of Melissa

and Robin discussed in chapter 7, when they had not been able to explain the violence within existing rules and narratives. During the research period, Richard talked with me four times about an incident when his 12 year old sister was gang raped. The first time was during the pre-group interview:

- Jenny:** And how do you make sure you're safe on the way to school?
Richard: I don't go here by the river side... (Jenny: Yeah.) ...because they did already rob, rob my sister.
Jenny: Did they? What happened when they robbed your sister?
Richard: They cut open her pantyhose.
Jenny: Right. Okay. How old's your sister?
Richard: Twelve.
Jenny: Okay. And so you don't walk that way, so you stay safe by walking the other way, yeah?
Richard: (nods)

Three months later, during a group session, when we were talking about problems in the neighbourhood, Richard brought up the incident again:

- Richard:** And Jenny they raped my sister.
[interruption by another child]
Richard: Jenny, and they did rape my sister.
Jenny: They raped your sister?
Richard: Ja. Here, here in the corner here...
Jenny: Did they?
Richard: ...by the school.
[unclear section involving several children talking]
Richard: ...cause they did ask for a little water, so she didn't want to so then they did, (mumble) I get you again. (Jenny: Yeah.) And they get her. So they take her to there, by the corner..
?: *(overtalking)..in there.*
Jenny: Yeah. *[name of local street]?*
Richard: No.
Jenny: Different one?
Richard: You see where's the grass there?
Jenny: Yeah. I know.
Richard: In the field. They take her there.
Jenny: So they asked her for water first of all did they?
Richard: Uh-uh, (nods) so they so did *dingese [Afrikaans – 'thingie']* her there...
?: Rape.
Richard: ...so she, so she screamed loud so that other auntie said leave him, leave her alone, so they did, and he ran away.
[interruption]
Richard: So my daddy go fetch her.
Jenny: So she ran away and your daddy went and fetched her. Did they ever find the people who did it?
Richard: And then she couldn't walk.

The third time Richard returned to the incident was soon after, in the post-group interview:

- Jenny:** Or why does somebody decide to join a gang?
Richard: 'Cause the gangsters tell the good children, they must join it.
Jenny: And then what do the good children - have to join a gang?
Richard: Yes.
Jenny: Okay. And...
Richard: Like my sister, when they did rape her, so they said come.
Jenny: And did they say she must join a gang?
Richard: M-m. They say "get in the car..."
Jenny: Oh I see.
Richard: ...my boys will rape you"

Jenny: Okay.
Richard: So they did rape her there and they *dinges* in the field.

Later during this interview, I raised the subject again, in order to discuss with Richard the support his sister had been given following the incident:

Jenny: And you've told me quite a lot about your sister. And did she go to the hospital or to the doctor after that happened?
Richard: Ja, to the hospital but the hospital couldn't help her. So the other man did come pray for her. (*mumbling sentence*)
Jenny: Okay. And did she feel a little bit better then, do you think after that?
Richard: Yes.
Jenny: Yeah.
Richard: She couldn't walk.
Jenny: She didn't walk after that? And did the police come?
Richard: The police did only get one.
Jenny: Only got one of the people who did it?
Richard: (*no verbal response*)
Jenny: Is that right?
Richard: (*no verbal response - nods*)
Jenny: Yeah. And did she have someone she could talk to all about it?
Richard: No.
Jenny: Only someone at home?
Richard: Yes.
Jenny: Who did she talk to?
Richard: To my mommy.
Jenny: To your mommy yeah. That's good. And was it a long time ago or just a little time ago?
Richard: A little.
Jenny: A little time ago and she was about twelve was she?
Richard: No. Only..(*mumble*)
Jenny: Pardon?
Richard: 'Cause they did ask for a little water, and she say no also, so she did swear them out.
Jenny: Yeah. I bet she did.
Richard: And he said, "I'm going to get you again."

Three of the four times we talked about this incident were generated by Richard, and did not seem to be direct responses to questions, but were prompted by talk on similar themes. The first time he used the word 'rob', though his graphic description of the cutting of the panty-hose alerted me to the likelihood of rape. On the second occasion, the 8 year old boys in the group had already mentioned the word rape in a discussion about neighbourhood problems, and this may have given him both the vocabulary and the confidence to raise the topic again. On this occasion his account was more detailed, with a clear sequential narrative, despite several interruptions by other children in the group. His introduction to the subject, twice saying my name, suggests that the group setting may have been less significant to him than the opportunity to talk again with me, as a trusted adult, about the incident. On this occasion, and on both occasions when we talked about the incident during the post-group interview, he describes how the men coerced his sister, asking her for water and then threatening her. It is this coercion, and that she was unable to walk after the rape, that seemed to haunt him, perhaps because of the powerlessness forced

on his sister. The final conversation is a little different as it was begun by me, with the intention of following up issues of care and support.

There are changes over time in these conversations with Richard, with clearer narratives after the first telling. The differences in the conversations may partly reflect my own changing responses, so that in the second telling of the story, my talk seems to be more facilitative. To an extent, both of us seemed to be grappling with ways to deal with this tragic and disturbing incident. Richard's choice to tell me repeatedly about the incident suggests that for him there was some value in the telling of his story and, given the increasing coherence in his accounts, perhaps the retelling helped him to feel some sort of agency over his interpretation of a senseless act of violence. Whether or not such narratives entail violent retaliation and retribution may depend on the nature of support by those sharing in the co-construction.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored ways in which children in Uitsigberg contributed to changing violent relations through their management of tensions arising in their strivings for control, connection and coherence. I considered first how they managed tensions in their relations with adults, children and the neighbourhood and then how the research process itself aided this. Reflecting on the research as an intervention - sometimes in planned ways, sometimes unintentionally - generates insights for the development of violence prevention strategies. Encouragement of children's active participation can foster a sense of control and agency. Working with collaborative groups can develop problem solving and negotiation skills and a sense of connection. Building on children's existing knowledges and co-creating non-violent rules and narratives can generate coherence. These methods - of active learning through social relationships - are closely allied to social constructivist models of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1990; Corsaro and Miller, 1992), and have clear potential applications for developing violence prevention strategies with children. It is important not to overstate the changes observed, nor to ignore the continuing tensions and dilemmas that persisted in the course of the research. The changes in children's talk over time may not translate into action, or into other arenas in their lives, they may not persist over time. But within this context, and at that moment in time, the participation in research seems to have begun to address the tensions relating to control,

coherence and connection, and to have enabled children to construct more nuanced and reflective ways of resisting violence.

The arrows of the framework (*figure 5*) show how fields influence children's habitus, but also how children's beliefs and practices feed back into the broader social fields, that children can contribute to social change. I have shown how the research process facilitated this process, but out of the safety of the school room in which we worked, where children exercised little power, I wonder how possible it is for these change processes to operate? While it may be possible for children to co-construct less violent ways of engaging with others, throughout this thesis I have shown how deeply rooted, historically constituted beliefs and practices continue to feed into children's social relationships, despite momentous changes in the South African political context.

Luke's reflections on change in relation to gangsterism, discussed in the post-group interview, point to a similar dilemma:

- Luke:** And then it's just because most of the children think that it's cool to be a gangster. (**Jenny:** Mm.) Most of them don't know what it is to be a gangster, what you have to go through to be a gangster. (**Jenny:** Mm.) Like I know I was friends with that – it was normal boys like us we're normal boys we're not still *skollies*, but our friends that was – what was normal boys but turned to *skollies* they told me what they do. Some of them they beat you up just to come into the gang and then sometimes you must do something like rob... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ...rob someone, to come in a gang.
- Jenny:** So do you think - if your friends who are *skollies* if they had known before all about what it's like to be in a gang, would they still have joined the gang?
- Luke:** I don't think so.
- Jenny:** So do you think one of the keys there, one of the solutions is to – to tell people what it really means or more about it?
- Luke:** Yes.
- Jenny:** Do you think people will be less likely to join the gangs if they knew?
- Luke:** Ja, most of the people here in Steenberg and Retreat they know what, how it is to be a gangster because most of these grownups here was gangsters already. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Because they were always – most of the grownups around here that I know they'll talk to me about becoming a gangster. My teacher also. I don't think a day that doesn't go past that she doesn't talk to me about doing drugs and gangsterism.
- Jenny:** Ha. So what would stop – what will stop you from getting into those things?
- Luke:** Stop me? I don't know. Just the things that I heard that – that is already stopping me... (**Jenny:** Yeah.) ... from becoming a gangster.
- Jenny:** Yeah. Okay and not thinking about you but thinking about what could stop those kind of problems with gangsterism?
- Luke:** What could stop? I don't think there's anything that could stop gangsterism. There will always be gangsters. (**Jenny:** M-m.) That's about all.

For Luke, children join gangs because they lack knowledge. If, through their connections with friends and adults within the community, they had access to narratives about gang violence and coercion, then they might resist the attraction to gangs, as he has done: “Just the things that I heard that – that is already stopping me”. At the level of habitus then,

Luke draws on control, connection and coherence in changing local practices. But beyond this level, he is pessimistic about the prospects of change, concluding: “I don’t think there’s anything that could stop gangsterism. There will always be gangsters.” His perspective seems quite opposite to Bourdieu’s comment on the inertia of the habitus discussed at the start of this chapter (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). For Luke, the inertia is at the level of the broader fields of social relations, while change and transformation are possible at the local level. But, like Bourdieu, Luke is aware of the complexity and the difficulty of changing social relations. Whether or not children can contribute to changing social relations, this chapter shows that, given the opportunity, they will actively and creatively strive to do so.

Chapter 9

Reflections

In chapter 8, I began exploring the implications of the study for changing violent relations. In this chapter, my main focus will be to reflect further on the research process and findings. The title of the chapter, rather than implying an endpoint, is intended to signal again the reflexivity with which I have tried to approach this study. I will begin by reflecting briefly on how the thesis has answered the questions I set out to explore. I will then consider how the study contributes to knowledge, its strengths and limitations, and finally I will consider some future directions for research.

The Meanings for Children of Living with Violence

The literature discussed in chapter 2 identified multiple ways in which the experience of violence reverberates in children's lives in South Africa – in their emotions, their development and, in particular, in their social relationships. Yet these studies showed that many children seem to be resilient, protected somehow from these negative consequences, challenging therefore theories of the 'cycle of violence'. The mechanisms through which this resilience operates are little understood, with research stressing the negative consequences, assuming a uni-directional relationship between violence and children, and with few studies seeking children's views.

Through eliciting children's perspectives, I set out in this study to explore what it means to children to live with violence. In particular, I asked how, through social relationships, do children (co-)construct beliefs, values and practices in relation to violence. Taking a social constructionist epistemological stance, I was interested in how children's perspectives about violence are constituted within social relationships – past, present and future – and how children play an active and creative part in these 'engagements'. Finally, a key question was how answering these questions can contribute to violence prevention strategies.

Children are caught up in a web of social relations, through time and space, social relations which are both constraining and enabling. In a context where social relations are unstable, where historically they have been enacted through violent practices, where those historical practices have been destabilised, and where inequities remain deeply entrenched, then high levels of violence may be inevitable. In moving across the web to avoid one form of violence, we find ourselves stepping into another. But there are many dimensions to children's social relationships, some which collude with or perpetuate violence, others which resist and transform. Through analysing these relationships, their patterns, conflicts and contradictions, this study identifies both continuities and spaces for change.

For the children in Uitsigberg, violence entered their lives across social fields – in the neighbourhood, in peer relations and in their relationships with adults at home or school. In chapter 4, I discussed how, in the neighbourhood, like a magnet, violence both repelled and attracted children. Children were afraid, distressed and angered by violence, which disempowered them, but at the same time there were glimmers of excitement and fascination, and when violence symbolised power and offered forms of *control*, it could attract. In the field of the playground, discussed in chapter 5, power and control also played a part, with violence used to negotiate and impose control within the peer group. But more often the source of playground conflicts was the desire for inclusion, or *connection* in friendship groups, seen as sources of social support in the context of violence. Adults were also viewed as sources of support, protecting children through the rules, routines and systems of punishment which regulated children's lives. I discussed in chapter 6 how children accepted and supported these forms of regulation, even when linked with physical force, since they understood them to be protective in the context of violence. Children constructed rules and narratives which helped them to make sense of or bring *coherence* to their experiences of violence. Rules about retaliation and retribution, for example, as discussed in chapter 7, were used to justify or at least to explicate violence. The meanings of violence for children were bound up with their strivings for control, connection and coherence. In chapter 8, I constructed a framework to illustrate this relationship between the socio-psychological processes of the habitus and the social field (*figure 5*, page 201).

The repeated and ritualised performance of fights in peer relations, and systems of punishment in adult-child relations, reproduced and crystallised inequitable power relations

between the strong and the weak, boys and girls, and adults and children. These relations were cemented by the potential to use physical force. But in each of the social fields there were tensions in children's positioning in relation to violence. Casting adults as regulators and protectors meant that children found themselves positioned oppositionally as weak and helpless, a construction which was resisted. Girls resisted their positioning as compliant and constrained. There were tensions for boys in their attempts to live up to unattainable masculinities, which involved defending and protecting themselves and others from attack in the neighbourhood or playground. The inevitable failure of these attempts generated unease, discomfort and sometimes shame.

These tensions contributed to processes of exclusion. For example, in attempting to construct more comfortable positions, children excluded 'others', those who they defined as too violent (Afrikaans-speakers, boys) or too weak (girls). Historical and social constructions of masculinity and femininity, social class and ethnicity and occasionally religion, could be traced in these processes of exclusion. In navigating the tensions, children sometimes repositioned the 'other' in more extreme ways, thus increasing potential conflict and separation. Tensions, instability and ambivalence about forms of adult regulation and protection also generated violence, as in the support for physical force as a form of punishment at school and home, or for the reintroduction of the death penalty in the neighbourhood. In these ways, tensions in the striving for control, connection and coherence contributed to processes of exclusion, conflict and violence.

But these tensions were also a source of change. In striving for control or agency in the neighbourhood, for example, children positioned themselves in complex ways to distance themselves from the violence, deconstructing the power of violence while at the same time resisting the powerlessness of being cast as victims. In striving for connection with their peers, they sometimes reflected on and contested processes of exclusion. In the quest for coherence, they engaged with narratives about human rights and equity, reciprocity and trust, using these to co-construct narratives and rules which opposed violent practices. Through working with children at these points of tension, it may be possible for interventions to contribute to changing violent relations. In chapter 8, I showed how processes that emerged in the research - through striving for alternative sources of agency and more reciprocal adult-child relations, and through co-constructing connections and coherence without violence - began to generate change.

Contribution to Violence Prevention

The key contribution to knowledge made by this study is that it provides a framework to consider the points of view of children, who have experienced violence, in the development of violence prevention strategies. This framework has implications for those interested in violence prevention from academic, policy and practitioner perspectives.

From an academic perspective, the study adds to knowledge about the psycho-social processes with which children engage with violence. While refuting simple cause-effect relationships, it supports the suggestion made in some studies that how children interpret violence influences their ways of coping (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993; Garbarino, 1999; Perry, 1997). It shows how children's interpretations are socially constructed and constructive, at the same time perpetuating and resisting violence. The study therefore contributes insights into the workings of the cycle of violence, the ways in which violence may be reproduced yet, at the same time, how the cycle may be broken.

While editing an earlier draft of this thesis and before writing this concluding chapter, I consulted South African colleagues – both academics and practitioners working on violence prevention – about a summary of the findings. In his feedback to the research summary, Andrew Dawes reflected on the implications:

Are we not seeing a cycle of violence phenomenon here - it appears from your paper that the children have incorporated a punitive control approach from parents who nonetheless have their interests at heart - they don't want the kids to get hurt, so they impose stricter (and more violent forms of discipline). The kids internalise these harsh approaches to retribution and also retaliation? Particularly the horrid phrase "they must feel before they listen"out of the mouths of many babes etc. This is also the language used by gangs, so it seems there is a circle of interlocking discourses from gangs to school yard to home, all of which engage with and reinforce the child's modes of engagement with the social world. Resilience comes through the child's ability to control these forces through his own aggressive conduct? (Dawes, personal communication).

One implication of the study, therefore, is the identification of “a circle of interlocking discourses”, which are intertwined in children's sense making and through which violent practices in one field might be taken up in another. These discourses are both spatial and temporal; spanning the fields of neighbourhood, home, school and playground, and at the same time historical discourses persist, and current perspectives are also influenced by children's imaginings of the future. This temporal dimension was highlighted in feedback from Sean Field, who was interested, as a historian, in how stories and images of their past are represented to children in Rwanda:

My own sense of the self and its construction, is that the struggle for coherence and cohesion is central, both as a way of containing the fundamentally fragmented emotionally-laden memories we use to shape ourselves, and as a way of making sense of the social worlds, which to varying degrees is socially fragmented and/or evokes the feelings of internal emotional fragmentation. Kids growing-up in fractured working class communities in Cape Town, with parents and grandparents who are either absent or marked by the traumatic scars of apartheid and poverty, often do not make for good containers or mediators of the social world. Similarly, (although on a wider and more severe scale) Rwandan kids are bitterly disappointed with their parents who are either physically dead or emotionally very numbed/withdrawn so in effect they provide little help for kids to understand the recent traumatic past or the present poverty-stricken and scarred present (Field, personal communication).

For Dawes and Field, the study contributes to debates about how violence may be perpetuated - through adult-child relations which entail violent forms of regulation or which are unable to support children's strivings for coherence.

Understanding ways in which violence may be perpetuated is important for illuminating processes in the 'cycle of violence', highlighting what needs to change and the challenges this incurs. But what I have also tried to make clear through the framework is how children resist entering the cycle of violence and how the cycle may be broken. As well as illustrating how violence may be perpetuated, the framework shows how striving for control, connection and coherence generate tensions. Through addressing these tensions, the study identifies ways in which children contest violence and ways in which interventions with children can generate change.

These proposals for intervention extend to practitioner and policy arenas, and in chapter 8, I suggested some ways in which violence prevention interventions may fruitfully proceed. Through focusing on control, connection and coherence, there is scope for interventions to work with children to contest violence – seeking alternative sources of agency, which disrupt the association between violence, agency and power; seeking more reciprocal adult relations, which loosen the coupling of regulation and protection, especially forms of regulation which employ violence; building connections which challenge oppositional processes of exclusion; and co-constructing coherent rules and narratives, which revise the rules of retaliation and retribution. These are of course overwhelming tasks, involving for example re-conceptualising relationships and views about what it means to be a boy or girl, an adult or a child. The danger for interventions of such proposals is that they may be bound to fail. This was reflected in the views of Jane van der Riet, one of the practitioners who fed back on the research summary and who has since left the NGO partly because “I couldn't bear the sense that we were not really making much difference to such a complex

and deeply historical/psychological problem”. But in acknowledging the importance of the historical and social context, and the constraints these have on children’s positionings, my intention is not to point to the impossibility of change, but to recognise the challenges faced by those attempting change. Van der Riet also responded: “I think you have got more depth and understanding of the problems than we perhaps ever did. Your arguments feel solidly grounded and relevant.” Sharing with practitioners the complexity of the tasks they set themselves may support their efforts to seek achievable goals for change.

Yet, despite the depth of the problems, the study generates hope about the possibility of change, in the active and creative ways in which children resisted violence, and in the ways discussed in chapter 8 in which the research process operated as a (partly unintended) intervention. One of the interesting and unexpected findings of this study was how a short-term, small scale research study generated changes in the ways children talked about solving problems of violence, through, for example, group structures and activities which facilitated participation and agency, connection and collaboration, and the co-creation of coherent narratives. Such a finding generates optimism about the potential of interventions which work closely with children, respecting and building on their existing ways of engaging with the world.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Dilemmas that have challenged me in the course of this research have been the source of both the study’s strengths and its limitations. Violence, for example, is a crucial research topic in South Africa, yet there are many pitfalls in its study. I tried to understand children’s meanings, yet in the end the research is my own interpretation. I aimed to be rigorous, but thus sacrificed the benefits of flexibility and responsivity. The focus on talk generated the richness and depth of the analysis, but had some limitations, including the thorny issue of the interpretation of silence. I tried through the research to reflect the complexity of social relationships, yet aimed to generate a text that is coherent and useful. Finally I have tried to balance the text as situated, contingent and partial, with the imperative for it to be applicable in other contexts and in broader debates about children and violence. I will consider each of these dilemmas in turn.

Researching violence in South Africa

With the immediacy of the problems of violence in South Africa, the pertinence of research which has the potential to increase understandings and to generate solutions is clear, and this is a strength of this study. At the same time, the focus on continuing violence could be seen to undermine the efforts of the current government, stressing its problems rather than its successes. However, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois argue that in South Africa the emphasis on seeking solutions through reconciliation has over-simplified and distracted attention from the continuing social and economic inequities: “talk of reconciliation and restorative justice side-track the legitimate demand for redistributive justice” (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois, 2004: 24). I have tried in this study to balance the importance of locating children within social context, and at the same time probing for avenues for change. Of course the problems of the past do not vanish with political change. But I do believe that researchers, like others in South Africa, need to look forward and support change efforts. This does not mean ignoring the continuing and new problems that emerge, but perhaps it questions deconstruction without reconstruction, or a tendency for research to expose power struggles without at the same time seizing the rich opportunity generated in a fast changing cultural context to analyse changing and conflicting discourses.

This balance between deconstruction and reconstruction is difficult to achieve and in the course of this study, there have been times when readers have attended more to the deconstruction, or the perpetuation of violence. At a conference, for example, I presented a poster entitled the Magnet of Violence (and based on chapter 4), which attempted to show how children were both repelled by and attracted to violence, and how they actively resisted the magnet. Although I had stressed children’s resistance to violence, I was dismayed when one reader commented: “there’s no hope for these children”. Andrew Dawes, responding to the research summary, commented on my arguments about children’s resistance: “did the kids actually resist it? From reading the paper my sense is that they in fact incorporated it – particularly the boys.” Certainly, the influence of violent masculinities has been a recurring theme throughout this thesis, not that all boys employ violent practices, but that they live ‘in their shadow’ (Connell, 2002) and that this constrains the positions available to them. But I have also tried to show how the tensions and contradictions in their positioning generate the possibility of change.

The reader's interpretation will always differ from the interpretation of the writer, but I have puzzled over the extent here of the difference in interpretation. It may be that when we read about violence, we are drawn (like the children discussed in chapter 4) voyeuristically to the drama and horror. There is always a danger in research about sensitive subjects that we are persuaded by the emotional impact rather than by rigorous analysis (Taylor, 2001). With emotive topics like violence, the possibilities for varying interpretations are immense and sometimes have the potential to cause harm. There is a danger of exacerbating stereotypes about violence and 'the poor' (Bourgois, 1995), or of African primitivity and barbarism (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). In the UK, researchers working on the ESRC Research Programme were concerned about interpretation by the media: "Investigators complained bitterly of distortion by the media, of twisted facts and of gross sensationalism" (Stanko & Lee, 2003: 10). At the same time, they were alert to the possibility that the focus on violence could undermine the credibility of the government to deliver public safety: "No doubt, historians of the future might think that during this time there was a miniature violent crime wave, as so many of the projects made headline after headline" (Stanko & Lee, 2003: 10).

While, as researcher, I do not take full responsibility for how the text I produce is interpreted, there is a clear imperative to reflect on possible readings. By focusing attention on violence, I am immediately selecting one aspect of children's lives, and neglecting others. While I started off asking much broader questions about children's social worlds, I have increasingly focused the analysis on violence, and this has the danger of presenting a distorted picture of children's lives. There is always the possibility that the research could be harmful to the participants, painting a negative picture, delving into 'private' realms of experience and troubling existing social relations. While, in chapter 3, I discussed how I tried to avoid any harm to children, the proposals for change discussed in chapter 8 certainly trouble existing social relations. I also discussed how this troubling has the potential to generate more conflict and violence, through, for example, the possibility of harsher punishments. Addressing the tensions may be a source of change, but it also has risks.

These limitations are not, in my view, a reason to avoid researching violence, but they should not be ignored. I have tried to address them through reflexivity – reflecting throughout on the possible consequences of the research process.

Interpretation and meaning

I really have a sense that you have captured or very sensitively engage with the (sometimes elusive) complexities and contradictions of these children's lives. There is a thread running through your writing of honouring and respecting the children's needs and feelings (Van der Riet, personal communication).

In order to find out what it means to children to live with violence, I followed Steinar Kvale's advice, as discussed in chapter 3: "If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?" (Kvale, 1996: 1). The research was designed therefore to centre on children's talk, and to encourage children's active participation in the research process. Asked in the post-group interviews what they most enjoyed, children talked of acting and role play (mentioned by 24 children), drawing and making things (24), talking and discussion (19) and playing games (17). The richness of the data, I believe, has something to do with children's pleasure in this active engagement, in which, as Van der Riet's words suggest, they felt honoured and respected. They rewarded my genuine interest with openness.

But this notion of respect also highlights a dilemma, a sense that my analysis has not been quite transparent, that the text I have produced is mine, and not the children's: "The subject is always at grave risk of manipulation and betrayal by the ethnographer" (Lincoln & Denzin, 1998: 412). Although the research in some ways 'gives voice' to the participants, a group disempowered by age and social position, the analysis also distances me from children's perspectives. As researcher, I select which extracts to analyse or to quote, which theories to engage with, how to interpret. I try "to critically see-through commonsense understandings and to show readers a different picture of what is going on than the subjects themselves may be aware of" (Yates, 2003: 2). And although I have tried to do each of these with rigour, this thesis is in the end my interpretation, and there will be other interpretations. And the participants would not always agree with my interpretation, in particular with my argument that their beliefs and practices sometimes perpetuate violence. In a way, therefore, I feel I have betrayed their trust, drawing them back into the cycle of violence through my interpretation of their words.

I do not think this dilemma can be eradicated, but I have tried to address it in several ways. Firstly, through a reflexive stance I have not tried to distance myself from the research, to pretend that I have not been emotionally affected by children's narratives, to claim

objectivity or impartiality. Instead I have positioned myself politically, but recognising that this is a social construction, that I too am constrained by the discourses available to me. Second, I have engaged with theory and research on children and violence, and tried to make this explicit, showing how it has influenced my interpretation. Third, I have taken seriously issues of selection. For example, through selecting participants of different ages and sexes, I have been able to explore patterns that recur and variations between groups. Through looking across social fields, I have been able to compare the experience of multiple forms of violent social relations. Through varying methods, particularly interviews and group discussions over a period of time, I have been able to look at variability and continuity in the talk of an individual, and at changes over time. Sometimes I have counted responses – stating, for example, how many children shared a particular perspective. But at other times I have looked in depth at a single conversation, which may provide supporting evidence for the broader perspective, or which may shed light on processes of meaning construction. Through exploring variation and inconsistency, I have been able to identify some of the complex and varied ways in which children construct perspectives, to “signal the ‘boundaries’ of different repertoires” (Taylor, 2001: 320). In these ways, I have tried to produce a credible and trustworthy text, which engages with the broader literature on children and violence.

Rigour and flexibility

While this study took place at a single site, and focused mainly on 36 primary school aged children, through the selection of participants, choice of research methods and forms of data analysis, it aims to be systematic and rigorous, and therefore persuasive.

But this rigour was also a limitation, since it restricted the possibilities for modifying and adapting the study. For example, the careful choice of 3 age groups elicited data about these ages, which had been neglected in previous research, and during which beliefs and practices in relation to violence may be forming. It also enabled me to identify some subtle changes in perspectives as children gained more experience and moved closer to the transition to high school. But it meant that the perspectives of younger children, or children in the later teenage years, were omitted. The selection of friendship groups was likely to have enhanced the quality of discussions around sensitive and challenging themes, but automatically excluded friendless children. Although I made it clear to teachers that ability

and achievement were not criteria for selection, those who were included were likely to be more socially skilled and confident than some others in the class.

There were some ways, however, in which the research design incorporated flexibility, and this had strengths and limitations. The combination of ethnographic and participatory action research methods proved a very effective way of eliciting children's perspectives about violence, but the various methods did not generate equally rich data, and so were not generally used for verification of an interpretation or triangulation, for example, comparing interviews with playground observations, or children's talk with teacher and parent interviews. I have only occasionally used observational data, my fieldwork notes and adult interview data in the analysis. The practices I observed in the playground were difficult to interpret, and so of limited value. The interviews with adults, though more lucid and clearly expressed than much of the children's talk, were based on much more superficial relationships and lacked the natural quality of the child data, gathered as it was over a much longer period. These ethnographic methods provided a backdrop to the research and were crucial for developing a research relationship, but it was talking with children that generated the wealth of material for analysis.

Within the group and individual discussions with children, there was some flexibility. The combination of individual interviews and group sessions meant that children who were inhibited at talking in one context were able to express their views in another. The semi-structured nature of the individual interviews also enabled flexibility in the questions asked, and I found that some of the least structured interviews were richest. Shandre, for example, was almost silent during group sessions, and aware of her reticence, I encouraged her to take the interview in her preferred directions. But this meant I occasionally forgot to ask questions earlier in the schedule, and it was then more difficult to compare responses. In the group sessions too, when I introduced more flexibility in the structure, it generated very rich data. Though there were only six of them, I sometimes found the youngest boys' group quite difficult to manage. Wanting to ask them some additional questions after the final group session, when I did not have access to video equipment, I decided to audiotape the group divided into two groups of three, so that I could distinguish their voices on tape. This generated much clearer discussion in the group and I realised that a smaller group at an earlier stage might have been more productive. At the same time the further I moved

from systematic and rigorous data gathering, the more difficult it was to compare and to engage with wider debates about children and violence (Yates, 2003).

Talk and silence

People's understandings of the world are not merely expressed in their discourse but actually shaped by the ways of using language which people have available to them (Cameron, 2001: 15).

The analysis of children's talk has revealed some of the complex ways in which understandings are socially constructed. But at the same time language is a form of social action (Billig, 1991; Willig, 2001). With talk viewed as socially constructed and constructive, the analysis of children's talk has been central to this thesis. Through the analysis of talk, I have tried to explore how children's beliefs, values and practices are rooted in past and present social relationships. At the same time, I have explored the generative nature of talk, the ways in which, through talk, children take up, discard and contest conflicting and contradictory discourses, how they co-create their terms of engagement with violence.

There are though some limitations in the analysis of talk in this study. My outsider status as a foreign researcher, lacking detailed knowledge of local forms of expression, means that I will inevitably have missed shades and nuances of meaning in the children's talk. Aware of this limitation, I chose to omit the detailed interpretation of expressions and pauses common in some forms of discourse analysis, and I have only occasionally interpreted non-verbal behaviours. I have to some extent combined content analysis and discourse analysis, and this has enabled me to manage larger quantities of data than traditional discourse analysis, and to attend to the way children talk as well as the content of their talk. The focus on processes and on variation has enabled me to resist the tendency of some analyses to reduce complexity through over-categorising. It has been an extremely labour intensive process, in which I have not been aided by use of software packages to analyse content. But this dual focus has enabled comprehensive, though not exhaustive, analysis of perspectives and processes of meaning formation.

A further limitation with the analysis of talk is the tendency for the most articulate to dominate both the discussion and the analysis. Children in the oldest groups tended to talk with greatest fluency. Some children had more to say about violence than others, perhaps because they had more exposure. Some children were just better story tellers. I tried to

manage these biases by frequently checking for comparisons across children, and where relevant, stating how widespread an opinion was. When an experience or perspective was exceptional, I tried to make this clear in the text. Of more concern was the interpretation of silence. The focus on children's talk meant that children were able to have some agency over what they chose to tell me. In a sense, therefore, they could 'control' the violence – deciding how to interpret and explain it. This could be read as a limitation of the study, since I may not be tapping into forms of violence, like violent rage, which children may be reluctant to admit since it is associated with loss of control. It could also be read as respectful of children's agency in choosing when to disclose and when to stay silent.

Silence though is difficult to interpret. When children do not talk about something, is it that it is not part of their experience, that I have not asked the right questions, or that they have chosen not to talk about it? And if the latter is true, then what right have I even to draw attention to it in the text? Sometimes I have chosen not to write about themes which seemed to be missing from children's narratives. For example, I noticed that children talked little about what I would define as nurturance in their relationships with parents, but whether this was because nurturance is expressed differently from my experience and so I was asking the wrong questions, or whether there were fewer opportunities for nurturance in the parent-child relationship in this context, or whether children just did not think I would be interested, was not clear and so I did not follow up this theme in the analysis. There was also little talk about intimate violence – between parents for example, or more extreme violence between parents and children. Since both parents and teachers told me about children's experiences of such violence, then I was aware that this was part of the experience of some of the children. Although I did not ask children direct questions about violence in the home, there were opportunities for children to raise these issues. There is good reason then to conclude, as I did in chapter 6, that children actively chose not to discuss this, and, while I have respected children's rights to privacy and not repeated in this text the narratives of parents and teachers in this area, this is a limitation in the study.

Complexity and coherence

Theoretically, I have drawn on approaches from social and developmental psychology and sociology. Each of these approaches, as I discussed in chapter 1, emphasises the social, and is consistent with a social constructionist position, but none on their own were able to answer the research questions. So I have drawn on social constructivist perspectives for the

analysis of how children actively construct their social worlds (Bruner, 1990), and on Bourdieu's habitus-field relation, and in particular Lois McNay's interpretation of this, to analyse social relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; McNay, 2000). Positioning theory has helped me to conceptualise the fluidity of the constraining and enabling features of talk (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999) and discursive psychology has aided the rigorous analysis of children's talk (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edley, 2001; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001). This blending of perspectives reflects the complexity of children's social relationships, and has facilitated an analysis which addresses the multiple layers of meaning. It permits analysis, for example, of the fine details of a conversation between myself and a child, the dynamics of a group of children and the tracing of discourses to the South African historical and political context. I have been able to consider the intricacies of the power networks in which children are positioned, and the contradictions which enable children sometimes to resist, challenge and subvert these relations (Mohanty, 1991). This blending of approaches has contributed to a fine grained and detailed analysis, which tries to avoid over-simplifying or reducing problems or solutions.

But the resulting complexity of the qualitative analysis potentially reduces the relevance and usefulness of the study for addressing day-to-day problems. I referred in chapter 3 to Ato Quayson's concern about post colonial theory, which both seeks "urgent and clear solutions" but because of our embeddedness in a "contaminated" world, finds itself riveting attention "on the warps and loops of discourse" (Quayson, 1999:8). Listening to children's perspectives, or giving voice, is not therefore a sufficient goal for research aiming for change, since children too are caught up in or "contaminated by" the web of social relations. Analysis of the ways in which meaning is socially constructed needs to be integrated with the aim of learning from these perspectives how to change violent social relations.

I have tried to manage this complexity (like the children discussed in chapter 7) by seeking coherence. There is a danger of overdoing this, of creating too neat a patterning: "These [cultural] plots and practices lead us to see coherence where there is none, or to create meanings without an understanding of the broader structures that tell us to tell things in a particular way" (Lincoln & Denzin, 1998: 426). The framework of children's engagements with violence discussed in chapter 8 attempts to bring coherence to the patterns discussed in earlier chapters, but inevitably reduces their complexities. Nonetheless, it integrates themes

that have recurred throughout the analysis and incorporates both continuity and change. Its success in the end will be judged by its fruitfulness.

Applicability beyond the research space

This text is not the only ‘truth’ about living with violence – it is shaped by a group of children as “embodied, aged human subjects” (Yates, 2003) talking with me, another embodied, aged human subject, in a particular location at a particular moment in time. It is, therefore, situated, contingent and partial. Yet its value lies in its applicability beyond the lives of 36 children and myself. Through the rigorous selection of place, participants and activities, and through the interweaving of theory and analysis, and through the reflexivity, I have explored many layers of social relationships and how these are connected in complex ways with violence, ways which are both enduring and fluid. While for other children, in other violent contexts, different discourses will vie for priority, this tracing of relationships lies at the heart of the applicability of this study across contexts. For continuities, contradictions and conflicts within and between dynamic and multiple social relationships, which in this study were the source of both the perpetuation of and resistance to violence, are not specific to this group of children. The study offers a way of analysing violence in and through social relationships. It offers a framework with which to design interventions to reduce violence. It offers therefore the possibility of working to change violent social relations.

Future Directions

The discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study points to future avenues for research, which build on and develop the approaches and the findings of this study within and beyond South Africa.

One of the dilemmas I discussed above was that of rigour versus flexibility, and I have reflected whether increasing the flexibility of the research design could have further enriched the findings, without necessarily sacrificing rigour. Future research might, for example, employ more flexible group sizes. With younger children, though the group size worked well for many activities, it was valuable for some discussions to have smaller groups than six children, and for all age groups this might make it easier for quieter children to voice their perspectives. The perspectives of children who were excluded from

this study – those for example, who have few friends and/or who are thought to use uncontrolled violence – might be incorporated within the research through individual or small group discussions. Discussion of the most intimate forms of violence and abuse may be facilitated by discussions between the researcher and individual children, but the data gathered this way needs to be balanced with the ethical issues of prising open these realms of experience. The boundaries between research and therapeutic intervention need to be carefully defined, and support systems to be in place. In a context where resources are severely limited, it may not be ethical to conduct such research without at the same time offering ongoing counselling support.

As well as flexibility through reducing group size, there may also be scope for increasing the size of groups. Violence in this study has been conceptualised as “a form of relationship, a way of communicating which may have multiple meanings” (see chapter 1). The proposals for change, discussed in chapter 8, focus on social relationships – relationships between girls and boys, between children in English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking classes, between adults and children, even between gang members and their neighbours. An important way forward for both research and intervention will be to encourage communication between these groups. This shifts the focus considerably from this study, which, in working with friendship groups, aimed to work with participants for whom co-construction of meaning might be relatively easy. Working with boys and girls together, or with parents and children, or teachers and children, would involve navigating the inequitable power relations. This approach may work more effectively as follow up research, in which research and intervention are fully integrated. Indeed, towards the end of the fieldwork period a few of the oldest children asked if I could organise sessions jointly with the opposite sex groups. Apart from the party for all groups, this was not possible because of timing in the school year. But it appeared that for some children an outcome of the group work was the generation of interest in and confidence about the possibilities of communicating with excluded (or excluding) groups. Future research could then consider two parts, the first closer to this study, and the second, planned also as an intervention, to combine groups whose relationships feature processes of exclusion, conflict and violence.

The eight months of school-based fieldwork in this study enabled me to begin to tap change processes, but these would be much more effectively analysed within a longitudinal study

which spanned several years. Such a study could also extend the findings of this study to younger and older children. Extension with younger children would entail some adaptation of the research design. Although I used a range of games, art and drama, enabling the children to express themselves in less verbal ways, these were not fully incorporated in the analysis, which was dependent on children's talk. Future studies with children younger than 8 years old would benefit from exploring ways of analysing non-verbal forms of expression, and from facilitating talk through, for example, working with children in pairs or threes.

Following children into high school would be fascinating to explore the ways in which beliefs, values and practices in relation to violence are both continuous and changing across life transitions. Already, as discussed in earlier chapters, the imminent move to high school of the 13 year olds was generating change in their perspectives, and working with a group of children as they make this change could illuminate further the active, constructive ways in which they engage with and resist violence.

As a small-scale study, its fruitfulness will depend on how the study can be replicated and applied in different contexts. The study may have particular relevance for other post-conflict zones, where, children are striving for control, connection and coherence in social relations in which, as in South Africa, violence is both changing and enduring. The dialogue with Sean Field, mentioned above, about working with children following genocide in Rwanda, points to the possibilities for future research and intervention in this area. Children living in post-conflict zones may have experienced multiple forms of violence and so have many parallels with the experiences of children in this study. But violence is not restricted to post-conflict zones, and replication and modification of the study in settings where children have experienced particular forms of violence could also be fruitful. For example, how is the framework able to consider the points of view of children who have experienced violence within families or within peer relations at school in the UK? And what are the implications of using the framework to consider these viewpoints for the development of violence prevention strategies?

In conclusion...

In this chapter, I have reflected on the research process and findings, focusing particularly on the dilemmas that have taxed me throughout. The most persistent of these has been the question of agency, of how much agency is possible for children in a context riven by violent social relations. I have identified some ways in which, through social relations, children are able to contribute to change – in their relationships with teachers and parents, with friends, with me as researcher and in their engagements with discourses about rights and equity in South Africa.

At the same time, the legacy of inequity, conflict and violence endures. Children continue to have little control in a grossly inequitable social and economic context. Violence continues to disempower, disrupt relationships and fragment narratives. Despite this, children strive for control, connection and coherence. I have made suggestions for interventions that are not easy to implement, touching as they do not just on acts of violence, but on the most intimate social relationships. In this way, I hope to open up new possibilities, while acknowledging that struggles continue. It is not the endpoints, but the strivings that this study illuminates. That is why I have resisted calling this chapter a conclusion. This study is, after all, just one part of the striving.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1:
Glossary of terms used by children

Many of these terms are Afrikaans words that have entered into the local non-standard varieties of English.

<i>bakkie</i>	truck
<i>dagga</i>	marijuana
<i>dinges</i>	slang for ‘thing’ sometimes used when children were unable to think of a correct word – also as a verb: <i>dingese</i> , <i>dingussed</i>
<i>dronkies</i>	drunk people
<i>ja</i>	yes
<i>kwaai</i>	cool, mean, cross
<i>lus, nê, mos</i>	fillers or emphatics with no obvious English equivalent
<i>moffie</i>	derogatory term for homosexual
<i>panga</i>	kind of big knife used as a weapon
<i>skell</i>	argue, scold
<i>skelm</i>	rogue, thief
<i>skinnering</i>	gossiping, talking behind another’s back
<i>skollie</i>	gangster (slang)
<i>slamse</i>	coloured Muslim (derived from <i>Islame</i> – Islamic)
<i>sommer</i>	a filler, meaning something like ‘simply’
<i>stoep</i>	raised platform, or veranda, running along front of buildings
<i>stry</i>	argue
<i>sturvy</i>	snobbish, self-centred (slang) (see chapter 5)

A comment on morphology and syntax

The local non-standard dialect of English used by the children in Uitsigberg is differentiated from standard English more in the grammar than in the lexicon (McCormick, 2002). Often these morpho-syntactic features have parallels with standard Afrikaans, but some may stem from British dialects which came to South Africa over a hundred years ago, and others are frequently found in second-language varieties. The following are a few examples commonly found in children’s talk in this study:

The verb to BE as an auxiliary verb often has the same form for third-person singular and plural:

My mommy **say** she got a headache.

Past tense is frequently indicated by using ‘did’:

That child must go with what **did** hit.

I **did** only get *skelled* a little

Past tense morpheme –ED can be deleted:

I used to play with her and that and then they **start** like talking about eachother.

AND and To may be deleted:

We used to go with my cousin a lot to **go pick** up his wife in Bexhill

Double negatives are used:

You **mustn’t** trust **nobody**.

Preposition choice is frequently different from standard:

So **he ate it and** so **he got dizzy and** so...

Appendix 2:
Letter for Parental Permission

[NGO Address]

Research Project: Children's Social Relationships

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child has been selected to participate in a research programme to be carried out at Sandwell Primary School. The research is linked to COPES Violence Prevention Project, which has been running at the school since 1999. S/he will be invited to join a group of children working on activities to do with friendship, play and leisure activities and staying safe in the neighbourhood. His/her involvement will include an interview with myself, followed by group work with his/her friends.

If you would like to find out more about the research or if you do NOT want your child to participate, you are very welcome to contact me on the telephone number below or please tell your child's teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Parkes
(Educational Psychologist and Researcher,
in association with COPES)

(Principal)

[phone number]

Appendix 3:
Gaining Parental Permission

After negotiating with the teachers which children to invite to participate in research groups, I gave the teachers letters to distribute seeking parental permission. I wanted to ensure that parents were fully consulted and given the opportunity to refuse permission. At the same time I was uncertain how likely parents were to respond in writing. I consulted the NGO staff, school principal and teachers about the wording of the letter, and was told that parents often feel more comfortable giving verbal responses. My compromise was to send a letter inviting parents to reply if they did NOT want their child to participate, and at the same time I asked the teachers to discuss the study with each of the parents. One parent initially refused, but changed her mind following her discussion with the teacher.

With the youngest classes, the teachers talked with the children about the research so that the children could discuss the letters with the parents. With the oldest groups, I spoke with the children first, asking their permission for me to write to their parents for parental agreement. This meant that parents were informed about the research from three sources – through my letter, and less formally through talking with the teachers and their children.

Using the teachers as intermediaries worked well, because of their familiarity, but I was concerned about the informality of the process. Retrospectively, I suspect that the enthusiasm of the children to participate would have ensured written responses from parents had I sought them. Having worked closely with the teachers, however, and carefully explained the nature of the research and the issues around seeking parental permission, I felt able to trust their capacity to discuss the research with parents and to seek verbal feedback.

Appendix 4: **Teacher Interviews**

The purpose of these is to gather background information on children's play and social relationships with each other.

Playground

How do the children in your class spend time in the playground?
Games? What do they tell you about playtimes?

What are the main problems that occur in the playground?
What happens then?

What are the children told in school about playing at interval?

Neighbourhood

How would you describe the neighbourhood where the children in your class live?

What are the main problems in the neighbourhood?

What do most of the children do after school?
Clubs? Home alone? Playing with friends?

Do you know where the children spend time in the neighbourhood?
Where are the no-go areas?

What are children told by adults about keeping safe?
Teachers? Parents?

Friendship and other peer relationships

How would you describe the relationships between children in your class?
Do the children in your class tend to have stable friendships/ fall in and out of friendship, large groups or pairs, special friends or play based on the activity eg. Soccer?

Do some children tend to dominate/ be dominated/ bully others? In what ways? Are there procedures in school for dealing with this?

Are there differences between girls and boys in the ways they spend their free time? In the problems that occur? In the kinds of friendships they have?

Who do you think the children go to if they have a problem?
Do you think the children give support to each other when they have a problem? In what way?

What are the ways in which children try to sort out social problems?
eg. A fight in the playground, a child who is crying because they have no one to play with?

Appendix 5: Teacher Interview Transcript

Agnes – teacher of 8 year old class 12.6.01

Agnes asked me not to tape the interview, so I made detailed notes.

How do the children in your class spend time in the playground?

Games? What do they tell you about playtimes?

Playing and running and being free and active. There are often many complaints. They complain about team work, playing together in groups, giving turns, compromising. There are often rough aggressive games. They are out to hurt – running, kicking, kicking between the legs, name calling.
(Question) Both boys and girls play in this way. The girls, you wouldn't even believe it. They play Rape Rape. You must kick the person hard between the legs and catch them. They toss in. They cross hands all the time and punch in the back. If the fingers are not crossed and they haven't tossed out, they are kicked. They play Dare Dare for money and certain things. They give things at interval, then they want them back afterwards and that leads to tensions. They can't concentrate, will fight and be moody all the time.

What are the main problems that occur in the playground?

What happens then?

Rough, aggressive games, so the children get hurt – not just a little knock. The whole group will run. One boy in grade 4 couldn't walk after this when all the boys pile on. It stems from home. They see aggressiveness then it starts. It comes back to school again. They swear, all the ugliest words you can think of.

What are the children told in school about playing at interval?

Either they are taken to Mr [Principal], who'll speak to them, or he sends them back to you and you talk to them. In assembly it's brought up. The teacher is to report games. In assembly they are told to promise to be kind and loving. If it is bad, their parents are asked in. If very bad, it goes in the transgression book – like if they swore, stabbed with a pencil, broke a window. Each class has a transgression book and Mr [Principal] checks it. We started TSTs – Teacher Support Teams – you can call people in – COPES or the psychologist. It really helps.
I want to kill all the children because I don't have the patience for this performance of theirs – you can only take so much.

How would you describe the neighbourhood where the children in your class live?

I would not like my children to grow up here. The children can tell you things about gangsterism, shooting, drugs – what happens in their homes. Smoking.. parents... at a party at home, in the house, an uncle tried to stab another uncle at a family party. 2 children who are cousins saw it. The parents in this community – 10 out of 100 will be interested in their children. The rest you won't see, they won't come to a meeting, they won't meet the teacher.
There is one library; it used to be very poor quality, I don't know if it's been revamped.
There are no play areas. You see them in the streets in the afternoon. On the field all those *skollies* congregate. At the back it is very dangerous. They found a body buried somewhere. Last year there was a man in the girls' toilet. He exposed himself at the fences to children during interval. It is dangerous at the back and at the side by the *vlei*.

What are the main problems in the neighbourhood?

Gangsters, drugs, *shebeens*, game shops. The children will play in the game shops till 6 or 7 at night. The divorce rate – conflict all the time between adults. Where do they get all these boyfriends and girlfriends? I don't know. From that another baby is born, then they feel left out. They are left with their grannies. Some of the parents are in gaol for murder, rape, drug pushing, taking drugs. Two fathers are in gaol – one child in the class witnessed her father murder her mother. Another is in gaol for fraud. There are a lot of family members in gangs.

What do most of the children do after school?

Clubs? Home alone? Playing with friends?

The older ones are in clubs – like matinee things on Saturday. Mostly they are home alone. They have keys around their neck at school. They must clean. They may have to fetch younger siblings. 7 or 8 of the children in the class are collected by someone. Some by older brothers. Some go with a taxi. Some go home alone. Many go to the game shop at the Seven-Eleven. They are allowed to play in the street. That is how things happen. Parents argue about children influencing their child to do certain things. Most of the parents do try but because of the area....

Do you know where the children spend time in the neighbourhood?

Where are the no-go areas?

The street is a no-go area. Also 2 fields in the area – they can go there with adult supervision. The vleis are no-go areas. There are gangs in the fields. I would never send my child to the Seven-Eleven – they just send children out to the shop after 5 or 6 o'clock.

What are children told by adults about keeping safe?

Teachers? Parents?

There are talks in school about strangers. I tell them it is not someone you don't know, but when you feel uncomfortable, even if it's a family member, rather avoid that person. They don't understand. If you talk in simplistic terms about sex and rape, they just laugh. Some parents were unhappy about their children's notes about sex – the parents asked what's happening in class. Always knowing who you are going with, telling teacher who you are going with. Parents do teach them – don't open the door for anyone. Stay away from strangers.

Last year a grade 5 child was grabbed. They took her to a field and tried to rape her, someone helped her, her stockings were torn. She witnessed them trying to break into her gran's house. You must keep your mouth shut.

(Going to party with friends) we went to buy wine from the liquor mart in Ottery; one of the girls went to the ATM and then went back and found the doors closed. It was during an armed robbery. One of the teachers was nearly dragged in and 2 shots were fired. I would keep my mouth shut.

There are shows at school, like learning about fire.

How would you describe the relationships between children in your class?

Do the children in your class tend to have stable friendships/ fall in and out of friendship, large groups or pairs, special friends or play based on the activity eg. Soccer?

Do some children tend to dominate/ be dominated/ bully others? In what ways? Are there procedures in school for dealing with this?

They fall in and out of friendship all the time. There are little cliques.

Friendship is determined on what you can give, or what you can do for me. If you have a lunchbox, everyone wants to be your friend. Tomorrow noone can stand the sight of you. Girls especially. Boys you can see who are friends.

One boy always wants to be the leader. He is a potential leader. He is very worldly wise. It is also where he comes from (Q) He's streetwise. He likes to dominate. He always knows the right thing. They look up to him. He will say no in dancing; then they have to beg him to join in. He uses gangster language in Afrikaans. They have to give him a sweet or bread but he will give nothing.

I don't know whether to intervene or let them fight their own battles.

He doesn't have one special friend – today it's this one, tomorrow that one.

One pair are always telling children what to do. He will lend pencils but they must fetch for him – do all his dirty work, skivvy.

There are no procedures for dealing with this. In class they talk about it. The COPES programme covers feelings, friendship, team working.

The same people are always chosen, so the teacher has to intervene.

Are there differences between girls and boys in the ways they spend their free time? In the problems that occur? In the kinds of friendships they have?

In class when they finish, the girls will sit and make a noise. Some will ask for pages. The girls will ask for more work or to help.

The boys walk around, throw things, make missiles.

Some of the girls in their free time argue, like about something earlier in the day.

Really it's half-half, the same type of behaviour.

They will start a puzzle in a pair. Then will fight and the boxes get broken. Then they will say "Teacher, Teacher". There is pushing and shoving on the mat. Groups can spend time quite nicely, innovative, but on the other hand someone wants to do this and I don't. If you do this I won't play because you want to be the leader.

Who do you think the children go to if they have a problem?

Do you think the children give support to each other when they have a problem? In what way?

The children will complain to the teacher all the time. They believe in complaining all the time. They don't know about sorting out themselves. If sorting themselves, they will fight. They don't know about talking to each other. They don't know the difference between a complaint that really matters and one that doesn't. Sometimes one or two are mature enough to support each other but that's very very rare. They expect the teacher to scold, or sometimes to hit, or take them to another teacher's class if another child is involved. Or to get the child to say sorry. I expect they expect some miracle.

What are the ways in which children try to sort out social problems?

eg. A fight in the playground, a child who is crying because they have noone to play with?

Fight

They will put an arm round the child and bring them to the staffroom. They will encourage a fight, stand around and watch and cheer children.

Appendix 6:
Parent interview

My research work at the school is looking at the children's social relationships with each other – in the playground and in the neighbourhood – what they play, how they deal with arguments and fights, how they sort out problems. Most of the work involves talking with children, but it is really helpful to get background information from parents and teachers about the way children play.

How old is your child/children ?

How does your child like to spend his/her free time out of school?

What does he/she like to play?

Where does he/she play? Does he/she play out? Where are the areas you feel it is safe/not safe for children to play out?

Who does he/she play with?

What does he/she tell you about time at school? In the playground?

Does he/she have a best friend/play with a group of friends?

What does he/she tell you about arguments or fights with other children? How do you think they usually sort it out?

What are your main concerns for your child about growing up in this neighbourhood?

What do you tell your child about safety in the neighbourhood?

How does your child try to sort it out if he/she has a social problem (eg. Argument with friend)

Appendix 7:
Parent Interview Transcript

J: Jenny

F: Fatima

- J: Okay this is Jenny talking with Fatima. As you know the work that I'm doing in the school is mainly with children and it's about how children get along with each other in the playground and in the neighbourhood. And what they play, how they deal with arguments and fights, how they sort out problems. And most of the work involves talking with children but it's really helpful for me to get a bit of background information from parents and teachers about the way children play. So it's not particularly about your child but it's more about how you see your children as playing, that kind of thing. Is that alright?
- F: Yes that's fine.
- J: And you've got three children and how old are they?
- F: Mikhail will be ten, and second eldest is seven and Rashieda's three.
- J: And has Rashieda started in the school yet?
- F: No.
- J: She's maybe next year - will it be?
- F: No she's only three.
- J: Okay. I don't know when they do...?
- F: Grade A starts from five.
- J: Oh really? Okay. Yeah. And your daughter, your other daughter is she...?
- F: She's in Grade A, second year yes.
- J: Okay. And thinking particularly about your oldest child how does he like to spend his time when he's out of school?
- F: Playing outside, playing like with the play station and like sport...
- J: Yeah.
- F: ...but mostly playing outside with his friends and that.
- J: Yeah. So he likes being out a lot. Yeah. And what kind of things does he do when he's outside? Is it soccer and ...
- F: *Ja*. Different types of stuff, that – that he'll now play whatever's in like if it's – he had a scooter...
- J: Yeah.
- F: ...then he'll *maar* [Afrikaans 'linking' word – has several meanings, ie. but, yet, merely, only just] play with the scooter. He's got rollerblades...
- J: Mm.
- F: ...everything that his friends are playing...
- J: Yeah.
- F: ...whatever game they're playing then he'll play with...
- J: Yeah.
- F: ...and then he doesn't like losing.
- J: Doesn't he? (*giggle*)
- F: He's a bad sportsman.
- J: (*laughing*) Oh dear. And so when – he – when it's kind of trendy to play with scooters they will play with scooters and then another time it's the fashion to play with something...
- F: Yes.
- J: ...else. Yeah. (*giggle*) And do they – do they tend to play out in the streets or ...?
- F: Like there, that area where I stay it's like the courts...
- J: M-m.
- F: ...flats and that, then there's an area where they can play like parking – where the cars park and that...
- J: M-m.
- F: ...where they can play or under the lines, the washing lines and...
- J: Yeah. Yeah. And do you – do you talk to them about how to stay safe or how to make sure they're safe when they're playing out?
- F: Like whenever he goes out they know I normally tell him he mustn't - he must only play where we can – where I can see him and that...
- J: Yeah.
- F: ...but he never listens, he always go on the other side to the park.
- J: Yeah.
- F: And that, but I don't like him playing there in the park. Even though there's a lot of children playing there but a lot of things happen.

J: Yeah.
F: Like where the gangsters smoke dagga, drinking and all that.
J: Yeah.
F: And that – and it's not good.
J: Yeah. Yeah. And that happens during the daytime as well does it?
F: Yes.
J: Yeah. Do they want – do you think they want to go to the park because there's more space for them to play their games?
F: Yes. There's more space and then there's this jungle and slip and slide and all that.
J: Yeah.
F: But because of what they – what experience he went through I'll rather see where - if I go out or if I stand by the window I'd rather like to see where he's playing and that. Not go out and look for him. *[She is referring here to an incident she told me about before the interview began.]*
J: Yeah.
F: And stand but – ever since what happened and when it came it out - he's a different – he's totally different.
J: Yeah.
F: Before he was very aggressive and all that...
J: M-m.
F: ...but he's changed a bit.
J: Since he's talked about it?
F: Not since he's spoke of it – ever since it came out because he never told us, someone else came to tell us.
J: Oh really?
F: Mm.
J: And was it out in the community that it happened?
F: Mm. *Ja.*
J: So when somebody else told you about it did he then talk about it too?
F: The thing is just when this particular lady came to tell me I didn't cross question him...
J: Yeah.
F: ...just to think of what we had to do and by looking at him...
J: Yeah.
F: ...to see what he had to do to the other kids and all that. And where he's concerned – you can even ask his teacher – at the beginning of the year...
[siren goes]
...how he used to perform at school and that. And I used to cry a lot – I'm very - okay, in actual fact this is the first year that he's staying with me.
J: Yeah.
F: ...and whenever he used to get hurt I cried and all that but when this came up, to tell the truth, I didn't even cry I was just – I was quiet. I couldn't cross question him – it's only two or three weeks after that...
J: Yeah.
F: ...then it only come to me.
J: Yeah.
F: But uh, through Mr [Principal] I got through it to it, by trying to forget about it and...
J: Yeah. And do you have some support from a social worker or somebody?
F: Yes.
J: Yeah.
F: ...Sister Mary also through the school.
J: Right. Well that's good.
F: Mm. My next – I went to see her yesterday I had an appointment with her yesterday...
J: Yeah.
F: ...my husband and myself and like I'm also going through a difficult time now...
J: Yeah.
F: ...because my mother-in-law passed away and things are - at home is not right...
J: Yeah.
F: ...and so our next appointment is for next Monday and that might be our last...
J: Mm.
F: ...because seeing that he is now improving and he's not the person that he used to be and all that.
J: M-m..
F: Like he's just changed a lot.

J: Yeah. And is he a bit more settled in school now?
F: Yes.
J: He's doing his schoolwork he's settled down. Yeah.
F: Before I had to – I had to fight with him to come to school...
J: Yeah.
F: ...he always had – there was always something – if it's not the one thing then it's the other.
J: Yeah.
F: ...and if he does come to school then he now perform he don't want to go to class and all that.
J: Yeah.
F: But that's all changed.
J: And does he have a particular group of friends now that he plays with or maybe one best friend or is he someone...
F: Not that I know of. (*overtalking*)
J: ...who plays with lots of different people?
F: I really don't know.
J: M-m.
F: But what I've seen, he plays the block where their class is in...
J: Yeah.
F: ...between that class – there he will play there and I think it's with his class friends...
J: Yeah.
F: ...the boys in his class...
J: Yeah.
F: ...there.
J: I think so. I think so. And when he's out of school does he have particular friends that he plays with at home?
F: Yes. He has got uh - because of this incident I banned him from playing with certain – with certain boys...
J: Alright.
F: ...because it's boys – this particular boy I used to like him a lot...
J: Yeah.
F: ...and he was also involved in this and like *_(?)*(*mumble*) things like they're the perpetrators and touch him also *_(?)*(*unclear text*)
J: Right.
F: And I banned him from them and all that. Then he's only got to play with certain kids now in the court and...
J: Yeah. And is he doing that do you think?
F: He does.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Good.
F: It's just this one boy that actually hit him yesterday, he's also at this school Fergus.
J: Yeah.
F: Hit him yesterday and then he came to tell me and then I approached Fergus and then I asked what - what did Mikhail do to you so that you had to hit him? "No auntie Fatima he did nothing to me it's something that he did long ago". So I said it doesn't mean if he did something to you last year that you must hit him this year.
J: Yeah. Yeah.
F: So whatever he does to them, sometimes, you got no right to hit him...
[bad noise – as interval starts and continues for duration of interview]
J: Can you go out and close the door please? (*noise continues*) Can you stay out and keep the door closed please? Oh dear. What was I going to ask you? Does he talk to you much about how he – about how he plays at school or what games he plays or with who?
F: No.
J: No.
F: He doesn't talk to me about it. (*too much noise in background – inaudible*)
J: Yeah. And when you said that he sometimes – he doesn't like losing does he often end up having arguments with children he's...
F: Yes.
J: ...playing with?
F: A lot.
J: Yeah.
F: When they play a game where there's a winning team and a losing team, and he hates losing and if he does lose he fights.
J: Yeah.
F: Or even though when they play cricket...

J: Yeah.
F: ...and he's bowled out or caught out then he always argues...
J: Yeah.
F: ...that he wasn't ready or something.
J: Yeah.
F: ...always something that happens...*(too noisy)*
J: Yeah.
F: ...he hates losing.
J: Okay. And how does he sort it out in the end?
F: By fighting.
J: By fighting.
F: And that's all I know about.
J: M-m.
F: By fighting.
J: Yeah. Yeah. I think a lot of them do that. *(giggle)* And what are your main concerns for your children growing up in this neighbourhood?
F: As I think *(unclear)* like I'm not worried about my two girls because...
J: M-m.
F: ...they're not like that like – that they'll play outside like him – when like even if there's nobody outside – he wants to be there also, he will stay outside – he will go and play and that. Where they won't – they'll stay in the house and that...
J: Mm.
F: ...and like in the community where I stay in...
J: Mm.
F: ...I'm concerned for his – about him...
J: Yeah.
F: ...and there's a lot going - happens and all that, now there's no fighting there in the area that I stay in, and Bexhill also.
J: Yeah.
F: But its quiet, it's only now and then that there – where they'll really argue or that and he'll now go stand there...
J: ...and watch.
F: Yes.
J: So it's not – there's not a lot of fighting like in the Bexhill area. But there'll still be some arguments...
F: Yes.
J: ...and he'll be someone who'll kind of go quite close and watch.
F: Yes.
J: Yeah. Okay. Are there – are there still gangsters around or not particularly in that area?
F: There are.
J: Yeah.
F: But uh - they don't worry with the people.
J: Yeah. They just get on with their own thing.
F: Yes.
J: Yeah. Okay. And we've sort of talked about how you think you'll – how you'll try and talk to him about safety and about staying close by.
F: Well as I said you can tell a person something a thousand times he won't listen. He will only tell you now "yes mommy I will" but the moment – the moment he's out by the door...
J: Yeah.
F: ...then he can forget.
J: Yeah.
F: That's why you must always watch him and that.
J: Yeah.
F: And he's very scared of his father and that – my husband, my second husband...
J: Yeah.
F: ...his stepfather but it's not that his being ill-treated by him or anything...
J: Yeah.
F: ...it's just if he wants something he's scared to ask he'll always tell me ask me to tell, ask Daddy this and that...
J: Yeah.
F: ...but then I always tell him ask yourself.
J: Yeah.
F: Because whenever I ask also then it's an argument, why can't he ask himself and all that.

J: Yeah. Yeah.

F: But he's not being ill-treated. My kids are being treated all the same by him.

J: Yeah. Yeah. And do you feel your girls are a bit safer in the community because – because they don't want to go out a lot?

F: Yes because if the second eldest - if she does go to the shop, if she's in the court then I always watch her.

J: Yeah.

F: Then I sit and watch her walking but I won't let her play outside alone when there's nobody to watch them.

J: Yeah. Yeah. That's great. That's really all the questions that I had, it's really to find out more from your side about how - you know - where he likes to play and...

F: But he makes friends very easily.

J: Yeah.

F: He can make friends very easily. See like my mother - is not for long she's in Ottery - she - they moved...

J: Yeah.

F: ...she used to stay in Mitchell's Plain and then my mother moved to Ottery she's now by my sister...

J: Yeah.

F: ...just for the time being - he's made friends there. Then my mother and my father had to look after my brother's place now three weeks ago...

J: M-m.

F: ...and he was there - I think that was in the holidays as well. No, for the weekend or something, but it was the long weekend...

J: Yeah.

F: ...and he was by my parents as well and he made friends. That's why everywhere he gets...

J: Yeah.

F: ...and then he comes and he makes friends.

J: Yeah. And does he keep friends as well or do you...

F: Yes.

J: ...find they fall out often?

F: No, they stay friends.

J: So they might have an argument but then they're friends again and it's fine. Yeah. Because he's one of the first children I remember when I went to that classroom he's one of the first children I remember because he's very – he's got big eyes and he's very enthusiastic and I remember going in the classroom and he had such a friendly way about him and so I can see why he makes friends so easily because he's very – he's very friendly to people.

F: Yes.

J: And so he's one of the first children I remember from the school.

F: Yes.

J: That's nice.

F: But I suppose he's talked to you and everything. Is he open?

J: Yeah. I mean I don't ask him personal things so I don't ask him anything about the things we've been talking about. I ask all the children – first of all I ask them all the same questions really about - can you think of a time when there was fighting in the playground and tell me about that... *[Very noisy and intercom interruption – tape not off]* Can you close the door please? Thank you. And a bit about who his friends are and then I asked him, you know, what are the good things about your neighbourhood, what are the problems in the neighbourhood. But I don't ask them kind of personal things or things about – I ask them to tell me about yesterday and what happened yesterday from when you woke up till when you went bed. But I don't ask them personal things about the family 'cause – because that's not what I got permission from you from in the first place – it's really to find out about how children get on. And he's always been absolutely fine and then in the group we do things about – I'll ask them about – again about the fighting in the playground or about how children sort out fights or what do they think of – you know – we make a list of all the things they think of are problems in the neighbourhood and he always contributes and he's been great I'm afraid. Really nice to have. *(giggle)*

F: Okay.

J: Alright? Thank you.

F: Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix 8

Semi-structured Child Interview

I'm going to ask you some questions about how you spend your free time at school and out of school. I'll ask you about friends and about the neighbourhood where you live.

Views about the playground

Which of these faces shows how much you enjoy interval? (shown 5 faces scale to express feelings A=very sad face, B=fairly sad, C=neutral, D=fairly happy, E=very happy) Why did you choose that face?

Which face shows how much you enjoy time in class?(for comparison)

Can you tell me about what you and your friends usually do at interval? (last interval? favourite game? Who is involved? rules of game? who decides/is in charge?)

(Pointing to face at sad end of the scale) Can you think of an interval when you felt more like this? What happened? How did it happen? Who was involved? What did you think/feel? Does this sort of problem happen often? Why do these problems happen? What might stop these problems from happening?

What are the main problems at interval?

(younger children – what are the bad things at interval?)

If fighting is not mentioned in the above, do children often fight in or out of school?

Can you think of last time you saw or were involved in a fight? What happened? Why did it happen? How do you think the people fighting felt? What might stop this type of problem from happening?

If not at happiest, point to happier face and ask what would need to happen to reach that face? What would make interval even better?

Do you play with children in the other grade 4/2/7 classes at interval?

If not, why not? Are there ever problems between the classes?

Do you ever play with older/younger children at interval? (age/status issues)

When do you play together? Would they let you play with them if you wanted to? Why (not)? Where / what do you think they play?

Do you play with girls/boys at interval? (ie. opposite sex)

What do you play together/separately? Why?

Views about the neighbourhood

Can you tell me about your day yesterday, from when you first woke up to when you went to bed?

Who did you play with? Where did you play? How did you get to and from school? Is that how you usually spend time at home or in the neighbourhood? If TV – favourite programme, characters – why like them – heroes? Do you stop and play on the way home? How do you make sure you're safe on the way home from school? (specific-general)

Can you think of an occasion when you had a really good time playing with another child/children at home or in the neighbourhood?

What happened? How did it happen? Who was there? Where was it? How did you feel?

Can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?
What happened? How did it happen? Who was there? Where was it? What did you think/feel?

What are the good things about this neighbourhood?
(prompt for younger children: the area where you live)

What are the main problems in the neighbourhood?
(prompt for younger children – what are the bad things that happen around here?)
What are the main problems for children in this neighbourhood? Can you think of a time there was a problem in the neighbourhood? What happened? Outcome? What could/should have happened? Why do you think these problems happen? What might stop this type of problem from happening?

Where is it safe to play in the neighbourhood?
Where is it not safe to play? Why? What do people do to stay safe? What do grown-ups tell you about playing in the neighbourhood?

Some people, especially older people, join gangs. What are the good and bad things about being in a gang?
Do you know anyone who is in a gang? Why do you think people join gangs? What do you think they do?

Friendships and other peer relationships

Who are your main friends at school?
Do you have a best friend? Do you remember when/how you started making friends? Why do you think you are friends?

I know that (names of research group) are all your friends. Can you tell me about those people? *(indiv names as prompts)*

Think of someone in school who everyone likes/who is very popular. Who are they?
Tell me about that person? Why do you think everyone likes them?

Now think of someone very different from/the opposite of that person. Who are they?
Tell me about that person? What do other children think of them?

What makes a good friend?

Can you remember a time when you had a fight/argument with a friend?
What happened? How did you feel? Did you make up? How? Why do you think friends fight?

Can you remember a time when you or one of your friends was teased or picked on?
What happened? How did you or your friend feel? Why do you think they did it? How do you think they felt? Why do you think people tease each other?

Social support

If you had a problem, who would you go to for help?
(prompt: eg. Someone was being horrible to you)

Can you think of a time when you have asked a friend for help? What happened? Do your friends ever come to you for help? What do you do? What sort of problems might a friend be able to help with? What might they do to help? What will happen then and how will you feel?

In that group of friends we were talking about earlier, who would you go to for help? Why? Who would you not go to for help? Why?

What would you like to be when you grow up?

I'm inviting you and your friends to work with me in a group in school, about once or twice a week. The group will meet about 4 or 5 times. We will spend time thinking more about how we can solve problems in the playground or neighbourhood and we will do fun things like playing some games. Would you be happy to be in this group?

Appendix 9:
Child Interview Transcript

J: Jenny 31: Clinton

- J: Right Clinton, I'm going to ask you some questions about how you spend your free time at school and out of school. And I'll ask you about friends and about the neighbourhood where you live, is that okay?
- 31: Yes.
- J: Right. Okay. Here we've got some faces. Which of these faces shows how much you enjoy interval?
- 31: This one.
- J: C?
- 31: C, yes.
- J: Why did you choose that face?
- 31: Um, our intervals is a bit shorter now and we can't do stuff that we used to do like when we were smaller and that, so I choose that one as well.
- J: Yeah. So what did you used to do that you can't do now?
- 31: We used to run around and kick ball when we want to and have more fun than you have like now.
- J: Mm mm.
- 31: Now, it's changed a lot now.
- J: And is that because you've changed, or because the rules have changed?
- 31: The rules have changed in the school. So, um, now our principal say that we like must obey and now we're going according to the rules and that.
- J: Yeah. Okay, so there's not so much running around?
- 31: Yes.
- J: And what are the other things that you're not supposed to do now?
- 31: We're not supposed to kick ball in the corridors and we're not supposed to run on the passageways and we mustn't like swear and spit.
- J: Mm mm.
- 31: Ja that stuff.
- J: There are quite a few rules?
- 31: Ja.
- J: Yeah. Do people stick to the rules or not?
- 31: No, not most of the children.
- J: Mm mm. Others doesn't obey the rules.
- J: Yeah. And it seems to me there are teachers on duty but they're often, that's up this end...
- 31: Yes.
- J:so, people wouldn't see.
- 31: Children(?). Most of the teachers stand here on the hill by the field, so no one can see us, that's why we can play ball in here in our corridor.
- J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And what are the things that are good still about interval?
- 31: We, unfortunately we haven't got the field now to play soccer and that, so we can use our, our gravel pitch here at the front, there by our class, we can play soccer there but some of us get hurt - and this small field here, this piece of grass patch here...
- J: Yeah.
- 31:is too small for us, so its....
- J: Yeah.
- 31: Now we just kick ball and doing things.
- J: It's just quite a narrow strip, isn't it, and....
- 31: Ja.
- J: ...and also the ball would probably go through that door so....
- 31: Ja, I think so, ja. (*mumbling*).
- J: Okay, so you have to wait 'til the field is done.
- 31: Done, yes.
- J: Yeah.
- 31: But the time when they're finished, then we're gone, maybe already.
- J: Yeah. And what would make interval better do you think then?
- 31: I would say interval would work better if we like had different rules, but not just -like, how can you say - like you can kick balls....

J: Mm.
31: ...in corridors, but not high....
J: Mm mm.
31: ...and break the windows and that, and we can have our own longer intervals....
J: Yeah.
31:and have more fun.
J: Yeah. How long would you make interval?
31: Um, about... We have interval something to ten.
J: Yeah.
31: Right, and...
J: I think it's about twenty minutes - sounds right.
31: Ja.
J: Yeah.
31: And then I'll make it about something to ten, so about twenty, or twenty-five past ten.
J: So then more like half an hour at interval or break?
31: Ja, half an hour.
J: Okay. And then if you were making the rules then, what would your rules be? You'll still have the rule about not breaking windows?
31: Yes.
J: So it will be to kick the ball low?
31: Low and um, as I've said now, like no running where the teachers mostly walk.
J: Mm mm.
31: And then spitting, which, where germs can accumulate.
J: Yeah.
31: And like, no fighting....
J: Yeah.
31:and being horrible to each other. That would be my rules.
J: Okay. And why do you think the teachers have the rule about like for soccer?
31: I don't know, I don't know that one.
J: Yeah.
31: Some teachers doesn't like some boys to play soccer here.
J: Yeah.
31: And the other teachers again don't like some boys or girls to play soccer in the other..., So there's nothing, as, as I've said, there's like nothing you can do anymore....
J: Yeah.
31:at intervals.
J: Yeah, yeah. But one of the things that I sometimes see when I'm out and around at the interval, is that when there might be some groups of girls maybe, maybe some boys playing games and then if the boys go and play soccer, then everybody has to move.
31: Because some children um, um, when some children, the smaller children play in groups in that corners, and then like we, us big boys, like play there, we some of us, like um, aim to them and hit them and kicking the balls.
J: Yeah.
31: That's why, that's why, they, either they scatter or they move to other places to play.
J: Yeah. Okay. And do you think they should have some areas where you can play soccer and some areas where you can't?
31: Ja.
J: Will that solve that problem?
31: I think so ja.
J: Yeah.
31: And I think the school must be bigger because the school is far too small for us.
J: Mm. What, for the Grade Seven's?
31: Ja, for the Grade Seven's. (*chuckle*)
J: You need more space when you're that big. (*chuckle*) Okay. And do they ever involve you in making up rules?
31: Mm, no.
J: No. Its always the teachers who do that?
31: It's always the teachers.
J: And where do the prefects fit in?
31: The prefects - they can only do their duties, but they can't take some children for nothing in. Like one prefect, for example, a prefect doesn't like me. Now I like kick a ball, maybe against someone by mistake, but she don't like me then she take me to the office.
J: Okay.

31: Like that.
J: Are there boys who're prefects too?
31: There's only one, one in our class.
J: Okay. So it's mainly, quite a big group of girls.
31: Ja, it's mostly girls.
J: All right. Okay. And which of the faces shows how much you like your time in class?
31: I'll go for E.
J: Oh, so you really like being in class?
31: Yes.
J: Why is it so good in class?
31: Um, my teacher make the subjects, how can you say it, um, interesting and....
J: Yeah.
31:all that.
J: Okay.
31: So that's why I like it in class.
J: I can understand that, yeah. Okay. And who do you usually spend time with at interval?
31: Who do I spend?
J: Mm.
31: Mostly with my friends.
J: Which?
31: We just....
J: Which friends?
31: Mostly the ones on the page there.
J: So these, David, Luke, Charles.
31: Luke, Charles, David, Tariq and Michael and other friends. Sometimes we make friends with other boys, smaller boys and that's what we do intervals mostly.
J: Yeah. And what other kinds of main ways to spend your time at interval?
31: If we haven't got the ball, we either sit and make jokes or we just walk around and look for stuff to do.
J: So it's either soccer....
31: Ja and all that.
J:or kind of talking and chatting and..., Okay.
31: It's mostly that.
J: And who brings, does somebody have to bring in a ball then?
31: Ja. One of us. If all of us have a ball, then we can like, say one of them can bring one.
J: Yeah.
31: Because we can't have all balls.
J: No. (chuckle) And is it..., So usually the same person who brings the ball?
31: Yes.
J: Who's that?
31: Um, I'm mostly person, two mostly persons is Chris and Karl.
J: Yeah.
31: Yesterday Karl brought a ball, because Chris's ball, I don't know where's that one.
J: Yeah.
31: So he haven't a ball anymore.
J: Yeah. Okay. And is the person who brings the ball in charge or doesn't it really work like that?
31: No, no one's in charge of the ball because my friend with the ball who brought it yesterday, he say that the person who, like breaks it must buy a other one. That, that is our rules.
J: This person who what?
31: Um, brings the ball.
J: Yeah.
31: And he says anyone who breaks it or kick it away....
J: Yeah.
31:must bring a other ball or buy him a other ball.
J: Yeah.
31: That is our rules with him.
J: 'Cause it seems to me with some of the young ones that, if they bring the ball, then they're kind of in charge of the game a lot more.
31: It's not like that there with us, because some of us think that they're bigger than the others and they're much, how can I say um, more responsible then they say you don't touch my ball and all of this stuff.
J: Mm mm.

31: That's why then we just leave them and we just do our own thing.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. [*I'm just checking the microphone, yeah, it's fine.*] Okay and you said, and that you sometimes will play with the younger children.
31: Ja. I'll play with anybody who comes by me. I like to have fun. That is me, I like to have fun.
J: Mm mm. Okay.
31: I play a lot.
J: And do the young children often kind of come up and see if they can play?
31: The Standard One's and Sub B mostly come to us, and they play, they ask if they can play with us. Then we say yes.
J: And what do they want to play with you?
31: Like soccer or anything. Then we just keep our, like our big feet to the ground and not, trying to avoid hurting the small children.
J: Trying not to kick them too hard. (*overtalking*) Okay. And then, what about the children in the other Grade Seven classes?
31: We again, the Afrikaans think that they're like better than us, now they just want to fight with us and all those, they act, they're mostly rude with us. So we don't actually bother with them.
J: Yeah. Why do they do that?
31: I don't know, so there's one or two, I think they are gangsters in here, in those class, now they like want to bully us, but we don't want to fight, then we just walk away.
J: Yeah.
31: Then we just leave them alone.
J: Yeah.
31: Then we do our own thing.
J: Okay. And do they think its better to speak Afrikaans or English or...?
31: Who? Us?
J: Do they think it's...?
31: They think it's mostly better to speak Afrikaans.
J: And what about the English-speaking children?
31: We sp-, Afrik-, I mean English.
J: Yeah.
31: We're just mostly English.
J: Yeah, okay. It seems to me that there's a bit of a problem between, that there can be a bit of a problem between the Afrikaans classes and the English classes. Is there anything that could make that better?
31: I don't think, we, we won't get along with those because they will, they think that we're keeping us, how can I say, in our language, we like speak now, they're like thinking we're "*kwaai*". That's how I, that's our language, if we like want to speak in Afrikaans. We mix, and then they just, they want to keep them those big men and all this. And we just ignore them and walk away or do our own thing.
J: Yeah.
31: And they want to swear at us and tell us that what we must do and all this.
J: Yeah. So if I was talking to someone in one of the Afrikaans classes - which will be difficult because I can't speak Afrikaans - but, what would they say if I asked them, "What do you think of the boys in the English class are like?"
31: Some, some of our girls in our class are friends with those girls.
J: Okay.
31: So they, if one of our girls speak English to them, they, they also speak English but they will mix Afrikaans into English.
J: Yeah.
31: So that's how they relate to each other.
J: Yeah. Okay. And the English children in the English speaking classes will also often speak Afrikaans as well, presumably...?
31: And will(?)
J: ...or are able to.
31: Ja. Like I can, I can speak Afrikaans, but I'm not a person to speak Afrikaans every day.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. It's interesting, in England we don't, although there are lots of people who speak different languages, there's one main language. So if somebody comes to a school who doesn't speak English, then they just have to learn English.
31: Yes.
J: So there isn't....
31: No.

J: ...this kind of, the kind of problem that we're talking about...

31: Okay.

J: ...'Cause... It's a bit different. Okay. And do you spend time with girls at interval?

31: Ja, um..., My friends are Jacqueline, Ramona and mostly Fatima and Anna. Those are the girls I play with.

J: Yeah.

31: Like go on and make jokes with them. That's the only four girls I mostly play with.

J: Yeah. And so when you're spending time with them you'll mainly be talking or making jokes?

31: Yes.

J: That kind of thing?

31: Ja.

J: And are there some things that they will always do separately?

31: Sometimes they, they go their own way.

J: Mm mm.

31: So, I, so then we'll like, we will sit there and they will like come to us and relax there by us and just, then we just start a conversation or something.

J: Yeah, yeah.

31: It's all we do.

J: And has that got better as you got older? Do you think the boys and the girls are more likely to spend time with each other now they're in Grade Seven or maybe in Grade or?

31: Last year we, us like our group with those girls used to be best friends, but now after this holidays and now we're in Grade Seven, it changed a lot.

J: Okay.

31: Now and then, they like, we talk to them, now, it's mostly we just play with ourselves now...

J: Yeah.

31: And we don't talk to them anymore.

J: And do any of the girls play soccer?

31: If they feel like playing soccer with us, then they play with us, but sometimes they get their own ball and they play volley ball or something.

J: Mm, okay.

31: That's mostly what they do.

J: Okay. And then moving onto thinking about a bit more about the outside of school. Can you tell me about your day yesterday, from when you first woke up until you went to bed?

31: What I done before I went to bed?

J: Well, just go through, right through the day from when you first woke up.

31: Uh, I was like just walking around, walking with my friends, my one friend he was, what I think, a year, or two years back he was in a very, a car accident....

J: Yeah.

31: ...and he's a bit lame in the two legs, so we like just go for walks and do our own thing.

J: Is that before school or after school?

31: It was after school, and...

J: Is he someone who goes to this school? [*Loudspeaker bleep in background.*]

31: Sorry?

J: Is he someone who goes to this school?

31: No. He used to go to Steenberg High....

J: Okay.

31: ...this school over here but he's not in school anymore.

J: How old is he?

31: He's sixteen.

[*Loudspeaker in background. Tape switched off and on again. Interview resumed.*]

J: Pardon?

31: He's sixteen now.

J: He's sixteen, so did he leave school or is it something to with being in a car accident?

31: Yes, ja, that had, it had something to do with the car accident.

J: And then he couldn't go back to school after that?

31: Ja.

J: Can he walk now?

31: He can walk but he get, he gets lot of lame, lame in his legs and have it a, a bag.

J: Yeah.

31: So it's, It's difficult to walk with that bag.

J: Yeah, yeah.

31: So now he just sit in a wheelchair and one us, his sister, his brother push him.

J: Okay. And what do you do with him when you spend with him?

31: Either we, either we walk or we sit there by his place and like talk or... We got a kerm board(?), did you see a kerm board? It's almost like pool, but it's just round stuff..

J: Yeah.

31: ...and its flat and it's almost like pool but it's just different articles that's all. And we sometimes play or we watch movies, or play playstation games.

J: Yeah. Okay.

31: That's what we do.

J: And so yesterday before you came to school, so you got up and then how did you get to school?

31: I, every morning I either walk twenty past, or twenty-five to school, uh, from home to school and then sometimes my friends Karl, this other little boy, then we just start kicking ball.

J: Yeah.

31: Until the bell rings for school.

J: And do you walk to school on your own?

31: Ja, I live, I just live here by the school, here just here.

J: Okay, so it's not far to walk?

31: It's not far, it's a five minute walk.

J: Yeah. Okay. And you walk back on your own as well?

31: Mm.

J: Do you go straight home after school?

31: Ja. I don't go anywhere else. I just go straight home.

J: How do you kind of make sure you're safe? I know it's not very far to come but?

31: I got friends right around me.

J: Okay, so there's a lot of people around when you're walking along.

31: Ja.

J: Okay. And so yesterday you came in to school, walked to school, had school, walked back again and then did you see your friend?

31: Ja, I saw...

J: What's his name?

31: It's Dean.

J: Okay. Is he someone you spend a lot of time with out of school?

31: Yes.

J: Okay. And how do you usually spend your time at home or in the neighbourhood?

31: How do I mostly spend my time?

J: Mm.

31: If I don't go out, I just sit and listen to music or watch TV, that's all. That's mostly what I do. 'Cause I don't, I don't believe walking around, walking around alone, because that's how accidents happen and.

J: What kind of accidents?

31: Like kidnapping, raping and that. I just keep calm and sit at home and watch TV and listen to music.

J: Yeah. Okay and do you spend time out as well, do you? To see friends?

31: Ja, I spend mostly time out Friday, Saturdays and Sunday that's my only time I go out.

J: Mm.

31: Or if, if it, if it is in a week days its with my family, like mostly I have lunch or it's a party, that's mostly the times I go out.

J: Yeah. And if you go out where do you spend your time?

31: If like, for Christmas we go out, um, here to Sandvlei, have *braais* and that. We go for, out for, then we just have our Christmas dinners...

J: Yeah.

31: ...and parties. That's all.

J: Yeah. And on an ordinary day if you're, do you kind of play out in the yard or out in the park?

31: Sometimes I take my, my, my little puppy and go for a walk, just here to the back, to the park and back and then when I'm finished with that then if, if my friend Darren's outside, then I sit by him and talk and play and that's mostly what we do.

J: Yeah. And is it, so do you see friends from school, out of school or not so much?

31: Now and then. Now and then because my one friend, Kieran, he's, he's a brother of Ramona, now they live in Sterling Park and my other friends all live in Sea...(?), Long Plain and all that places.

J: So then, some of them are long way off?

31: Ja.

J: Okay. So it's mainly, is it mainly Dean that you see out of school then?
31: Ja. Well, mostly the only time I see him a lot, is in school.
J: Yeah.
31: And walking home, that's all that's the only time.
J: Okay. And do you play soccer out of school?
31: Now and then, here in Uitsigberg High's field.
J: On the field?
31: Ja, with my other friends.
J: Yeah. And is that safe there?
31: Ja it is safe.
J: Yeah. Okay. And can you think of a time when you had a really good time with another child or young person, and or group of young people at home or in the neighbourhood?
31: Um, Saturday, last week Saturday, it was my friend's, Dean his mother and father had their 27th Anniversary, so they had a party. That was a time I enjoyed myself.
J: Mm mm. Where was it?
31: There, at their house.
J: Their house?
31: Ja.
J: Yeah. And what did you enjoy about it?
31: We meet new friends, we and we enjoyed ourselves.
J: Mm mm.
31: And mostly there was no fighting, *skelling*, swearing, nothing.
J: Mm.
31: We just kept calm and party and we had fun.
J: Yeah.
31: That's all we done.
J: Okay. And can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?
31: Ja, when my, when I heard that my friend had a car accident.
J: Okay. So he was your friend before as well?
31: Yes.
[Siren in background. Tape switched off and on again. Interview resumed.]
J: And what happened? He'd had a car accident, was he in a car?
31: He was sitting at the back of the car and this man who knocked into them he was drunk.
J: Oh dear.
31: And so he rode with no lights and he rode with a speed into them and so they knocked him first, so he was the baddest out of all.
J: Mm mm.
31: His, his hipbone is right out and his, he got two plates here on the side.
J: Okay.
31: And he got two pee-bags and a um....
J: Ja.
31: And that bag.
J: (?) bag. And is there anything they can do to...?
31: Um.
J: Is he having to go to the hospital still?
31: Yes, last week he, they took out the one pipe where it was in his private part.
J: Mm mm.
31: They took it out and next one, the 16th then they take the other one out. So he can like accumulate and all that stuff now.
J: It sounds like he talks to you about these things.
31: Ja.
J: Do you think he kind of comes to share it with you because you're his friend?
31: Ja. We take each other as family. Because I knew him all my life.
J: Yeah.
31: So we take each other as family.
J: Okay. Okay. And then thinking about the neighbourhood generally, what are the good things about this neighbourhood?
31: Um, that there isn't mostly gun shooting, stabbing, arguments, killing and... It's just here by the shop here by us, down the road. That's the only bad thing, because they sell drugs and that there, and there's a lot of gangsters that sit there...
J: Ja.
31: And *skel* and fight...
J: Okay.

31: That's the only bad here, in our road.
J: Mm. So that kind of brings me onto the next question, which was, what are the main problems in the neighbourhood? (*chuckle together*) Is that the answer?
31: That's the answer, yes!
J: And so, what do you think are the main problems for children in this neighbourhood?
31: That they can get to the um, like some of it is gangsters, you can involve with them, asking to sell like drugs for them and do bad stuff for them.
J: Yeah.
31: That's what I think of what children can get hurt of and all of that things.
J: So they'll come and try and get the children to get involved?
31: Ja.
J: Okay. So do they do that with your friends so you?
31: No, I don't know one of my friends that do that. And not one of my friends are gangsters or a bad influence.
J: Mm mm. There's always that possibility I suppose.
31: People, ja.
J: That they could come and approach you, come and ask you those things. And that presumably is a problem for a boy, but wouldn't be a problem for a girl.
31: No. There in our road, some, most of the girls are gangsters.
J: Are they?
31: Yes.
J: How do they get to be gangsters?
31: The, some, like the, for example, there's the one girl on the corner, she lives there by us, her name is Karen. She um, she knows this um, boy, he's a gangster. Now they go out a lot and so that's how she got involved with gangsters and this.
J: So the girls get involved because they start going out with the gangsters?
31: Yes.
J: Okay. And can you think of a time when there was a problem in the neighbourhood?
31: Yes, um, when a man chasing another man with a gun, right in front of my door. And luckily the cops, the cops rode past us then. That was the only bad thing there by us that happened mostly.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And did you see them go past there?
31: I saw yes, they were standing by our gate. As they were running and so the man stopped and he kept the gun by his head and so just when he was about to shoot him, so the police came past. So they stopped everything and arrest this man.
J: And how did you feel when you saw that?
31: I felt scared because maybe he could hit the gun and the gun.
J: Yeah.
31: Could point to me or something.
J: Were you inside the house?
31: I was standing by the door.
J: Outside?
31: Outside.
J: Oeh!
31: Yes (*chuckle*)
J: Yeah. So it's lucky the police came that time.
31: Ja.
J: Okay. And why do you think these kind of problems you were talking about happen?
31: I think it's of drinking. Drinking problems and smoking weed. That is my suggestion.
J: Yeah.
31: Because mostly um, here at, again at the back, just by the park, before you get the park, uh, the gangsters call it "a yard", that's where they go drink and smoke weed.
J: Yeah.
31: And when they come out of there, then they're "high wire".
J: Okay.
31: Then they start this problems.
J: Yeah. So if they weren't doing the drinking and the smoking weed there, they wouldn't make?
31: They wouldn't ja, it would have been maybe a happier village, as we call it, a village here.
J: Yeah. Okay. And why do you think, what are the causes of the drinking and the smoking weed?
31: I think the causes is that the people who sells it, those, that is the people who causes the stuff.
J: Okay. And so what could stop this kind of problem from happening?

31: If, if the people, are like, for in, in like, for example like there's already wine places, so why must the people have like a house where they sell beers and wine, because there is already like, wine places, liquor stores.

J: Yeah. So they should just sell the wine and stuff at the liquor store?

31: Yes. Because some people they take advantage, then the police just think that they sell beers and wine in it, then they start um, selling weed and drugs and that.

J: Okay, yeah.

31: Yes.

J: So, okay that's interesting, so one possible solution will be to try and stop that from happening.

31: Stop that yes.

J: Yeah. Anything else that could stop those things from happening?

31: I think that they must ban wine and smoking.

J: Mm mm.

31: That's what I think that will make it better here.

J: Mm mm.

31: They must just ban everything.

J: Yeah.

31: Ban, the wrong stuff they must ban.

J: Yeah. And how would they know where the people were?

31: If some...

J: Thinking if they notice? (*overtalking*)

31: Some, some um, people phone to the police...

J: Yeah.

31: ...and tell them that this people is selling this and that, but if the police come here then they *mos* like hide the stuff away.

J: Yeah.

31: Then they *mos* don't know, then they think, ag they're just phoning for nonsense and that.

J: Mm mm.

31: Then that's how, that's how, that's how some people escape with the drugs.

J: Yeah.

31: They hide the stuff.

J: Yeah. So they're kind of prepared?

31: Yes.

J: Okay. And thinking about where it's safe, where is it safe to play in the neighbourhood?

31: In our neighbourhood here?

J: Yeah.

31: I think it's... We can play in our roads but it's just for some, some causes of people getting drunk and that, that's the only cause that its dangerous if we play in the roads.

J: Yeah.

31: It's the only thing.

J: Okay. And where is it not safe to play?

31: Um, here, like here.

J: That shop?

31: Ja, by the shop yes, just there.

J: Mm mm.

31: Because otherwise then it's quiet and peaceful here by us.

J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So what do people do to stay safe?

31: Some people's parents keep them in the houses, the children in the houses. Then it's like um, just the big, the big children and the big men, and women just walks around. Because some, some, now and then you'll never see us, like we're playing here or something in the roads.

J: Yeah.

31: Because you just mostly in the houses.

J: Okay, and what do the grown-ups tell you about playing in the neighbourhood?

31: That its dangerous and you can get involved, ja, get involved with gangsters.

J: Yeah.

31: Because this is, here, just here, here by those face brick houses, it's a merchant, he sells drugs.

J: I think I've seen him out there.

31: Ja.

J: Even during the day sometimes, yeah.

31: Ja.

J: And it seems to me that may be, particularly difficult when you're about your age because with the younger children you can say, stay in the house and they will.

31: They will yes.
J: But when you get to being kind of your age, that seems to me that's more difficult really.
31: Some, some children if they're my age like 13, 14 they're getting too big for their boots.
J: Mm.
31: And some, the children just think, ag to hell with what they say, and lets we go our own way and that's how the trouble begins.
J: Mm mm.
31: Ja.
J: Are there places that people your age can go in groups, that are safe places to go together and?
31: Our safe place to go in a group is to the Mall.
J: Yeah.
31: Or like into, like here by to Max, that's.
J: Yeah.
31: A dancing club.
J: Okay.
31: But now I think they're going to ban it because mostly, mostly gangsters go there and then they fight there.
J: Yeah. So that's not such a great place.
31: Ja. Now on Saturdays and mostly Saturdays we just go here up to the Mall, play games and walk around.
J: Yeah. Presumably in the Mall you kind of need money.
31: That's um, from Thursday already we organize this thing, then Friday we get our money, that's when our parents pay.
J: Yeah.
31: Then we, if we're like hungry, we just club together and then we buy us food.
J: Okay.
31: That's all.
J: Yeah.
31: And from the rest we can like play games and like here too by Smokin' Token.
J: Yes, yeah.
31: We just play games and after that we come home.
J: Yeah. Okay. Is that the game shop near the 7-Eleven?
31: Ja.
J: Yeah. Okay. And you've talked a bit about gangs. What do you think are the good and bad things about being in a gang?
31: I think that the good is, there's no good in, in being a gangster. In gangsters there's two reasons, either you go to jail or you go under the ground. That's the only two reasons I think that is bad being a gangster, and this violence and all this things are gangsters.
J: Mm.
31: Because gangsters think that they can take over and just rule other people and children.
J: Mm mm.
31: That's my say.
J: So what happens when you go "underground"?
31: If you go, by, by saying that, you either you get killed.
J: Okay.
31: Or you, you like, ja get killed and you get buried.
J: Okay, yes.
31: That is.
J: Okay, and okay, so that's one of the problems of being a gangster.
31: In gangsters yes.
J: Why do you think people join gangs?
31: As I said now, some people join gangs to be big, Mr. Big Stuffs.
J: Yeah.
31: And they can like just do what they want to do.
J: Yeah. So when you're saying about some people your age will decide they're not going to kind of follow the rules, and they're getting a bit big for their boots, are those the people who you think might become the gangsters?
31: Ja, mostly because, as if, as you can see in all this, in all gangsters there's mostly just Afrikaans.
J: Mm mm.
31: Like this two Afrikaans here in Grade 7, I think they're, they're gangsters.
J: Do you?
31: Ja.

J: So how do you know if somebody's a gangster?
31: Either you can see on their hands or here in their neck, they uh, how can I say it, they're tagged.
J: Yeah.
31: You get there's numbers to say what you are. There's a "27", that to say um, you can kill and a "26" is you steal, and a "25" in, how can I say it, you're a teller.
J: You're what?
31: You're a teller, if one of your friends like steal and you weren't, and you were with and they just catch your friend, then um, like the friend, the "25", go to the police and tell them that what he done. But in the meantime he was also with and there's a "30", that is a person who um, who wants money.
J: Yeah.
31: He wants money.
J: Yeah. Okay. So they're going to have do robberies and things?
31: Ja.
J: And so, is it like marks?
31: Ja.
J: Or tattoos?
31: Some you, ja, some you can get on your bodies, on your arms and here behind the ear and here.
J: And is it a number that you have on you?
31: Ja.
J: So you might have a "30" and "25" and that means you've done those things?
31: Ja, um, like if you go into prison, if you're not, if you weren't a gangster there, they will still tag you with a number, because in jail there's, like how can I say it, there's men who get attracted to other men.
J: Yeah.
31: And then there's a "28" who's a, he's gay.
J: Okay.
31: And then when you come out of the jail you have, you have a tag with a "28" on.
J: Okay.
31: It's to say that you will, you were a wife in jail.
J: Okay, so the word goes round, even when you're in jail?
31: Ja.
J: Mm. And so when you're a gangster is the idea to get as many numbers as you can on you?
31: Ja, it's, how can I say.
J: It's cool, or *lekker* or something?
31: Ja, like that, um, if, if you want to be a certain gangster you must choose a certain. Like if I want to be a gangster and I want to just kill people or like stab people then I want to be a "27".
J: Yeah.
31: Ja.
J: Okay. And to get into a gang do you have to do some of these things?
31: Ja, like if you, if you want to be a "27" for example, you have to take a gun and shoot it in the air, that's to say, okay you can be a "27". And then in the following, if, if like a person stabbed one of, of your family in the gang, then you must go kill that person or hurt them or do something to them.
J: And what if you want to get out of the gang?
31: Um, in some gang relationships they believe if you want, if you want to come out of the gang, they will, then they hit you and beat you up, then you're out. And it's hard to get off, attacking you and all that stuff.
J: Yeah. Okay. So that's true in some gangs. Will every gang have a leader?
31: Ja, every gang must have a leader.
J: How do they decide who the leader is, do you know?
31: My friend is a gangster, he told me if, how to, to see if, if he can be a leader is, he's daring.
J: Yeah.
31: If, if you say you can, if you must do it, you'll do it and then as you become a leader then he can tell you now again what to do and then he can sit and he can receive the stuff that he stole and.
J: Yeah.
31: Like.
J: So the way to get up towards being a leader is to be as daring as possible?
31: Ja.

J: So that's how you get kind of status in the group?

31: Ja.

J: Okay. So is it your friend who told you all about this... (*overtalking*)?

31: Ja, he lives in Long Plain, he's a "9" (?). You get different names in gangsters.

J: Yeah.

31: Like there's the "JFK", that's stand for "Junky Funky Kids".

J: Okay.

31: And then there's the "JMS", the "Junior Mafia". Now those are the rich gangsters again.

J: Okay.

31: And of all the, that is, that is gangsters that own places.

J: Yeah.

31: And they, and they're a big family. Ja.

J: Mm. And some of the taxi drivers, are they involved as well, or is that different?

31: Most, most of the taxi drivers.

J: Most of them?

31: Ja. Like this merchant here, he, he owns about fourteen or fifteen taxis. Now all, all his um, the boys that work for him are gangsters.

J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. What could, what could kind of stop the gangsters, stop the gangsterism?

31: That I don't know, because every time you stop them, a new gang come up, so I don't know.

J: Yeah.

31: What can stop gangsters.

J: And why do you think there are more gangs in some communities than others?

31: In, there's mostly, mostly gangs in the poor areas like this. This is (?) and this is the place for gangsters, (?) here for B Street and that, that is where all the rich people... Now there you will find no gangsters.

J: Okay. So is it partly 'cause people can't find work?

31: Ja.

J: Or want money?

31: Ja.

J: Yeah. Okay. Okay. Thank you for all that. I've heard things about gangsters, and kids tell me bits but no one has told me so much. Now moving onto thinking about friendships, who are your main friends at school?

31: My main friends are Luke, Ross, Kieran, Karl, me. Now me and Karl we grew up together.

J: Mm.

31: We came from pre-school up now until here.

J: Okay.

31: So we actually are best friends and Peter, Neil and Rory. That is my most friends at school.

J: Yeah. Okay. And I was going to ask if, if, do you have a best friend?

31: That was, that is Karl.

J: Karl?

31: Yes.

J: Okay. And I was going to ask how you, you probably don't remember this, you've been friends for such a long time, is do you think you'll remember how you started making friends?

31: Um, I started making friends is by going other places and just in, in like walking over. When I met Kyle in "Sunshine Corner" that's in Twelve Avenue, I met him the first day I went to pre-school.

J: Mm mm.

31: And so, I was playing and so he like *mos*, he sat on a swing, and so I started talking to him.

J: Mm mm.

31: And that's how we became friends.

J: Yeah. Okay. And why do you think you and Karl are friends?

31: I think that we, we have a great friend relationship, we never skel, we never fight and we do right stuff to each other.

J: What kind of right stuff?

31: Like um, for example we don't fight.

J: Yeah.

31: We buy each other if we haven't got, if I haven't got, then he gives me.

J: Yeah.

31: If he haven't got, I gives him.

J: Okay.

31: It goes like that.

J: And thinking about the group here, that, there's David, Luke, Charles, Lester and Tariq, is it?

31: Ja.
J: Am I pronouncing it right?
31: Ja, Tariq. Ja, ja it is Tariq.
J: Tariq. Can you tell me about those people?
31: Those, they're all right, um, Tariq is, he's one of the, he's one of our prefects in the class.
J: Okay.
31: See, and he's one of the, the, the people who gets the money. Got the money, so we play with him mostly, but.
J: What do you mean "one of the people who's got the money"?
31: Like us, we um, Karl and Luke, we aren't so rich like him, because he can get everything he wants.
J: Okay.
31: And we have to wait to get our things.
J: Yeah. Yeah.
31: So.
J: So he's from a richer family, is he?
31: Ja.
J: Okay. And what about David, what's David like?
31: David, I met David in Sub B, and so from then, we, David is, is he's actually, he was shy in those day, so as he became friends with me, I told him, you mustn't be so shy and now he's all right now, he's a nice.
J: Not so shy?
31: Ja.
J: Okay, what about Luke? What's Luke like?
31: Luke, I met Luke when, in Sub A.
J: Yeah.
31: And so from there we grew up, so he's all right, so we know each other from long now.
J: Yes. What kind of person's he?
31: He, I, I don't like him, when, when he gets angry because no one want him near him because he will snap.
J: So he can get angry sometimes?
31: Ja.
J: Yeah. Okay. And then you keep away from him then?
31: Ja, some teachers say that we mustn't be together because we're naughty together, we catch up, uh, strangest mischiefs and all that in school. That's all we do if we're alone.
J: What do you think about that, is that right?
31: No, it's wrong because, we sometimes if, if the small children fight and we're near there, then, then the teachers blame us.
J: Yeah.
31: They say that we involved them to fight and all this stuff.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And what about Charles, I've realized I'm getting confused, this, is, is it Charles who you were talking about before, who's your best friend, or is that Karl?
31: Karl, Karl.
J: Karl. That's what I thought you said, and then I thought maybe I've just misheard, okay.
31: Charles, Charles is the one who had leukemia.
J: Yeah.
31: Ja, and I met him in Standard Four.
J: Mm mm.
31: I was, ja, and so from there I met, and so no, no one wanted to speak to him, because he's like new and we don't know him. Now and so first interval I like, we walked, and so I asked him if he want to come with, so he said "ja", so we spoke and then that's how we became friends.
J: Okay. And what kind of person is he?
31: He's also very shy and he's up to now he's still shy.
J: Yeah.
31: Ja.
J: Okay. And what about Lester?
31: Lester.
J: You haven't said much about Lester?
31: Lester's all right, but just now and then that he's, he's um, how can I say, he's, he's, he feel lonely.
J: Mm.
31: Because now and then we walk, and then he, then we leave him here to like talk to someone, and we, and then he just sits there and with a sad face.

J: Okay.

31: So he's like a sad person, in a way.

J: Okay. Yeah. What cheers him up?

31: We, we cheer him up, we make jokes, that's the time when we sit down and talk to each other.

J: Mm mm.

31: Ja.

J: And what about Tariq? What kind of person is he?

31: Tariq is all right a person. He likes making jokes and now and then he sits with us. But mostly now he play with his friends, Paul and John and...

J: Mm mm. Okay. Is all this group the same religion or are some?

31: Tariq is a Muslim.

J: Okay.

31: And the others are, we are just Christians.

J: Yeah. Are the Muslim families sometimes richer or is that not right at all, it's just because you said he was from a richer family?

31: From a, ja

J: Is that sort of..?

31: Because some, some coloured, I mean Christians are richer than Muslims.

J: Yeah.

31: Muslims are only famous in owning, owning their own businesses and owning their own shops.

J: Mm.

31: That's the only..., Ja.

J: Okay. Yeah. It's again, that's something I know very little about, the different communities that there are here and that's interesting. And can you think of someone in school who everybody likes, someone who's very popular?

31: Uh, mm mm, I can't think of that, because all, everybody likes everybody here. It's just now and then you get some people who don't like each other.

J: Yeah. What about if you would think, to think of one person in your class who you thought was a particularly popular person?

31: I think my teacher is.

J: (chuckle) You think your teacher is. Your teacher's not one of the ones I was thinking of though, what about students?

31: Um, in our, if I must choose a girl, I'll say it's Ramona.

J: Mm mm.

31: She's, she got a nice personality, she's got nice ways and she's not rude with a person.

J: Mm mm.

31: And in a boy I'll, I'll take Charles.

J: Mm mm.

31: Because he's a one who'll always be there for you.

J: Mm mm.

31: And he will take up for you.

J: Okay.

31: That's....

TAPE SIDE A ENDS - BEGIN SIDE B

J: Clinton, can you think of somebody who's like the opposite of those people?

31: Um, there's no one. In our class everybody likes each other.

J: Okay.

31: So we just, we keep calm in our class and every, and we play with each other.

J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So if you took Ramona, for example and then thought of someone who's just very different from her, can you think of someone?

31: Fatima. She is a person that um, want to keep, keep um, how can I say, like she want to take someone else's um, personality and she can like copy it, because she, she's friends with Ramona.

J: Mm.

31: And she want to like just try and be like Ramona.

J: Mm.

31: But then in other words, she's not so right, because she's now and then rude with a person.

J: She's now?

31: She's now and then rude with a person.

J: Okay.

31: Ja.

J: Okay. So what do you think makes a good friend?

31: I think, um, in a good friend there must always be a good relationship between the friends and there must never be arguments, fighting and that.

J: Yeah.

31: That's what I think.

J: Yeah. Okay. And can you remember a time when you had a fight or an argument with a friend?

31: With my, my friend, he's, he lives in Strandbloom now. He used to, he also used to come here in Sandwell, he's in Standard Six now. We grew up from since we were babies.

J: Mm.

31: So we grew up and we had a fight over a girl.

J: Mm.

31: And so, like we said, "*ag* you're this" and "*ag* you're that", so for a week we never spoke to each other and so a few times and we were starting to talk and play. That was the only fight I had with a friend.

J: And that was when, was he still at Sandwell when that happened, or is that more recent?

31: Ja, he was in Sandwell...

J: Okay.

31: ...that time.

J: And why were you fighting over a girl?

31: Uh, we both liked this girl.

J: Yeah.

[Background siren- signifies break time]

31: And we, at the same day we wanted to ask her, ask her out and so.

J: Yeah.

31: We, and all of a sudden we started this argument.

J: Yeah. What grade were you in then?

31: I was in Grade Three and he was in Grade Four.

[J: Okay. Okay. I've got about four or five more questions, do you want to?

31: *No, I'll answer it now.*

J: Should we just do them now? Is that all right? Thank you.]

31: And why do you think friends fight?

J: Um, some friends fight over other friends.

J: Mm mm.

31: Because if you, if you have too many friends, one friend will like you and a other one will like you, then the other one who really likes you, will start a argument.

J: Mm mm.

31: And that's how fights begin in friends, so...

J: Mm. Okay. And can you remember a time when you or one of your friends was teased or picked on?

31: Um, Charles. Um, I had a fight with a other boy who um, insulted Charles and all.

J: Mm.

31: And so I said he must stop that, all this, and so he said, "*ja* we can fight after school" so I covered up for Charles, and so I fought with him.

J: Okay.

31: The other boy.

J: So you kind of fought for Charles?

31: Ja.

J: And that was after school?

31: After school yes.

J: Are there a lot of fights after school?

31: Not recently, not in this year. Last year was a lot of fights yes, and mostly girls again.

J: Really?

31: Ja.

J: Mm, I wonder why? Any ideas why?

31: *(chuckle)*

J: All right. And so that time what happened? After the fight?

31: And the boy just left Charles alone and, and so we had, and so we were in big trouble because we had to bring our parents and all that. So after that, that was over, no one took notice of no one.

J: And did the teachers see that you were fighting? How did the teachers find out?

31: No, no one, they were having a staff meeting and so in a fight everybody runs after the person who's in a fight.

J: Yeah.

31: And so the, and so the teacher, one of the teachers heard that all the childrens are shouting and all that.

J: Okay.

31: So that's how they found out.

J: Yeah. And did any of your other friends come and join in?

31: No.

J: Did they help out at all?

31: Ja, um, one, Luke.

J: Ja.

31: Luke came and helped, so after that we just went home.

J: Okay. And if you had a problem who would you go to for help?

31: To my mommy, she's, she's the one who's always been there for me.

J: Mm mm.

31: So, I'll, I'll go to her.

J: Mm, okay and what about friends? Can you think of a time when you've asked a friend for help?

31: No. In all my life I've never asked a friend.

J: Yeah. Okay. So do your friends ever come to you for help?

31: Like um, Karl?

J: Yes.

31: He was, a boy was picking on him, so I was like sorting the thing out and now this boy and Karl is friends now.

J: Yeah. Okay. How did you sort it out?

31: I asked them like why, why are you bullying him and all this.

J: Yeah.

31: So he told me why, because he's swearing this, the boy out and all that. So I told him, um, look you can like just talk the thing out and be friends, so after that they were friends.

J: So, what are the kind of problems that friends can help each other with?

31: Um, in, in a fighting situation you can like say, just walk away or talk to the person.

J: Ja. So that would help, and help out with a fight. And in that group of friends we were talking about earlier, who would you go to for help?

31: I'll go to David. He's, he's also a person that would like take after you and all that.

J: Okay. And who would you not go to for help?

31: To, to Charles, because he's a person that, if, if its another fighting situation and he, he won't like go up to that person, because he's a very, how can you say it, scared.

J: Mm.

31: Because he doesn't like fighting and he, he's very scared of a other, next person who can hurt him.

J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And just going back, I just want to ask you a question that's quite difficult, I've just thought of it really, to do with the gangs. How do you think young people can resist the pressure to join a gang, how can they say no, to being in a gang?

31: In, in no situation.

J: Mm.

31: The girl or the boy can just say "no I don't want to be in a gang". And if like a gangster like want to pressurize you to be in the gang, you can like tell someone to tell him to stop talking and that, and that's how I think a person can just say no.

J: Yeah. And do you have to be quite strong, do you think, to say no?

31: No, because...

J: Strong in yourself, not physically strong?

31: No, some gangsters they think as, as I said earlier on, they think that they can control people and...

J: Mmm.

31: Because in Long Plain, my mom, my mother lives in Long Plain.

J: Mm mm.

31: Now there's a lot of gangsters *mos* there, now I, I know a lot of gangsters.

J: Mm.

31: Now there's one boy who came from Rocklands, he's a, he's also a gangster.

J: Mm.

31: So he asked me if I like want to be in his gang.

J: Yeah.

31: So I said no. Why, because what's the use of being in a gang if you can be strong...

J: Yeah.

31:and like do stuff for yourself if you're not a gangster.

J: Yeah. Yeah.
31: So you don't need to be strong or strong-faced to the other person...
J: Yeah.
31: ...in the gang.
J: Yeah. Okay. All right. The last question is, what would you like to be when you grow up?
31: I want to be a stockcar racer. That is my...
J: Really?
31: ...that is my dream and the, mostly, either a motorbike racer or a V-12...
J: Mm mm.
31: ...racer, and I want to own one day my own panelbeating auto shop.
J: Yeah.
31: That is my dreams.
J: So you'd do both those things?
31: Ja.
J: Yeah.
31: My uncle, he's, he's a manager of a, of a panelbeating shop, so he told me all what you need and that, so I'm like convinced now what I must need and what I must do...
J: Yeah.
31: ...to succeed this dream.
J: And so owning your own shop would that give you the money to...
31: Ja.
J: ...be able to do the racing?
31: Ja, you see I planned everything out already. I'll start in a small garage or a small yard.
J: Mm mm.
31: And from that money I can buy a small, like a small place where a car can like fit in and work and from that money I can build up to buy my own shop.
J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. That's brilliant.

End of Interview

Appendix 10:
Group Session Plan and Transcript

Playing in the Neighbourhood

4G Session 4

The focus of this session is to follow up children's concerns about their neighbourhoods. Children's views about play and safety in the neighbourhood are explored, using aspects of a problem solving framework and using a life story metaphor to explore causes and solutions. The session also develops plans for the group film.

Warm up game: Feely bag – describe what you are feeling for others to guess.

Round: If I was a colour....

News: any thinking/ideas over the week about the short film – method (acting/song/poem/story) and theme (how friends can help each other to solve a problem – in neighbourhood, playground, between friends)

Theme:

Brainstorm good things and problems for children in neighbourhood.

Prioritise problems (most frequent, most feared, most manageable?).

Expand detail on prioritised problem. If gangsterism is the main problem, use gangster drawing activity to explore further – or adapt visual activity to prioritised problem.

Draw person who has recently joined a gang. Draw him when he was 11. Draw him when he was a baby.

What kind of friendships does he have now? What does he do with his friends?

Appearance? Feelings? What was he like at 11? Friends? As a baby? What happened on his time line? What will happen in another 10 years? Think of alternative ending and how to get there.

Why does priority problem happen?

What are the solutions?

How can children stay safe?

How can and do children choose alternatives to violence and crime?

Can we make a difference?

What do children think about cycle of violence theory?

Film planning:

Telling a story about...

children in the neighbourhood,

children in the playground,

friendship, arguing, fighting,

facing a real life problem and solving it together

What is your central message for other children?

Beginning – action – ending.

Next week: short film and how friends help and support each other/what can groups of children do to prevent violence/keep safe/solve neighbourhood problems.

Endgame: Pass the rhythm or movement.

Appendix 10:
Group Session Transcript

GROUP 4G-4 (Grade4/Girl/Int4)

J: Jenny Fa: Faiza M: Melissa S: Simone
F: Ferial Ch: Chantal Sh: Shanelle ?+: more than one

[000-036] WARM UP GAME / ROUND – IF I WAS A COLOUR (DON'T TRANSCRIBE)

[036] NEWS (first section just audiotaped so voices difficult to distinguish)

- J: Okay now the other thing we tend to do is we talk a little bit about the news. And we've have a long time because we had a holiday last week so, no one was in school last. So has anyone got any news they want to share? What is it Faiza?
- Fa: When we went to the Voice of the Cape's Spring Festival and I saw Ferial and her sister and so she didn't see me and so I _(?)(mumble)
- J: She saw you there. And what did you do to her to – so she saw you?
- Fa: I run *in her back (mumble)*
- J: You *hit her(?)* - not too hard I hope?
- Fa: No.
- ?: *(giggling)* And so I turned around so I saw her.
- J: And is the Voice of the Cape a festival? *(very noisy)* Is it a theme festival?
- ?: Only for Muslims.
- J: So it's a Muslim Festival?
- ?: Humans Rights and with Chistians also... *(chairs making a big noise)*
- J: Yeah, so anybody can go but it's a Muslim festival that you can go to. Can I just ask something that's just reminding me on - Rabea in Grade 2 she said to me, because we were talking about when we're going to have our get together. I said something about bringing some food and she said that she's fasting in November.
- ?: And me.
- ?: Yes.
- J: So will all the Muslim children be fasting? And that means you don't eat at all between dawn or dusk.
- ?: My birthday is in the fasting.
- J: Pardon?
- ?: My birthday is in the fasting.
- J: Oh no!
- ?: And my mommy's birthday.
- J: Oh!
- ?: And my sister's friend.
- J: So does that mean you can't have food?
- ?: Only in the night, when we get up in the morning early and...
- (video starts here)**
- Fa: _(?)(mumble)... cakes away before we go pray and the cake's away.
- J: Okay and that's every day Monday to Friday?
- ?: ... or watermelon.
- J: Can you drink water?
- Fa+F: No.
- J: We can't drink.
- ?: Only in the... _(?)(overtalking)
- Fa: And early in the morning.
- F: You can fast the whole day or so.
- J: When does it start, the fast?
- F: The 17th of November.
- Fa: Of November.
- J: The 17th. So if we met before the 17th November I can bring food?
- ?: ...the 11th, then we fast *(too soft – talking to each other)*

J: Okay. I must just write that down because that's very important because that means that we have to have our group get together before the 17th November because I wanted to bring some food maybe and I don't want to do it like some...

Ch: Mrs Parkes can't we bring something?

?: Cakes or...

J: No it's fine - I will bring it, because it's my time to say thank you to you.

?: *(all talking)*

?: ... bring something. *(overtalking)*

M: Mrs Parkes we must also say thank you for Mrs Parkes.

S: Mrs Parkes gave us such a good time.

J: Ah, that's nice.

F: And I think we must also bring something Mrs Parkes.

J: November. And is this Eid, the Eid beginning? How do you spell Eid. E-I-D?

?: Eid.
[Intercom interruption – tape not off]

J: Eid Fasting. Okay. Sorry it's on the bottom of the Ground Rules but it will mean I will remember that. Okay.

Ch: Mrs Parkes?

J: Yeah?

Ch: We can also bring something to say thank you for Mrs Parkes... *(sound not clear)*

?+: *(all talking)*

J: You're going to do the play next week.

Sh: I can bring dip.

J: We'll talk again.

Sh: ...for Mrs Parkes.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: *(giggling)*

?+: *(all talking)*

J: I don't know which room but somewhere in the school Faiza.

?: Can we bring... *(all talking)*

J: I would like to be in room – yeah. I mean, hopefully next week we'll be in there as well.

S: Can we wear casual clothes or must we wear our school clothes?

J: Pardon?

S: Can we wear casual clothes or our school clothes?

J: I think it has to be school clothes...

?: And the...

J: It's not going to be a big party...

S: But when we...

J: ...we're going to bring – watch the film.

S: ...but when we come here and then can we bring casual clothes with us. Then we can dress up and act like...

?+: *(all talking)*

?: The act man.

J: No not with that - because the thing is all the other children in school will still be in lessons so I have to be very careful not to do that makes – 'cause there's a lot of children in school that feel a bit unhappy that they're not in a group.

S: Can't we go in the other room there on the other side...

Sh: Mrs Parkes...

S: ...there - because there's no other people there.

Sh: Not like that Mrs Parkes, when we come here only then we bring casual clothes and then we're in class and then we go to the toilet and then we dress us quickly and we come here.

J: Then there'll be no time to watch our film. Don't worry we'll talk about it again anyway. Because I have to still sort the dates out with the teachers because I know there's lots of tests and things. Do your class have test as well?

?: Yes.

?: Ja.

Ch: Yes, we're having a test tomorrow.

Sh: And after tomorrow we have a test. We're having rounds.

J: Oh, okay.

Sh: If you win a round you must pay R2,00 for __(?)(mumble)

?: And me.

J: Okay. So when you win you have to pay some money?

?: And we're going to...

J: That's interesting.
S: ... we have to pay the R2,00 for *_(?) (not clear)* then you're going to be the same time.
J: Okay. Now I wanted to ask you - do you remember last time we talked about...
Ch: Our dance.
J: Yeah. The dance or the story or the play that you're going to do and we talked a little bit about it and you were going to go away and think about ideas.
S: Excuse me Mrs Parkes every time the boys come brag by us, they're going to do a show and they tell my teacher but my teacher knows already and they tell my teacher all the time.
Ch: Then they say - then they say the boys, the boys is going to win the cup.
J: But you know they can't possibly...
?: *_(?) (mumble)*
J: So. What - have you thought of some ideas? What could our story be about?
Ch: We can - gangs
J: Yeah.
Fa: I can - we can dance and sing.
?: *(all talking)*
Fa: That we must all be friends and we must go...
J: Okay, so hang let me just write this down. *(Fiddling with paper)*
?+: *(all talking)*
Fa: Is Mrs Parkes making the boys, the Standard 5 boys?
J: Yeah. Yeah.
Fa: Because I saw... *(overtalking)*
S: Mrs Parkes also played the fruit basket with them.
J: Uh yes.
?: That other time when we...
J: Yeah.
?: ... did wait by...
J: I don't do all the same things with all the groups, but I do play fruit basket with everybody.
F: When *_(?)* was away we made ladies and they didn't play. *(mumble)*
?+: *(giggle)*
J: Yeah.
?: ...and children...
?: Ah, children are...
J: Was somebody away?
F: Yes Shanelle wasn't here.
J: Did you miss - ah Shanelle was away last time - when we made the little people.
?+: Yes.
J: Did you tell her about it?
F: Yes.
J: Did you hear about it?
Sh: Mm.
J: It was quite funny.
?+: *(all talking)*
?: ...and Melissa did make a *_(?) (overtalking)*
J: And they didn't sit up did they? Okay, right what we need to do for our film planning is something to do with telling a story about children in the neighbourhood or children in the playground or friendship, arguing or fighting. Or facing a real-life problem and solving it together. Okay. And the first question I've got is - what is your central message for other children?
Fa: Mrs Parkes what is the...
J: What is your message? And I think that - was it Ferial who just had a message. An idea for a message?
Sh: Stop fighting, arguing and fight - stop fighting, arguing and...
Ch: What?
F: We're all playing and...
Fa: And fighting and we all...
F: ...start to cry..
Fa: 'Cause they're all fighting and then, the bullies and his friends come...
F: And then Faiza comes when...
J: Just a minute - sit up in your chairs.
Fa: First we're fighting and then the teacher did come and tell you don't fight, don't fight rather talk it out. And then in the end we can all say, we're a crime stopper.
S: No we all be sad, we all be said, then... *(fading)*

Sh: Bullies, teachers...

S: We have - we have – do we have... Melissa can be a...

?: Ssh.

S: ..and then Mr B come - give us rules like...

?+: *(all talking)*

Ch: It's not rules it's rights.

J: *(overtalking)*...someone gave you some rights?

F: We need to hear and learn...

?: *(all talking)*

J: Who said that – Mr B?

?: Mr B.

J: Oh, Mr B. And okay. Did he? That's interesting.

?+: *(chanting)* Bullies, teaches parents to ...

J: So he actually gave..

Sh: wrong to do and children need to learn and play...

F: Children need to run and play.

?+: *(all talking)*

Ch: ... run mad and *_(?)**(mumble)*

J: Yeah.

?+: *(all talking)*

Fa: And run...

?: No and play with a rope.

J: Yeah.

?: *(all talking)*

?: And there was another one and what's it called?

J: Sounds like you remembered them very well.

?+: *(all talking)*

?: Did he?

?: *_(?)* *(overtalking)*

J: Okay. So, yeah why I wrote this down is because a good story usually has a beginning - something that happens first of all it has some action in it and an ending. And Faiza was just suggesting that there was a beginning - was going to be about fighting you're suggesting...

Fa: Yes.

J: ..and I think over here I don't know if it was Shanelle, said something about fighting as well. Yeah you said that the message could be "don't fight" didn't you?

Sh: Don't fight and stop arguing.

J: And stop...

?: *(all talking)*

J: So these are possible messages. We have to decide which ones you want to do. Don't fight.

Fa+: Don't swear. Don't swear.

J: Yeah or swear *(writing it on board)* or ..

Ch: Don't back chat

J: Don't argue. There was a nice message from you first of all - when we first started talking about this, what was it you said? Everyone...

F: You mustn't swear, we first can fight and then one of us can...

Ch: ...can *skel*.

Fa: All of them children can fight...

F: No we're friends - you friend...

Fa: Yes and then the children come in over there that while they're fighting and still fighting, just going to get hurt. Let's talk it over.

S: Mrs Parkes can we do it now?

J: Well, I want to do something else first but I thought if we've got some ideas now, we could let the ideas sit in our head and then later on this morning we can actually try and maybe get the story written down. And I think it will be nice if its something that really matters to you girls as well. So although we all know that boys often get into fights and sometimes girls do too. Then maybe we need to think of the kind of fights or arguments that girls have 'cause it's kind of about a message from you.

F: A message for the boy that they must stop fighting with the girls...

?: And stop swearing...

Ch: ...otherwise if they hit girls they are girls.

J: Yeah.

Sh: And stop keeping big for their boots.

J: Yeah. Or you could think about the girls or you could think about...

?: Or stop running.
 J: Okay. I think we're getting – I think we're getting on. That's sound like a it's...
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 F: Crime stopping...*(overtalking)*
 J: Crime stopping, crime stopping - I'll just write that down – I need to remember that idea. You can also think whether the story's going to be something in school or if it's going to be something outside school.
 ?: Mrs Parkes?
 J: Yeah.
 F: We can also make a song, because in our class we each must have a song remember that we must stop killing the animals.
 J: A song?
 Sh: Stop killing the animals *(singing)*
 J: Well that would be lovely!
 ?: *(all talking and singing)*
 Sh: Mrs Parkes – Mrs Parkes and then we can chase the animals in here and then we must start and then afterwards then after that and then they must start.
 ?: No after... *(all talking)*
 J: Hang on, hang on, hang on. We're going to have to move on. We'll do it later. Okay can we do it at the end? Can we do it right at the end of the session? We'll – the song you've just sung. But you might want to make up a song about what we're doing. Right back on chairs. And Faiza turn around so you can see - I think the thing is, the reason we keep on moving is because – no sit on your chairs, I want you all to be able to see each other. Do you want me to use, I think we do need use this because... *(fiddling with the flipchart)* Before we can think about our play – I'll come around this side for a bit I want us to think about the neighbourhood.

[152] BRAINSTORM: GOOD THINGS/PROBLEMS FOR CHILDREN IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

J: We've done a lot of talking about the playground problems that happen in school. We haven't talked very much about playing in the neighbourhood. And I know I've talked with each of you about it. But we haven't talked much about it. So what I wanted to do first is to – I need you too tell me first some of the good things in the neighbourhood. What are some of the good things – you know the neighbourhood – the streets around here, around where we go to school where we live.
 Sh: It's boring and quiet in our street.
 J: Pardon?
 Sh: It's boring and quiet in our street.
 J: Boring and quiet. Is that one of the good things? It's quiet in our street is it – is a nice thing.
 Ch: It's nice in our street it's nice and quiet.
 J: Lovely.
 Ch: ...and then Friday night and then we play but all of us is nice.
 J: Okay.[160]
 S: It's nice in our street.
 Ch: *(?) (unclear)*... be six o'clock in the house.
 J: Right and what are the other good things about the neighbourhood around here? Ferial?
 F: We always play together and we don't fight.
 J: Okay. So people in the neighbourhood play together and don't fight. That's one good thing. Simone?
 S: And in our road also we don't fight and we play with each other..
 J: Okay.
 S: ...and then the boys catch the girls but we don't play rough, we don't hurt children and when we wanted to block it, they don't hit them hard and we don't hit them hard, and we don't hurt the children. And the children can do whatever they want to.
 J: Right lovely. Melissa can you think of something good about the neighbourhood?
 M: They don't fight in the road. They always, the whole day in the house... *(mumble)*... *sometimes they come through(?) (bad sentence please check)*
 ?: ...her brother's face. *(mumble)*
 S: And she told me that she must... *(mumble)* her boyfriend.
 J: *[talking in background to somebody at the door - not clear – somebody looking for a lost clip – tape not off]* Oh dear it's one of those days.
 ?: Jenny, where was her clip?

J: It was under the – under the table over there, but its squashed by the table, but it's fine. Okay so that's some good things about the neighbourhood. Now what about the problems? What would you say are the main problems in the neighbourhood? Problems for children in the neighbourhood? And this is a brainstorm so we'll write lots of ideas down.

?: *(talking to each other in background - not clear)*

J: Okay. Let's see where shall we start? We'll go around...

F: Shooting.

J: Shooting.

F: ...when I sleep and then I heard a gunshot.

J: Okay.

Sh: Shooting.

J: Hearing gunshots at night. *(writing it on board)* Yeah. Faiza, can you tell us a problem?

Fa: Then in the nights then especially when it's close to Guy Fawkes and then a lot of children burst crackers and then I can't sleep at night.

J: Okay.

Fa: Bursting crackers and swearing. *(chairs making a noise)*

J: Swearing. Shall I write that? Making a noise at night? Or shall I write swearing and making a noise?

F: Yes when they're bursting crackers.

J: *(writing it on board)* and bursting crackers.

?: There's no problems here... *(talking in background - not clear)*

J: _ (?) have you got one?

?: No.

J: What do you think are the - what problem in the neighbourhood do you think?

Sh: Shooting at the back in the bush and then they sleep there and...

J: So shooting in the bush... *(writing it on board)*

Sh: At the back... *(mumble)*

J: Or at the back. *(writing it on board)* Is the bush an area... [203]

Sh: There by Huitberg also... *(mumble)*

J: Yeah. Sorry what did you say?

Sh: In Huitberg they shoot and then I can hear it also.

J: Okay so a similar problem to this one. Simone?

S: Men fighting with women and children...

J: Listen.

S: ...and men fighting with ladies and...

J: Okay.

S: ...and then they hurt people... *(very soft – not sure)*

J: Men fighting with women.

S: Hitting in the windows and dragging the children over here, people raping children.

J: Do you hear about it – how do you hear about it?

?: On the radio.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Okay.

?+: *(all talking)*

?: Hitting or raping children... *(too soft)*

S: And last time I've seen that high school when I saw...

J: Just a minute, just a minute. Someone said that happened to me.

?: Yes.

J: Charné?

Ch: One day me and my friend were in the shop so we came back, a white car stopped and that man pulled down his pants and he rolled down the window and opened one of the doors and he called us and he wanted to grab my friend and so I pulled her, so we ran away and so that man did turn the car around so he turned until we were in the house, and so we ran into my house.

J: Were you near the house then?

Ch: *(nods – no verbal answer)*

J: That's good.

Ch: It was on the corner by my house.

?: Jenny uh...

J: That was frightening. And what happened after that?

Ch: And so my daddy did come and so he was gone.

J: Your daddy went out to see – what would your daddy have done if he had found him?

Ch: I don't know. My daddy say if he grabbed him he will kill that person.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Okay. Now. Simone I think you were in the middle of telling us - you said about men fighting with women. Did you say something else to go on this list?

S: Jenny, once there was a time I think it was yesterday...

J: Yesterday?

S: ...and this lady was fighting with her and she was married this lady, she was fighting with a girl that was __(?) her husband, she was in Matric, she was in Matric that girl. And then she was fighting and she also pushed the girl in the road and the car came by and knocked her over and then she was swearing and ...*(fading)*

J: So this is not just men fighting with women, grownups fighting with children or hitting – was she hitting the child?

S: Yes she pushed her and hit her and __(?)*(unclear)*

J: Shall I say “hurting children”? grownups hurting children *(writing it on board)*

?: Yes I know women also rape children.

J: Women?

?: Yes when we were walking still...

?+: *(overtalking)*

J: Simone – hang on Melissa – what problem in the neighbourhood can you think of?

M: They fight.

J: Fighting. Yeah were you thinking of the grownups fighting or the children fighting?

M: Small children and grown ups.

J: Okay. So we’ve got men fighting with women and we’ve got grownups fighting *(writing it on board)* and does that happen in the daytime or at night?

M: In the night time.

?+: And in the day.

S: The children fight during the day, some – but then there in our road then the children fight the boys against girls. And I always go when it’s six o’clock because I don’t stay late outside. Mine is eight o’clock and so they were fighting with us and hitting ...

J: Is everyone listening?

S: ...I was and I was stop, I was trying to stop there was __(?)*(mumble)* of us out there... So I said – so I told – call my friends here ‘cause I had – I had pizza my mommy gave it and so I had to share with my - and I couldn’t... All came running back and then __(?)*(mumbling)*

J: Okay. And Charné did you want to add anything to the list?

Ch: Yes they’re bursting crackers in the night and the dogs is very scared of the crackers and the dogs are barking...

J: Sorry. Say again.

Ch: They burst crackers and during the night...

J: Yeah.

Ch: ...and then the dogs run into the house and then we can’t get the dogs out and then the dogs want to go bite them and so my dad had to fasten our dog and so he break and jump over our fence and so we had to go __(?) that boy.

J: Oh dear. So is that this one? Bursting crackers at night?

Ch: Yes.

J: Or do I need to add anything?

Ch: Yes.

?: Mrs Parkes...

J: Yes.

Ch: ...yesterday five boys in our road was bursting crackers and so the police came they were following us so we run, so we jumped over Sebedia(?) School and so the police was still catching them and so they turned around __(?).... So they went under there so they were laying there and so then the police came they hid in there in the school and so they jumped over the fence and so they ran back to my street.

J: Okay.

S: Jenny, Jenny...

J: I’m not sure which of you had your hand up, I know one of you has had your hand up for a long time, was that you...

Fa: Me.

J: ... it was you wasn’t it? Go on then Faiza.

Fa: My sister did, not my sister my cousin goes to Square Hill

J: Melissa, listen Shanelle’s sitting beautifully.

Fa: My cousin goes to Square Hill,

Sh: mommy’s daughter

Fa: And she goes to Square Hill and one day she went to the toilet and so when she came off the toilet so she a man there, and she asked "what are you doing here?" and so he just left her and so he pushed her _ (?) also and he started choking her and so another girl came in and so...

Ch: He wanted to rape her

J: Was that at the school toilet?

Fa: Yes, and so, she pushed him in the back and so she ran out and so they were shouting, so _ (?) (*mumble*) complained and she heard her _ (?) wanted to choke but she didn't know that it was my cousin so she phoned my mommy and so... (*talking in background - not clear*)

J: It wasn't at this school was it?

Fa: Square Hill.

J: Okay.

?: Jenny.

J: It was frightening.

?: Jenny.

J: I'm glad she got away.

?+: (*overtalking*)

J: Was she too frightened to go to school?

?+: (*nods - no verbal response*)

J: Yeah. Ferial?

F: A man – men when they drive wild, they ride wild there in the road, and so they did a bump a dog over and there by Lavender Hill and they shot two ladies and three men.

J: Was that a long time ago or just a little while ago?

F: It was Saturday night.

J: Really? (*somebody coughs – can't hear end of sentence*)

?: Mrs Parkes uh...

J: So another problem – we've got about the shooting. Shall I write men riding wild you said? So there's.. (*writing it on board – talking to self*)

S: Jenny?

J: Dogs or it could be people as well.

S: Jenny?

J: Yeah.

S: Byron, Byron in my class...

J: Yeah.

S: ...he also shot, he also _ (?) (*mumble*)... the one day kills the birds... (*talking in background - not clear*)

J: He what?

?: Mrs Parkes, Mrs Parkes...

S: Byron he do – he smokes.

J: Just a minute – he smoked?

S: And he was smoking...

?: And he was smoking and he...

Ch: And he has tattoos on his body.

S: And now they - they said if you wear tattoos and then the police will give you a fine.

J: Okay. And if you wear tattoos what does it mean?

S: And Mrs Parkes he's a gangster all the time he's part of a gang.

J: Of a gang?

?: (*overtalking*)

Ch: He's a spoilt brat.

?+: (*all talking*)

?: And so he said...

J: The group is called "Spoilt Brat"? Is that what you said "A Spoilt Brat"?

S: Yes. And then everyone _ (?) and then sometimes when he goes, when he's to big then I always smell his bad smoking and then...

J: Okay. Okay.

F: And my teacher was talking about gangsters and so the teacher said something and so he was probably _ (?) (*mumble- pointing to her chest*)... I'm a gangster.

S: He said (*points to her chest*),

F: And he smokes in the park.

S: And he stands there around and he swear at the children.

J: So, (*overtalking*) are gangsters one of the problems in the neighbourhood?

S: Yes.

Sh: I don't think so.

J: You don't think so? Why don't you think so?

?: *(overtalking)*
Sh: We don't have - only rude children..
[Intercom interrupts – tape not off]
...children are in our road but there's no gangsters.

J: Okay. So one problem is – there's a problem is rude children. But thinking outside your road to the bigger area around here. Steenberg/Retreat/Lavender Hill that kind of area. Don't you think gangsters is a problem...

Sh: *(nods)*
?: Mrs Parkes?
J: ...in the big area not just your road. Okay. So rude children is a problem and gangsters. Why is gangsters a problem?
S: Because they hurt people that's how...
?: *(all talking)*
Ch: ...and they swear and steal...
S: And they steal.
?+: *(all talking)*
Ch: ...and they fighting and gambling.
S: And once he told me also...
J: Okay, so it's stealing... *(writing it on board)*
S: He stole the – once he told me when we listen to - like Eugene(?) told me – he is too - that when they're in the group they go out and they make fun of poor people and then they come here and they say "you worth/were(?) nothing to people" and anything like that and they hit the people like that and...
J: Yeah.
S: ...he once he also told me _(?) and when he's going to be big he's going to smoke dagga.
J: Aah. Okay. Charné yeah?
Ch: Mrs Parkes and then Saturday we go ___(?) and so they were popping there and so the other man with the white bakkie...
J: Popping crackers or popping something else?
Ch: Popping with the cars.
?: With the cars.
J: Okay.
Ch: ...and so they bumped a lady over that her brain shoot out...
J: Ah!
Ch: ...and so the police so the _(?) so the police asked that man what happened and so...
[Intercom interruption – tape not off]
...and so they are making, and so he said it wasn't him, so all the other people said it was him and so the police took him and so they and they _(?) and so the children was crying 'cause she was driving the car and the children was crying and so they – they didn't - trying to make them take them home.

M: And his mother *(overtalking)*...knocking of the bus and her friend...*(not sure - overtalking)*
J: Okay. That's *[knock on door – tape not off]*
?: Mrs Parkes and he hurts people's friends.
?: Mrs Parkes...
?+: *(all talking in the background)*
J: Did he?
?: He say and then he's rude last time in the class.
?: *(all talking)*
J: And what do you say then?
?: Then he mustn't at the back of my – then he pulls our hair but he runs...
?: But then he kiss you Faiza's hair.
J: Let's move on. Right. You've done lots of listening. Now I want us to think about this list and to agree – everybody – which of these things do you think is the biggest problem for children in this area? Which of these is the biggest?

S: Shooting.
J: Right so Simone thinks shooting. Charné what were you going to say?
Ch: Raping children, shooting, swearing.
S: I thought that raping and...And gangsters.
Ch: Bursting crackers during night and they can't they must go sit on, and on the beach...
J: Lots of them. Let's choose one or two, maybe that go together. Shooting or breaking...
S: Jenny. I say everything is.
J: Aah.
Fa: Is the biggest problem in the neighbourhood.

J: Quickly all together what do you get?
?: The pooh!
J: How much of these things are to do with gangsters?
?+: *(all talking)*
J: A lot of them?
Fa: Violence...
J: Violence.
Sh: ... I think gangsters are the most _(?)(mumble) things in the neighbourhood. *(unclear sentence)*
Sh: And raping children and PAGAD... [W taps R on arm and whispers something to her]
J: The raping of children is that...?
Sh [to Fa]: It is.
Fa [to Sh]: It isn't.
?: *(mumble)*
J: Ferial...
Fa: Do you know what PAGAD stands for? People Against ...
Ch: What?
?: *(giggling)*
Fa: People against...
J: Gangsterism and Drugs isn't it?
Fa: [looking at Sh] See?
Sh: No.
Fh: It is.
Sh: PAGAD is a group
?+: *(all talking)*
J: ..finish this discussion.
S: Mrs Parkes do you hear what happened in New York and in Washington?
J: Yeah.
S: And then they say that America... *(talking in background - not clear)*
J: Yeah.
S: Because that was a world trade centre where they...
Sh: Jenny, in America they want to burn all the countries. They shoot against us
?: And they bomb our places
Sh: And when they go to the show or something then they throw bombs on stations and people die. *(talking in background - not clear)*
J: Who are they? Who does that?
?: *(all talking)*
Sh: The American's people.
J: The Ameri-; oh you're talking about the gang called Americans or are you talking...
?+: *(all talking)*
Sh: The whole America's country is a gangster.
?+: *(all talking)*
?: America's country is against us
Fa: Some people only have stones to throw and the Americans have the big cannons and guns...
?: Do you know...
?: No.
S: And they want to make war also now.
J: Who wants to – the Americans?
?: And they...
Ch: Mrs Parkes, my mommy say that the Muslims, that the Muslims...
J: Just a minute, just a minute.
?+: *(all talking)*
J: Charné? Shanelle save it for a minute. If it's important you can say it, but there's...
Ch: I think it's the Muslims or the *Slamse* [*Afrikaans slang for Cape Coloured person*] I don't know, but the...
F: [glances at Faiza] *Slamse* is Muslims.
?+: *(all talking)*
Ch: I don't know, I don't know - so my mommy say they are all PAGAD. *Slamse*, I don't know
J: So some people, I think some people think that PAGAD is like a gang and other people I think you were just disagreeing with that weren't you?
?: PAGAD isn't a gang.
?: PAGAD is a gang because two of their group, they ran out of jail and they're supposed to go to court because they killed a lot of people. It's only some of them, but not all the people.

?: *(all talking)*
J: Just a minute.
S: Some people, uh...
J: What was Faiza -- I just want to hear what Faiza was going to say.
Fa: Only some people do that things they go to jail and that, but the other people, but the other that's already in jail they didn't do that stuff but some people are gangsters, other people throw bombs or something or anything and then they blame them, PAGAD and then they put them in jail.
?: But Mrs Parkes.
J: You can say it to Faiza if its..
?: But Mrs Parkes, no I don't know what I wanted to say now.
J: It'll come back, it might come back.
S: Jenny, but my ma, my grandma said but maybe they do that, the people that did jump out the window, did save their lives on that bomb and some were injured and the man's face was full of blood.
J: Yeah. I know. Melissa -- let's hear Melissa.
Ch: Mrs Parkes, she say that I said they are PAGAD [pointing to F and W]
?: I said they are people against drugs.
?: Oh.
M: Charné said that you mustn't listen to them [pointing to F and W].
?: Oh.
Ch: I said you mustn't listen to the Muslims.
?: But PAGAD's...
?+: *(all talking)*
?: But then it's not killing (?)*(overtalking)*
?+: *(all talking)*
J: Go then, what do you want to say to that? Ferial what do you want to say to that?
F: But me and Faiza is not killing people.
Sh: We and Midaad.
?: *(all laughing)*
J: Charné, what do you want -- I think what Charné was trying to say is...
Ch: I said...
J: ...something a bit different, go on Charné say what you were trying to say.
Ch: I said they're not them, other Muslims.
J: And what do you think about that?
?: That they, that they...
J: Do you think she's right?
F: Yes.
S: But the, but the Americans they wanted to come bomb our country first but then they didn't because they catch them and now, and now they make the Muslims angry and now the Muslims want to do it to them because they like cross with them,
Fa: 'cause they start first..*(talking in background - not clear)*
S: They started first yes, and it was their men and they want to come, but the...*(mumble)*
J: Yeah.
S: ...the Americans, that was a world trade building.
J: But I think the -- the thing that I think is that sometimes you get people who are -- have very extreme ideas and they might be Muslim or they might be Christian or they might be some other religion, or maybe they're no religion and they find an extreme idea, but the problem when something like this happens that you were talking about, is that people say all Muslims are like that and of course that's wrong. Is that - that's what you were saying, isn't it?
F: [nods]
S: But they want to come to everybody's door when they're Muslim now and they say you did that. Because it was an important building and that they, they put a bomb, they put a bomb or something up and they put a bomb in the world trade centre where there was stuff in, but then...
?: And the Pentagon.
Fa: But the Americans they killed ladies and children, and people.
?+: *(overtalking)*
J: What, you mean when they bombed Afghanistan?
?: Yes. *(all talking)*
S: *(beginning unclear)*... they bomb like the world trade centre and the Pentagon, and that's important places ... because...
J: What do you think Americans should do now?

S: They should stop the war and....

Sh: No, they should build the buildings....

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Sorry – Shanelle what do you think?

Sh: They must build the building all over because it was them...

Fa: Yes but then the Americans must also build the Palestinian,

Sh: The Palestinian

Fa: All their buildings

?: *(giggling)*

Sh: I mos [*Afrikaans confirming kind of word, ie. "did"*] said America is...

?+: *(overtalking)*

J: Sorry - hang on, hang on... Faiza finish just what you were going to say.

Fa: I did finish.

J: You did finish. Ferial, let Ferial...

F: And the Americans can kill us here but when we want to kill them and then it's a big problem, because on TV they show it every time...

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Yeah.

Fa: ...but on the news and then they only show a small piece about - what you call it?

Sh: Pakistan.

Fa: Pakistan...

J: Yeah.

Fa: But, on TV they show all night about America...

J: Yeah.

Fa: ...and that big piece at the bottom America...

J: Yeah.

Sh: But when, but when it's - when something happens here in South Africa

Fa: They will just call it Muslims and then they only show a small piece.

?+: *(all talking)*

Ch: And they show how the people go to America...

Fa: No they don't.

Ch: Yes they do. They show how it's there when you're walking around and everything.

Sh: When something happens to us here and then they will just show it once on the TV but they won't care about our country but they will just care about their America because they show it over every time and it happened in September and every day show it.

J: M-m and just a minute. Melissa what do you think the Americans should do? After the World Trade Centre got bombed?...

Sh: They must build the building.

J: What do you think?

M: They must stop the war...

J: Stop the war.

Fa: ...and make friends.

J: And what do you think Charné?

Ch: I say they must make it exactly the same like it were...

J: Build it up again?

Ch: Yes. And then it mustn't be and they must stop the war also fighting and they must sort things out and...

Sh: They must build it again, because that's only world we live in.

J: Okay. Right. One two three four on this and then we're going to change subject – yeah?

F: People rape children here and they don't put it the whole day and the whole night on the TV but they want to put it the whole time on the TV.

J: Yeah, good point.

S: Jenny, my grandpa say they mustn't come show it here because they want to let the other people from our country go stay there now-now, but then they're going to show it only they're going to show it half but they show it then we must miss all our movies out and they can watch and we must see there...

J: Yeah.

S: And they can watch their movies and ...

J: And last point on this?

Fa: When the World Trade Centre bomb up and so the first thing they showed and they said it was the Muslims.

J: Yeah. The first thing they said.

Fa: But they didn't have any proof but

S: Proof that the Muslim was.. (*overtalking*).

Fa: It could even be people from their own country.

F: Then they say it's America.

J: Okay enough of that America.

?" (*giggling*)

J: Let's come back to Uitsigberg now. That was very interesting, you've got lots of ideas and things to say and to discuss. And I want us to move on because I want us to think about your play, or the dance or the song what we're going to do for next week. But - and so we're going to save some of these things and we're just going to think what to say for next time. What I – just one thing – if you take the problem of the – say the shooting and we've talked a lot about hearing shooting being a big problem in the neighbourhood...

Ch: And gambling.

J: ...Raping. Hearing about raping.

Sh: And gambling... where's gambling?

?: (*all talking*)

J: And we've got to add gambling to our list. Okay. Don't add anything else though because I want us to just – and the gangsters – all these things are sort of connected I think. What causes these kind of problems do you think? Charné?

Ch: Mrs Parkes when they drunk and then they start shooting, swearing and stabbing each other and then so the gambling starts.

J: So...

Sh: What gambling – gambling is when you go to the casino...

Ch: So?

Sh: ...and then you...

J: Okay.

Sh: ...gamble – gamble for money.

Ch: So?

J: So well thinking about the shooting and the raping and the gangsters it could be -are you saying that people when they drink a lot make them more likely to get into arguments and do some of these other things?

F: Like in...(mumble)

J: Okay so alcohol, let's just put that over here for a minute (*writing it on board*) Somebody else had an idea about the causes. Faiza what were you going to say about the causes?

Fa: They do it because of money. (*talking very softly*)

J: What about money?

Ch: Because of...

J: Just a minute.

Fa: They want to steal the money and when the people don't want to give them money and then they start shooting and they rape you.

J: Okay. So the causes there, are you saying its being caused – because - or is it wanting more money?

Fa: Wanting more money.

J: Okay so wanting money (*writing it on board*)

?: And... (*talking in background - not clear*)

S: Jenny?

?: Sit back (*whispers*)

J: (*giggling*) I can see you! Yes?

S: Jenny, my mommy and my daddy got a divorce because my daddy is a alcoholic and we don't want him to be and [?] she can't stand it anymore

J: Mm.

S: That's why they live in separate houses.

?: (*all talking*)

J: Right. And some of these things can be very hard to change, because people get habits for some things, smoking, drinking even some of these other things too.

R: Jenny.

J: Okay, thank you for that. Yes Shanelle quickly.

Sh: And it starts from arguing.

J: And it starts from arguing. Okay so another cause is arguments and why do you think the arguing starts then Shanelle?

Sh: Because if they don't want to give him a cigarette or something and then they want to make a big thing about it

Ch: Of a small thing

Sh: And then they start fighting and swearing and bombing and throwing and...

J: M-m.

?: *(giggling)*

J: So arguing – so do people argue more in some places than other places do you think?

Ch: It starts from...

J: In some areas?

Ch: It starts from Bexhill and then the _(?)

J: Why Bexhill?

?: Its _(?)(mumble) also... *(unclear)*

J: Why Bexhill? Why would people argue more in Bexhill than here?

S: Because (?) there's JFK.

Sh: Junky Funk Kids

F: Last week we went on a train _(?) and so a man did kill(?) him and so he told us and his friend, she stands on the corner and she sleeps with everybody.

J: Yeah.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: That's called being a prostitute isn't it?

?+: *(all talking and start singing a song)*

J: Hang on.

F: Stand by the door and stand in front of the yellow light. *(explaining about the song they were just singing)*

?: And Mrs Parkes and we mustn't forget about our ticket.

J: Yeah.

Sh: And Mrs Parkes one day I was standing _(?)(mumble) waiting for my friend so we went around corner so we asked that lady for her name and she said, "No thank you" and so there was one lady in the house so she said come with me, my house is just on the corner so we went with her – so we did, we thought she just live in that area so she let us follow her to (?) block and so she robbed us of our money.

J: Oh dear.

Sh: And so my mommy said we were brave to go on a run because she was also, going to do something to us, like when we get - maybe she's leading us somewhere and every time I told my friend something then she say "what did you say, what did you say now"

J: Okay.

Sh: Because she knows if we hear we know that she's going to do something to us, but I didn't want to tell her what we said.

J: Yeah. Okay these are the causes, these are some of the causes we talked about, what about the solutions? How can these problems be solved?

Sh: My mommy said she's cursed.

J: Pardon?

Sh: My mommy says maybe that lady is cursed. *(very soft - not quite sure)*

J: Oh, she's cursed?

?+: *(all talking)*

?: I think so.

?: *(giggling)*

J: Just a minute. Let's just take Shanelle's point. Shanelle, do you think if your mommy says she's cursed, is your mommy saying that's the cause of the problem?

Sh: No, she's cursed, it will be bad luck for her.

J: Bad luck okay. So one solution might be bad luck for those people. Okay.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Sorry, what was Simone – Simone what were you saying?

S: *(beginning of sentence unclear)*...then I look like this né, but he was also nine he and my sister was saying look at him..., so I looked at him some time so his eyes was brown and so his hair was spikey and then I just thought his eyes was blue... *(unclear/mumbling sentence)*

?+: *(all laughing)*

S: ...different colour hair also, *(overtalking)*

J: Very cosmic.

?+: *(all talking)*

J: Okay other solutions to these problems. Anymore? Can anyone think of how we can solve these problems? What do you think should be – I bet I know - this group is the most amazing group for thinking of things. Charné what do you think?

Ch: Excuse me Miss?

J: What do you think – how can these problems be solved?

Sh: Did you say "Excuse me Mrs Parkes?"

?: *(giggling)*
 Ch: Mrs Parkes?
 J: I tell you what I think that we've talked so much about this we should talk a bit more about this week.
 Ch: Mrs Parkes, they're laughing at us... *(overtalking)*
 J: I know they're still thinking about things they did last week.

[584] NEXT WEEK / FILM PLANNING
 J: Put your hands down a minute, let's move on. Let's move on. Right I think we need to think about what you want to do for the five minute show. Okay now I know that you've said maybe a song. Maybe acting out or maybe a dance of some sort.
 S: We can do the dance and we can all have...
 ?: *(all talking)*
 J: Okay let's come up with a story. We need to do this quick and you're maybe going to act it out.
 S: Then we can say, then we can say...
 J: ..sit down. Right. We've got – where are we going to have this – we've got a message here – don't fight or swear or argue. Okay? Are we going to have..
 Ch: A story.
 J: ...let's think of a story. Okay. What happens at the beginning of the story?
 Sh: Stop it now...
 J: We've got six people acting in it okay?
 S: And then we can all do...
 J: Charné?
 Ch: On the beginning of the story we must first...
 S: Candle(?)
 Ch: And then after that we start drinking and after that we start fighting and then, speak with everybody and then we can have some action and at the end we're going to like have some endings.
 S: Then we're going to have like...
 J: I want this to be problems for the children...
 ?: Then we're going to say, then we're going to say, "Stop this right now, stop this right now,..."
 J: Okay so. So one possibility is not to do it like a story it's actually to act out or mime maybe, some different scenes and different things that you think are problems for children and then to maybe make up a song about stopping it. What do you think?
 ?: Stop crime - stop crime.
 J: What do you think? One story – you've got your suggestion there, you see you have a different...
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 J: Listen everybody! I know you've been listening for ages and you're probably ready to go home and do something. Maybe we should try – so maybe we don't have a beginning, a middle and an ending. Maybe we say, okay this group has decided to act out some of the problems that children have and then you can show problem one is this. Problem two and then you can make up a song to - about stopping these things.
 S: Stop the crime *(singing)*.
 J: What do you think about that idea?
 F: Yes.
 S: *(singing)* Stop the fighting, stop the swearing.
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 J: No, you won't be doing it in front of anyone, we're going to film it and then we'll just show it on the film on television, not real television, not real television, just for us.
 ?: *(all talking)*
 J: So, and the nice thing about filming it, is that you can – you don't have to do it all in one go you can sort of cut and then do a bit a more. So let's try out some ideas and things. Okay if we were going to do – okay Charné what was one of your ideas?
 Ch: At the beginning it was gambling...
 J: Yeah.
 Ch: ...and then they start fighting and start drinking ...
 J: Okay, drinking. Drinking. Do you think we could have two people who want to try acting out drinking? Well maybe everyone should and then – shall we do it...
 Ch: ...drinking and...
 J: Right everybody stand up and let's do a little bit of drinking too much. Okay.

?+: *(practicing – drunken mime around the room)*
 J: Oh dear. Okay, right please come sit down.
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 J: Pardon?
 ?: Now we're going to rob.
 J: Right. Now when people are drunk why are they a problem?
 S: Because... because they're hurting somebody and they..
 J: They could then, do they argue then?
 S: Hit somebody with a bottle against their face and...
 J: Okay. Let's have two people who want to act out people who are a bit drunk and arguing.
 Okay, right these two. Sit down. Who else? Give us what happens when people are drunk
 and why it's a problem for children?

ROLE PLAY

S: *(S and Ch get up and start acting)* "Yes jy," *["Yes you"]*
 Ch: "Jy!" *["You"]*
 S: "Jy vat my geld af" *["You take my money"]*
 Ch: "Kom kom" *["Come come"]*
(very noisy)
 J: Okay. Right. Thank you. Very good. Sit down. *(clap hands)* Okay. So these people get
 drunk, they argue then it's a problem for children because there's a lot of noise and maybe the
 children get knocked. Okay what else? What else? Arguing – so you've got drinking and
 you've got arguing. *(writing it on board)*
 Sh: Now we're going to do robbing.
 Fa: Killing(?)
 J: Robbing?
 ?: Gambling, no-no.
 J: Just a minute, is gambling a big problem?
 Sh: We're going to shoot.
 J: Shooting, okay. Right.
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 ?: Do a rob - a robbery.
 J: Robbing okay. You two – hang on.
 S: I'll be the lady then they must rob me.
 ?: Yes.
 J: Yeah? Wait a minute. Sit down a minute. We're going to do gang, Shanelle do you want to
 do?
 Sh: Not me – no Mrs Parkes – no man.
 J: You were going to do the shooting weren't you?
 Sh: Yes me and then I'm going to rob her and I'm going to shoot her and..
 J: Do you four want to just discuss this for a minute so you can...
 ?+: Yes.
 ?: Can we sit here Jenny?
 J: Yeah.
 ?+: *(S, Fa, F, Sh talking in background doing their planning)*
 J: Alright.
 ?: *(all talking)*
 ?: Write down the gangsters names.
 ?: Okay, are you ready?
(Drama – Ci and R rob F and W – lot of fighting)
 ?: No, wait only when we come home and then...
 ?: Okay now.
 ?: *(lots of talking and moving about)*
 ?: "Your money – your money"
(lots of struggling" sounds)
 ?: "You're under arrest"
 ?: *(lots of talking and moving about)*
 ?: "Los my!" *["leave me!"]*
 ?: *(Lots of talking and moving about)*
 ?: "She's under arrest take her to jail"
 ?: "I'll get that one"
 ?: *(Lots of talking and moving about)*
 J: Okay. And freeze. That was exciting, it's like watching a movie. Faiza did __ (?) thank you
 Shanelle. Okay.

?: Sjoe! I'm tired, that was the running.
 J: So you've managed to get in drinking, arguing, robbing and shooting. Okay.
 S: *(lots of huffing and puffing)*...I'm was running all the time.
 F: And I went to go hide my money away.
 J: It's going to be time to stop any minute so I think...
 ?: Mrs Parkes can...
 J: What is that?
 ?: Can we play here?
 J: But we...
 Sh: Imagine we leave it...*(overtalking)*
 J: ...now what we need to think about is how we turn this into something that was fun and lots of ideas and how we turn it into something that would be a good show. And I think it might good to maybe, have a song as well. Do you think you can make up a song before next week?
 ?: *(all talking)*
 F: We've got a song me and Shanelle about... *(stop the fighting, stop the fighting – singing and clapping)*
 Sh: We're going to be in a movie.
 ?+: *(all singing and all talking)*
 ?: I'm so excited...*(singing)*
 ?: Uh-uh they say "I'm not excited".
 J: But you can change the words can't you?
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 ?: "You drive me crazy" *(singing)*
 J: Is this a song that you all know already or are you making it up?
 ?: Yes.
 ?: No.
 ?: *(all talking)* ...made up in class.
 J: Okay, but we won't – we're not going to do something with animas, can you change the words a bit?
 Ch: Mrs Parkes, Mrs Parkes....
 J: What is it?
 Sh: Mrs Parkes we all of us can sing that song, last year...
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 F: Come we do it, come we do it.
 J: Go on then, go on, go and join in. Do you want to join in? *(to Melissa)*
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 Fa: No, you's must turn around and you must be...
 Sh: Girls you need to be over here don't you?
 ?+: *(all talking, singing and dancing)*
 J: Come and stand up here okay. Melissa and I are going to come and sit over here so we can watch you.
 ?: Melissa don't be...
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 J: Melissa doesn't – I don't think want to join in with that particular bit, is that right? You can change your mind if you want to, it's up to you – you don't have to if you don't want to. Come on then, come and sit here and we'll watch.
 ?: *(all talking)*
 J: Okay right. When I say 1-2-3.
 ?: You mustn't stand like that.
 ?: You must go...
 ?: And you must...
 ?: Over here...
 ?+: *(all talking)*
 J: Okay.
 ?: No come turn around.
 ?+: *(start singing – about animals)*
 S: Now you must say, no you must say "don't forget about the people"
 ?: Yes.
 J: What about children? Did you think – did you tell it - in children, you know you don't care about the children?
 F: ...we don't like the people that kills the animals and...
 J: I know but if we were changing it into the sort of things we were talking about...
 Fa: Yes, but we don't care about the people.

J: The people or the children?
S: "We don't care about the people" (*singing*)
Ch: "We don't care about the people" (*singing*)
J: Okay everyone sit down again. Melissa, what did you think about that? Did you think it was good?
M: (*nods – no verbal response*)
J: Okay Melissa and I both think it was good. It's lovely about animals but if we're trying to do something about children and children being safe and that kind of stuff then...
?: (*all talking*)
J: This is your task, this is your task for next week everybody. (*lots of talking to each other in the background*) This is your task for next week - is to discuss all of you and if you need to change any of the words okay. First of all you decide whether you need to change any of the words. Do you need to do anything else or do I need to do anything else before next week?
Sh: Can we do it in casual clothes?
?: No.
?: No.
S: We can wear, can we wear casual clothes when we're going to do our dance then we're going to do our acting. Maybe we can – me and Shanelle can wear shirts and we can like wear a pants or black pants or ...(*overtalking*)
J: What do the others think?
F: And then we, and then the police...
J: The only thing with ...(*overtalking*)
F: ...the two girls, the robbers...
S: My uncle – my uncle got his caps *né*.
?: (*all talking*)
J: I can bring caps. I can bring caps.
?+: (*all talking*)
Ch: We can make cigarettes with paper.
J: Yeah.
Fa: ... like gangsters.
?: Yes and all us, all us (*all talking*)
J: Okay so we'll have paper cigarettes, we'll have...
Ch: Caps.
J: ..caps.
?+: (*all talking*)
J: Hang on let's hear Melissa's idea.
M: I can buy the sweets, they look like cigarettes.
?: Yes.
S: Yes, that long sweets.
J: We can make it up – we don't have buy anything especially. Can you help make some?
M: Yes
Ch: Mrs Parkes when must we make them?
?: Mrs Parkes, and then we must – then we must chew bubble gum...
J: We must do it at the beginning of the session or if you get a chance to make them before.
Ch: Why can't we do it here...(*mumble/overtalking*)
J: Yeah. Okay I'll bring some paper, let me write it down.
F: And we must wear clothes, broken clothes – stuff like that.
?+: (*all talking*)
J: Okay, so I'll bring paper to make it into cigarettes.
?+: (*all talking*)
J: What do children think about needing to wear...
?: (*giggling*)
J: ...or should we just have some _(?)(*overtalking*) do you think?
?+: (*all talking*)
Fa: We must have our clothes like gangsters with the caps on the side so and...(*overtalking*)
?: (*all talking*)
J: I'll tell you what the boys did. Some of the boys brought different clothes to change into and some didn't and that was okay. What do you think?
Sh: I'll bring changing clothes. And Mrs Parkes when the gangsters me and Ferial will be double gangsters and Melissa and ...(*overtalking*)
?+: (*all talking*)
Ch: Mrs Parkes the gangsters must change in clothes and the police...(*overtalking*) but they're the same people.

J: Are you going be – ah police...*(fading)*
S: I can wear my gray pants and my shirt and then I can get...
J: Just a minute. Do we need these – Shanelle and who else are the gangsters?
?+: Shanelle and Ferial.
J: So if you're going to be – Shanelle, Faiza and Ferial are going to be gangsters and then 'cause we won't do exactly what you did today. And then Charné and Melissa and Simone are you going to be...
?: We're the, I'm the – we're going to be the...
S: Melissa can be the lady 'cause she's...*(overtalking)*
J: This is children, what happens to the children in the neighbourhood, I don't want to forget about children. I know its easy to go into kind of being like in a movie and everyone being grownup...
S: She can be the child
Ch: She can be the child I'm a policeman and she's policeman.
S: And she must...
Ch: And one of them can be a mommy.
?+: *(all talking)*
S: How can I be a child?
?: No...
?+: *(all talking)*
Sh: No Jenny I want to be a gangster.
J: What if all children are gangsters?*(overtalking - too noisy)* and then police?
?: Okay, I'll be a...
?+: *(all talking)*
J: ... and then we can show how the drinking and arguing and robbing and shooting affects the children and then...
?+: *(all talking)*
J: Not now.
S: Can we just act half of the part we do now.
J: No, not now we haven't got time now. Okay so we've got gangsters and we've got Simone and Charné and Melissa, what are scenes? The scene being children and..
?+: *(all talking)*
J: No-no this is just for you. Okay we need to think about this plot a bit more. See if you can you think about the story a little bit more before next week.
?: Mrs Parkes we can each go home and write on a piece of paper and then we can bring it here.
J: Okay or you can to just talk about it. Now, it's going to ten past, it's very late, let's sit down again quick-quick.

(END GAME – Clapping Rhythms game – NOT TRANSCRIBED)

Appendix 11:
Post-Group De-briefing Conversation

Purpose:

- To give each child the opportunity to raise any issues they were unable to talk about in the group or other outstanding issues.
- To seek feedback from the children about the groups (content and process).
- To explore any changes in the children's thinking over the research period (research question: How do they construct and reconstruct meanings?)

The conversation will focus on a group of line drawings, designed to act as reminders of core themes covered in group sessions. The drawings represent visual images drawn from children's accounts of their social worlds: roughness and fights in the playground, playground games, relationships with "others" eg. opposite gender, children's rules of the playground (who do you play/share with/not), violence in the neighbourhood, when friends can help. The conversation will be loosely structured as below, but certain questions will be repeated from the initial interviews, for comparison purposes.

Now that we have finished our group sessions, I would like to ask you some questions about our time in the group. Is that OK?

**What did you most enjoy in our group sessions?
What else did you enjoy?**

What could have been better?

Show picture cards- explain that these are to remind them of things we talked about in our group sessions. For each of the pictures:

What do you think is happening here?

How does it remind you of what we talked about in the group?

Soccer and hocks pictures (a)

Friends picture (b) (*Social support*):

What sort of problems might a friend help with? How can a friend help?

Fighting picture (c) (*Playground*):

What starts this kind of problem? What might stop this type of problem from happening?

Gangsters picture (d) (*Neighbourhood*):

Why do you think these problems happen? What might stop these problems happening?

Girls and boys picture (e):

Do you think these girls and boys want to play together? Why?/Why not? How?

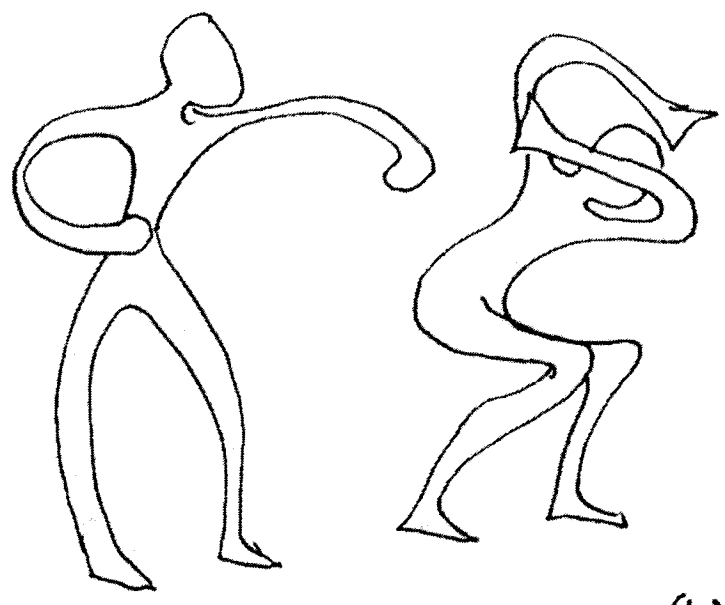
Food sharing (f):

What must the lonely child do to share with the other children?

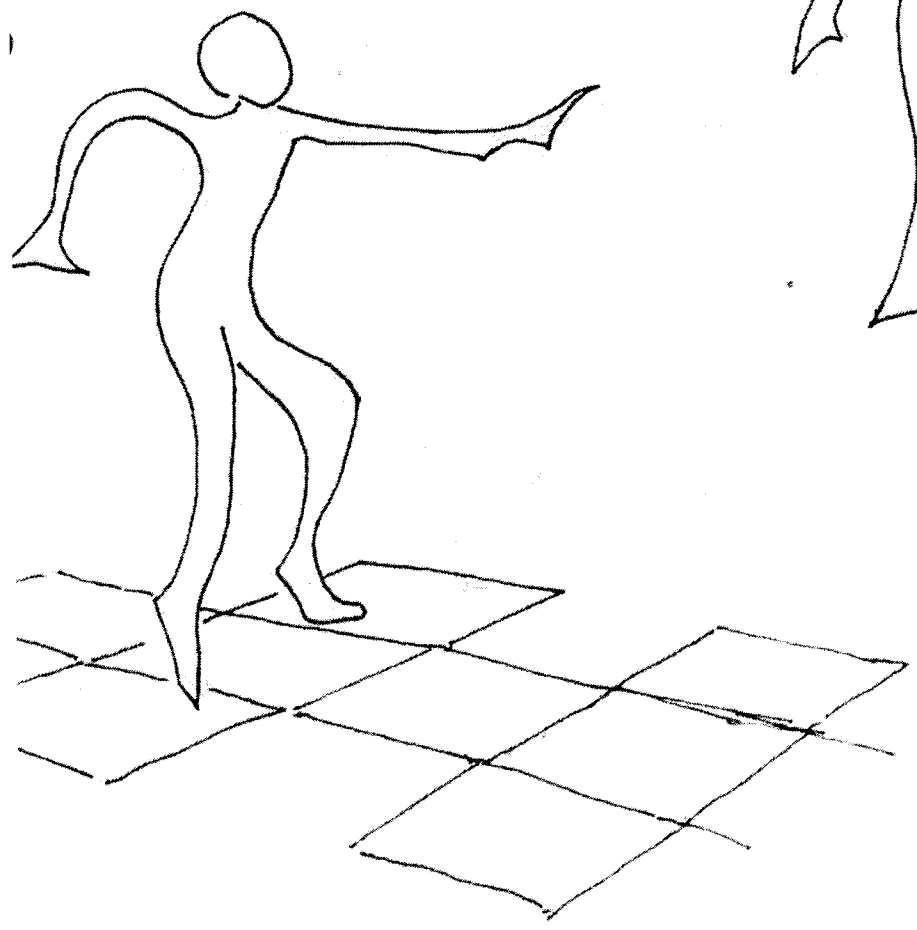
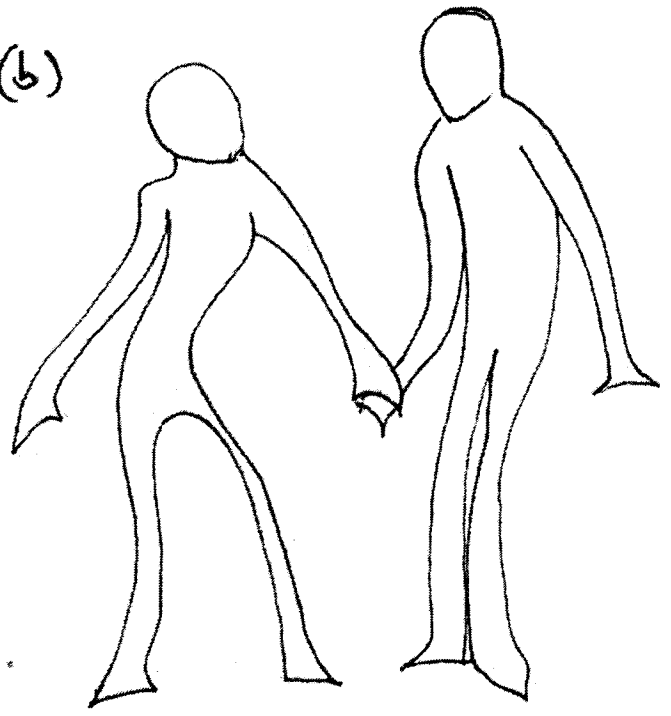
Is there anything else you would like to talk with me about?

Appendix II: POST-GROUP PROMPT CARDS

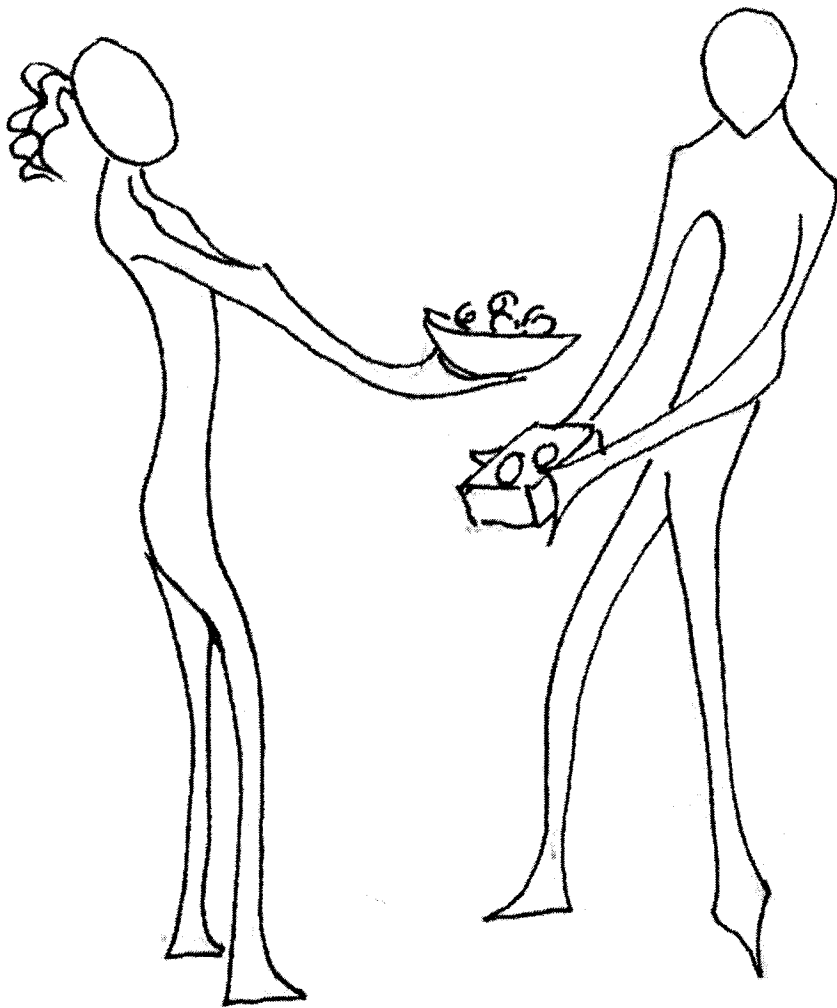
c)



(b)

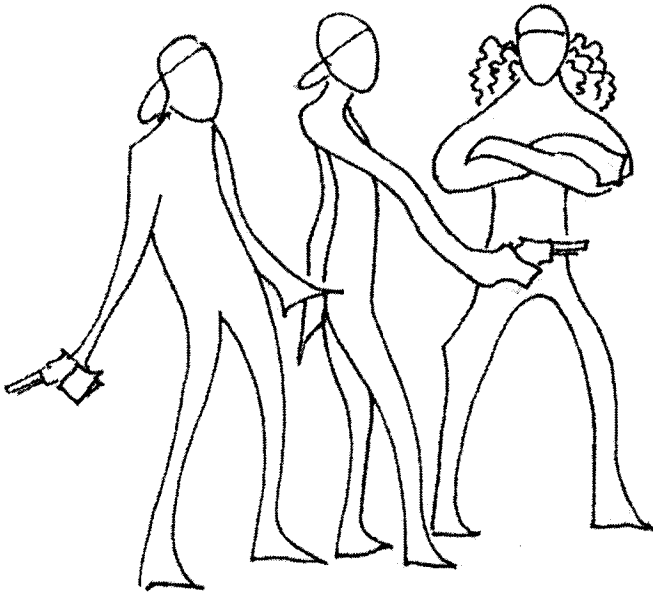


Appendix II: POST-GROUP PROMPT CARDS

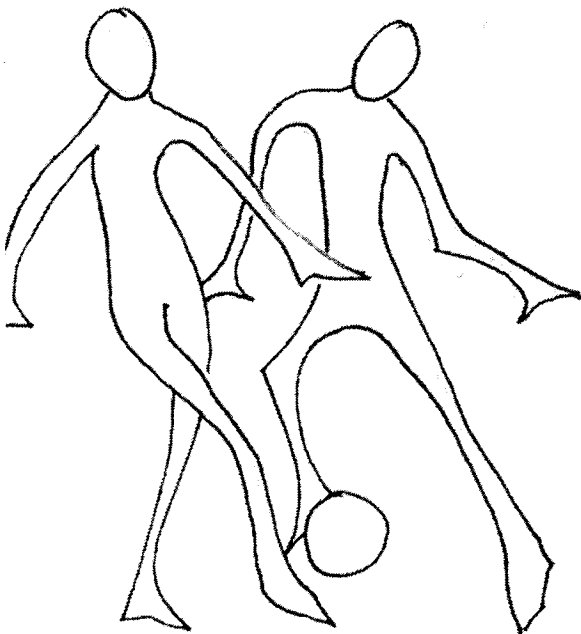
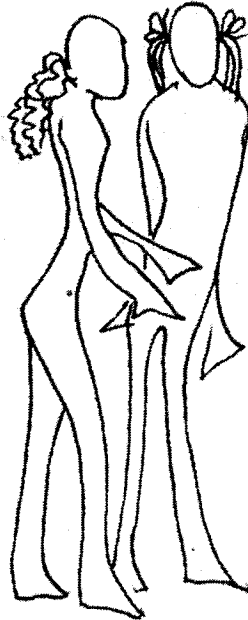


Appendix II: POST-GROUP PROMPT CARDS

(d)



(e)



Appendix 12:
Post-group Debrief Interview Transcript

J: Jenny 14: Rushaanah

J: Okay this is Jenny talking with Rushaanah and, Rushaanah, I wanted to talk with you to ask you some things about the group. Is that alright?

14: Yes.

J: Okay. What did you most enjoy in our group session?

14: The puppets...

J: M-m.

14: And the things that we played with and we do a lot of stuff. Even Jenny's puppet I liked.

J: M-m. What else did you like?

14: The drawings.

J: M-m.

14: And a lot of stuff. All the stuff.

J: Okay. Is there anything that could have been better?

14: No.

J: Nothing?

14: *(shake head - no verbal response)*

J: Okay. And I've got some pictures here that I'll show you in a minute. But first of all I wanted to ask you did you learn anything new in the group Rushaanah, do you think?

14: Yes.

J: What was that?

14: The rules and we learnt when Jenny hit on the tambourine we must put our puppets on the floor.

J: *(giggle)* We did do that didn't we? Now I've got some pictures here to remind us about the things that we were talking about in our group. So I'm going to show you these pictures. What do you think is happening in these pictures?

14: It tells where am I play-; kicking the balls.

J: M-m.

14: That one is playing *Hocks*.

J: Yeah. And how does that remind you of the things we talked about in the group?

14: I remember that I drew *Hocks* and then we – then there was children in pools and all that stuff.

J: Yeah. And what were we...

14: draw...

J: What were we...

14: Draw...

J: *(giggle)* We keep both talking at the same time. What were we drawing all together there?

14: We were drawing pools and ducks and children in the pools and things like that.

J: Yeah.

14: And we even drew our suns and things upside down.

J: Yeah. And there we were trying to imagine our ideal playground weren't we? The perfect playground. Do you remember?

14: Yes.

J: And that was where *Hocks* was. Yeah. Okay. So that's those pictures. That was the bit I was thinking of too. What about this? What's happening here Rushaanah?

14: They're holding each others hands.

J: Pardon?

14: They're holding each others hands.

J: Yeah. And why do you think they're holding hands?

14: Because they want to go somewhere.

J: Yeah. Do you think they're friends?

14: Yes.

J: Mm. I think so and do you remember – how does that one remind you of when we talked in the group?

14: I can't remember.

J: M-m. One of the things I was thinking of was when we talked about how friends can help. Do you remember? And I think we made a big list of all the different ways we thought friends could help. So what sort of...

14: It was our last chances Jenny.
J: It was yeah. What sort of problems do you think a friend can help with, Rushaanah?
14: When other friends – when other people hurt you...
J: M-m.
14: And when you get sore...
J: M-m.
14: And when you're feeling sad....
J: Yeah.
14: ...and when somebody say you stink and things like that.
J: Yeah. And how can a friend help?
14: By saying just ignore them and it will go all away.
J: M-m. Yeah.
14: And when a friend buys something for the other friend.
J: M-m.
14: Or they will, and best friends...
J: Yeah.
14: and they...
J: That's fine. What about this picture, what's happening here?
14: That boy is hitting that girl.
J: Mm. M-m and how does that make you – remind you about what we talked about in the group?
14: It's not sharing...
J: M-m.
14: ...a ball with each other and this boy was very nasty to the girl.
J: Yeah. So sometimes we talked about boys and girls didn't we – and what they do to each and sometimes we talked about fighting in the playground, remember? And I was thinking about fighting in the playground with that picture. Why do you think people fight?
14: Because sometimes they're jealous of other people.
J: Why do you think that would be? What are they jealous of?
14: Of their clothes they wear and sometimes the teacher only let them look for talkers and things like that.
J: Yeah.
14: And – and sometimes also they feel jealous because they are – those people that they fight with is better than them.
J: Okay. Yeah.
14: And isn't a monkey like the parents(?) and they are monkeys.
J: (giggle) Okay. What can stop that kind of problem happening? What can stop the fights happening?
14: By telling them to stop and we can make it better.
J: Yeah.
14: And they will stop fighting.
J: So do you think other children should tell them to stop sometimes?
14: Yes.
J: Yeah. Okay. And here's my next picture. What does this one make you think of? What's happening here?
14: This two children is – want to shoot that person...
J: M-m.
14: ...if he don't give stuff.
J: What kind of people do you think they are?
14: Gangsters.
J: Mm. Yeah. And does that remind you of anything we talked about in the group?
14: Yes. Of no shooting and things.
J: Yeah and we talked about gangsters didn't we? So why do you think these kind of problems happen?
14: Because they don't like the people and they want to take all the people's stuff away from them and the children.
J: M-m. Okay. What could stop this kind of problem happening?
14: If you take their gun away and point it to them and then they get scared then they put the gun down and then they run away then they don't do it ever again.
J: Okay so you need to point a gun back at them do you? Okay. And right - what about this picture?
14: This two boys is playing and this two girls is coming to ask if they can play with.
J: M-m. And do you think – what will the boys say do you think?

14: No, because they don't want to play with girls then the other boys say that they are *moffies*.
 J: Ooh. So even though the girls want to play with them they won't play with the girls?
 14: Yes.
 J: And what must happen for the girls to be able to play with the boys?
 14: Get the ball away from them and tell them, the children won't call you tomboys.
 J: Yeah. So do the girls get called tomboys?
 14: I don't know.
 J: Don't know. Did you just say they - you won't get called tomboys?
 14: *(no verbal response)*
 J: Yeah. Okay. What does that remind you of that we talked about in the group?
 14: It reminds me of - no - of the children not sharing.
 J: Yeah. And sometimes we talked about the boys and the girls didn't we? How they don't play together sometimes. Yeah. Okay. Thank you. And I've got one more picture. This one. What do you think is happening here?
 14: The two of them are sharing their lunch with them - dolls and things and that one don't want to share.
 J: M-m.
 14: And now when they were all three friends and so they broke up friends.
 J: They were all three friends do you think?
 14: And so this one didn't want to play with them because they share.
 J: Okay. So do they want to share with this one?
 14: Yes.
 J: Okay. So do they want to share with this one?
 14: Yes. And he didn't want.
 J: Why doesn't he want to?
 14: Because he thinks his friends is just playing a trick on him just to get back at him.
 J: Okay. Alright. That's interesting. So if he goes - what must he do if he wants to play with them again?
 14: Say sorry and they will still have things left over.
 J: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. That sounds great. Alright. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about with me Rushaanah?
 14: No.
 J: No - okay. Let's just check that...

END OF RUSHAANAH DEBRIEF

Appendix 13: **Transcription Notation**

[...]	material deliberately omitted
(text)	clarificatory information
<u>text</u>	word(s) emphasised
(?)	unclear word

Discussion:

In selecting the method of transcription, I compromised between detail and ease of interpretation. First, I compared two forms of transcription:

- (1) adds punctuation, so that it is easy to read for meaning.
- (2) Removes punctuation and adds pauses, so that it more closely resembles actual speech with its hesitations and grammatical inaccuracies. Brief remarks made by me are inserted in brackets within the text to improve the narrative flow.

Finally I decided to use a combination of features of these two forms:

- (3) I included punctuation, and removed the pauses, so that the text is easy to read. I included my brief remarks in brackets within the text to improve the narrative flow.

Examples:

1. With punctuation.

Jenny: Can you think of a time where you've had a really good time playing with another child or children at home or in the neighbourhood?

Imraan: My friend opposite us. We were riding bike...

J: Mm mm.

I: ...then once a fa... fast car came and so he nearly knocked my friend off the bike, so my friend had to throw his bike on the floor, so he had to run 'cause the man was riding very fast and over the bump he did, he did make fly (very emphasised) over there. He did go fast. He make the car did jump over the bumper.

J: Yeah.

I: He go fast.

J: And then could you ride your bikes again?

I: Yes.

J: And why was that such a good time?

I: 'Cause we were frightened and sometimes when we frightened we're happy.

J: (*chuckle*) Yeah. Okay. And can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?

I: When a man came and he started hitting the children so we all had to run in.

J: Mm mm.

I: He started hitting the children, so we all had to run in at home, we were all riding bike.

J: Yeah.

I: Next to us; opposite us. We're all riding bikes, our friends.

J: Out in the street?

I: It's a block, then we all did ride around the block from the man, so we had to turn around, so we had to run, ride fast away, 'cause the man was running after one of my friends.

J: Yeah.

I: And so we had to ride fast away so we went home.

J: Why do you think he was doing it?

I: He's mad. He's mad.

2. based on Edley 2001. Adds pauses and takes away punctuation.

- Jenny:** Can you think of a time where you've had a really good time playing with another child or children at home or in the neighbourhood
- Imraan:** My friend opposite us (.) we were riding bike (**J:** Mm mm) then once a fa... fast car came and so he nearly knocked my friend off the bike (.) so my friend had to throw his bike on the floor (.) so he had to run 'cause the man was riding very fast and over the bump he did (.) he did make fly over there (.) he did go fast (.) he make the car did jump over the bumper (**J:** Yeah) he go fast
- J:** And then could you ride your bikes again
- I:** Yes
- J:** And why was that such a good time
- I:** 'Cause we were frightened and sometimes when we frightened we're happy
- J:** (*chuckle*) Yeah (.) okay (.) and can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?
- I:** When a man came and he started hitting the children so we all had to run in (**J:** Mm mm) He started hitting the children (.) so we all had to run in at home (.) we were all riding bike (**J:** Yeah) next to us (.) opposite us (.) we're all riding bikes (.) our friends
- J:** Out in the street
- I:** It's a block(.) then we all did ride around the block from the man (.) so we had to turn around (.) so we had to run (.) ride fast away (.) 'cause the man was running after one of my friends. (**J:** Yeah) and so we had to ride fast away so we went home
- J:** Why do you think he was doing it
- I:** He's mad (.) he's mad

3. With punctuation, pauses removed, my brief comments inserted in brackets in text.

- Jenny:** Can you think of a time where you've had a really good time playing with another child or children at home or in the neighbourhood?
- Imraan:** My friend opposite us. We were riding bike... (Jenny: Mm mm)...then once a fa... fast car came and so he nearly knocked my friend off the bike, so my friend had to throw his bike on the floor, so he had to run 'cause the man was riding very fast and over the bump he did, he did make fly (*very emphasised*) over there. He did go fast. He make the car did jump over the bumper. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) He go fast.
- Jenny:** And then could you ride your bikes again?
- Imraan:** Yes.
- Jenny:** And why was that such a good time?
- Imraan:** 'Cause we were frightened and sometimes when we frightened we're happy.
- Jenny:** (*chuckle*) Yeah. Okay. And can you think of a time at home or in the neighbourhood that was not so good?
- Imraan:** When a man came and he started hitting the children so we all had to run in. (**Jenny:** Mm mm.) He started hitting the children, so we all had to run in at home, we were all riding bike. (**Jenny:** Yeah.) Next to us; opposite us. We're all riding bikes, our friends.
- Jenny:** Out in the street?
- Imraan:** It's a block, then we all did ride around the block from the man, so we had to turn around, so we had to run, ride fast away, 'cause the man was running after one of my friends. (**Jenny:** Yeah.)
- Imraan:** And so we had to ride fast away so we went home.
- Jenny:** Why do you think he was doing it?
- Imraan:** He's mad. He's mad.

Appendix 14:
Children's Ideas for the Playground

For discussion with Mr. P. (Principal):

In exploring children's social relationships, we talked about how children spend their time together at interval. All children very much enjoy the time they spend in the playground at Harmony. In one activity, children were asked to design an imaginary playground where nobody is hit or hurt. Later, groups were asked to think of ways they could make their playground even better.

Grade 4 boys:

- We could plant more grass in the areas between school buildings.
- We could put bins into each area and ask each other not to litter.
- When children break a rule, like no rough games, fighting or swearing, they could first have a warning or last chance before being sent to Mr P.
- We could fundraise to pay for these improvements.
- We can tell other children about these rules.
- We can give our suggestions to the Principal and maybe he could make an announcement in assembly.

Grade 7 girls:

- We could make available P.T. equipment at interval, with teacher supervision eg. Hockey, netball, hoops, ropes.
- We could have access to the field for play.
- An area of the field could be set aside just for small children.
- Playing in the quad, where there are playground markings, could be restricted to people wanting to play hocks and games which use the markings (this would be easier if boys were able to play soccer on the field).

Grade 2 girls:

- Keep the toilets clean and fresh.
- Remind children about the no fighting rule, as someone may get hurt.
- We would like more playground markings for hocks and other games.
- We would like a soccer area in a different place than the quad where the playground markings are.
- Children must keep their papers and litter or put them in the bins in each play area.
- We could fundraise to help with playground improvements eg. Karaoke, programmes for parents, sell things, have prizes, raffles.

Recurring themes:

1/ Use of space eg. separating soccer area from areas with playground markings, opening up the field

2/ Improving the environment eg. use of litter bins, grass areas, toilets

3/ Increasing the range of activities eg. More playground markings, use of PT equipment.

Appendix 15:

Problems in the Neighbourhood: Children's Messages

The children spent time with me discussing the problems in the neighbourhood and some of the groups thought about messages they would like to pass on to others to help stay safe or make the neighbourhood a safer place. These are the young people's messages, and do not necessarily reflect my views. Violence, often gang related, was the most frequently raised concern. The children agreed that I should pass their messages on to their teachers and to COPEs Violence Prevention Programme.

Messages for Children

7B:

- Don't do drugs because afterwards you won't know what you're doing.
- If someone abuses you, go straight to the police and don't take the law into your own hands.
- Don't take stuff in your own hands that you can't handle – go to a responsible and reliable person.

7G:

- Respect yourselves.
- Don't take after your parents. You must try to do better.

2B:

- You must not walk with gangsters.
- If someone is outside and they want to give you sweets, don't go or they will steal you away.

Messages for Adults in the Neighbourhood

7B:

- Be careful with the children.
- Stop drinking such a lot.
- Stop abusing – that's how the children end up in the streets.

7G:

- You must look after your children.
- You must think twice before you decide to have children.
- Don't let the children suffer of abuse.
- Respect your children.
- Don't smoke or drink in front of your children.

2B:

- Don't come out when gangs are around or you will get hurt.
- You should have a weapon.

- Put burglar bars on your house.
- Get a dog.

Messages for the Police

7B:

- Be more awake, faster, more active. We need you NOW not in half an hour.
- Your service must be just as good here as in the white areas.

7G:

- You must stop being on the people's (gangsters') side.
- You must stop being scared.
- You must come on time.

Messages for the Government

7B:

- Bring back the death sentence.
- Everyone with a gun must have a licence.
- People should not be allowed to carry weapons.

7G:

- You should put rapists in gaol straight away.
- You should give strict, long sentences.
- Bring back the death sentence.
- Give homeless children homes.
- Listen to the children.

Appendix 16:
Group Performances

Each of the groups spent a short time producing a 5 minute performance to be videoed and shown to the other groups. The groups were asked to produce something which told a story about children in the neighbourhood or playground, and they were asked what is their central message for other children. Their performances included some of the themes we discussed in the group sessions:

An Everlasting Friendship

2G

A puppet show demonstrating how children argue over which game to play and then how they sort it out.

Messages: Friends mustn't fight. They must be caring and kind to each other.

Watch out for Gangsters

4B

3 friends meet the Diamond Devil kids. This shows the dangers for kids of being near gangsters. But in the end, it's the gangsters who are worse off.

Messages:

- Don't mess with gangsters.
- They keep making trouble.

Don't Drop your Standards for Others

7G

This is about the temptation for older children and teenagers to join in with people who seem 'cool'.

Messages:

- Don't drop your standards.
- Think twice.
- It's your choice.
- Don't turn your back on your friends
- Because you'll need them in the end.
- Life is precious.

The Jungle Book

2B

Using animal masks, this is about being new and trying to join a group, thinking you're big and strong but in the end making yourself unpopular by becoming a bully.

Messages:

- Help a stranger to become friends.
- To be a friend you mustn't bully, and must share.

Our Message is to Teenagers in the Nation

7B

This group thought about safety in the neighbourhood. They have messages for children about how to stay safe and for adults about how to make the neighbourhood a safer place. Then they sing a song with a message for teenage boys about caring for your girlfriend.

Messages:

For children

- Don't do drugs because afterwards you won't know what you're doing.
- If someone abuses you, go straight to the police and don't take the law into your own hands.

For adults in the community

- Be careful with the children.
- Stop drinking such a lot.
- Stop abusing – that's how the children end up in the streets.

For the police

- Be more awake, faster, more active. We need you NOW, not in half an hour.
- Your service must be just as good here as in the white areas.

There's more to Life than Being a Gangster

4G

This is about the temptation to be cool by joining a gang and also about how difficult it is to resist the pressure and to avoid being trapped.

Messages:

- As title!

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