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ALLPAY AND NO WORK: SPHERES OF BELONGING UNDER DURESS

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

AllPay No Work explores the consequences of post-apartheid political-economic changes on the social fabric of Manenberg, a residential neighbourhood on the Cape Flats, Cape Town. I show that despite the important benefits of codified human rights for all, recent macro-level changes have meant that young women are currently struggling to establish themselves in their local spheres as socially valued individuals, or achieving “positive personhood”. In a context of relative deprivation being socially valued is critical for belonging to “coping systems”, the systems of support and reciprocity that cushion the worst aspects of suffering. Consequently, more and more young women are seeking escape from an untenable present through drug use. Under these circumstances, children are under additional strain to secure their survival and their future options. But their own spheres of belonging – to family and friend groupings – limit their agency in doing so.

Overall, this dissertation illustrates that the more marginal the individual is in the macro political economic context they inhabit, the more important belonging is in the micro social sphere. This is a critical factor in the current dissonance between the calls of the state for local assistance in routing out illicit activities, and the survival needs of marginalised communities.

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Chapter One

Starting at the Centre

The Druivevlei Community Centre (the Centre) stood solid and protected: encircled by a high, gated, palisade fence, and “hardened” with barred doors and bullet proof glass windows covered with metal mesh plates. To the right was a clinic, similarly armoured (open on Fridays), to the left a house notorious for ‘shady’ links and activities and, in late 2010, regularly raided by the police. Across the road stood a large Afrikaans¹ first language public primary school, which most of the young children in the immediate surrounds attended. It, too, was armoured.

The Centre sat on Ruimte Road, a busy conduit for the traffic and hooting taxis that carried passengers the fifteen kilometres to and from this corner in the north east of Manenberg, on the dusty Cape Flats, to Cape Town city centre. The surrounding streets were lined with small, single room semi-detached houses and cheek-to-jowl face-brick “maisonettes”.² These, too, were guarded from the street; some only minimally with propped up fences, others were barred and caged. Though houses were small, they had originally been constructed with relatively spacious back yards. By the time I came to Manenberg in 2009, however, yards were mostly populated by “hokkies” (shacks) or Wendy houses.³ These squeezed out the light to make additional living space for extending branches of family trees.

During my fieldwork, from 2010 through 2011, the Centre was one of the few public spaces that continually provided a safe space for area residents. And it was here that, two mornings a week,

¹ Afrikaans, one of the official languages of South Africa, developed out of Dutch with influences of various other colonial and indigenous languages. It was the first language of the majority of people in the area. The Afrikaans spoken in Manenberg is, however, the highly descriptive colloquial version. It had with many of its own twists and turns; two words were often compressed into one, vowels were shortened, and the characteristic double negative of Afrikaans was often absent. All Afrikaans terms in the text are all italicized. In order to retain the flavour of the local dialect I have frequently used phonetic, rather than official, spellings.

² Semi-detached, or row houses

³ Wendy houses are readymade wooden housing structures, originally designed as children’s play houses, and named after Wendy in the children’s story Peter Pan. Now widely used as small houses, many just accommodate a single bed, though they can also be considerably bigger, too. One of the families I worked with had a four bedroom Wendy house structure, with separate rooms for the parents, the boys, and the girls.

older ladies in the senior's club came to read the paper, sew, talk and sometimes dance a little.⁴ It was here that children, after school, slipped in, signed in, and traipsed through the hall to the back yard, where space was limited, but they were safe to play – to kick a ball about, to climb the tree, and to oscillate on the seesaw. On Mondays and Wednesdays the majority of these “Centre children” donned white uniforms and spent the afternoon to the swaying rhythm of the “ginga” as they practiced their capoeira moves.⁵ On Tuesdays and Thursdays Centre staff made large pots of food and lunchbox carrying queues formed outside to collect a hot meal. These meals were initially intended for the children attending the centre, but then the elderly came, too, and, later in my fieldwork the queue extended to youths whose shifty, glassy eyes and constant sniffing betrayed their drug addictions.

Most other public spaces in the immediate environment – the large, litter strewn fields (green in winter, spiky and parched in summer), the playgrounds and the streets – vacillated between being places of pleasure and danger. As much as they provided place for socialising and games, they were also spaces where power dynamics were publically contested and imposed, often violently, particularly during times of gang strife.⁶

Manenberg is notorious for being an area of high levels of gang activity, substance abuse,⁷ unemployment and social problems. One of the first Cape Flats neighbourhoods actively constructed on an apartheid map, it is often used as an example of the ravages of that system on poor families and communities (Chipkin, 2003; Robins, 2002; Standing, 2006). As with most poor areas on the expansive Cape Flats that stretch out on the periphery of Cape Town, the social problems in the area are manifold. Manenberg is, however, also a place of ingenuity and creative survival and, as one young research participant said, “Care-giving, people and life!”

⁴ When I first met the senior's group, I asked them where the men were. They laughed and one replied, joking, but with a serious edge, “Yes, that's what we all want to know, where *are* all the men?”

⁵ The “ginga” is the basic, swaying movement of capoeira. Capoeira is a Brazilian dance martial art, which was taught at the Centre.

⁶ There were a number of large, open fields within striking distance of the Centre. In the vast majority of pictures drawn by the children in this study of “My neighbourhood” “*Die veld*” (The field) loomed large.

⁷ I utilise the term “substance” in reference to all addictive drugs, including alcohol (though I exclude tobacco). In line with the City of Cape Town, I use the term “drugs” to refer to “all psychoactive substances, illicit or otherwise that change patterns of thought, behaviour and emotions” (City of Cape Town, 2007:10).

Despite the huge gains of human rights in the post-apartheid era, in many ways people on the Cape Flats have become more politically and economically marginalised in the broader national system. This dissertation is an exploration of peoples' responses (both adaptive and reactive) to these political, social and economic changes. I argue that in this context of relative deprivation social relations are an important resource for survival. Moreover, the ability to access local networks of support becomes more critical, the more marginal individuals are within the larger contexts they inhabit. For individuals this access is contingent on achieving what I term, "positive personhood": being recognized as a valued human being. As such, dynamics of belonging, inclusion and exclusion are critical to coping.

This chapter outlines the context of my research and analysis. I start by presenting two concepts – positive personhood and coping systems – that run through and stitch together, the research findings. I then turn to providing a basic historical context to the area of Manenberg. I outline the literature which underscores my thinking and work; the methodology used in the research process; and, importantly, the ethical concerns involved in conducting – and representing – research in contexts of marginalisation.

“We must go on”: positive personhood and coping systems

In conversations about the difficult aspects of life, the toil and the hardships, the phrases “*Ons gaan ma' aan*” (“We just go on”) or “*Ons moet ma' aangaan*” (“We must go on”) were frequently offered as reflections on challenging situations. Much of life in Manenberg was described in terms of this “going on”. The stubborn resistance to being marginalised was embedded in this assertion of the continuation of life and of survival. Survival implies that the continuation of life itself is being fought for. It requires the successful struggle against forces that lead to death for an individual, a valued practice, or process. While almost all people are constantly engaged in seeking to survive (excluding those seeking suicide, or assisted dying) this is a far more active process for the poor and the marginalized (Ross, 2010). Moreover, for the poor it relies, to a far greater degree, on belonging to small social circles or spheres that, through systems of support and reciprocity are able, to some degree, to cushion some of the corrosive aspects of poverty. These systems are what I call coping systems.

Coping systems, for those able to utilize them, allow for options to deal with and overcome problems and difficulties in ways that reinforce social perceptions of people's status. In turn, this process social support for those regarded as displaying positive personhood further augments their position and their ability to draw on resources. In this sense, then, coping refers to more than an individual's response to stress that can be either adaptive (positive, or helpful) or maladaptive (negative, or harmful)⁸, as is widely utilized in the psychological literature and in culture of poverty models.⁹ Coping is, rather, a structurally and socially constituted set of relationships.

The inclusion in local coping systems is contingent on positive social recognition by neighbours and contemporaries. As such, the struggle was not just to survive, but to endure in socially sanctioned ways that render one as a valuable being. Positive personhood – the social consensus on individual as a valuable being – is, then, important to the dynamics of belonging.

In my exploration of personhood I am indebted to a number of classic theoretical contributions. In his famous lecture entitled “A category of the human mind: the notion of person; the notion of self” and presented in 1938, Marcel Mauss attempted to trace the social development of the notion of the person. Mauss argued that the person was a social concept which was distinctly different from individual's awareness of self. While the evolutionary trajectory he depicted was already somewhat outmoded at the time (La Fontaine, 1985), his lecture was ground-breaking in this distinction.

This notion of the *person* as socially constituted has since been built on and developed by numerous theorists, including Radcliffe-Brown and Read (see La Fontaine, 1985). Most noticeably, and influentially, Meyer Fortes (1987, [1973]) argues that the concept of the person is concerned with “the perennial problem of how individual and society are interconnected” (cited in La Fontaine, 1985:126). For Fortes, the person is the “socially generated and culturally defined” aspect of the individual that develops over the lifetime (187:250). Moreover, in his

⁸ There is a wealth of psychological work on coping. For key founding works see Folkman & Lazarus (1980); Lazarus & Folkman (1984); and Carver, Scheier & Weintraub (1989).

⁹ Coping, in the original sense of the word meant to “come to blows with, engage, encounter, contend, fight with; or to contend with in a well matched fight”. Today it tends to be used in its figurative sense to mean to “contend with, face [or] encounter (dangers difficulties etc.). Often implying successful encounter.” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989:903)

exploration of Tallensi religion, Fortes argues that the social recognition of personhood “implies a moral status accorded individual human beings by virtue of their humanity, which recognizes their autonomy and responsibility for their actions” (La Fontaine, 1985:133). This is a critical input because Fortes recognises and includes of the role of agency in construction and maintenance of personhood.

Charles Taylor (1985) and Grace Gredys Harris, (1989) both further this emphasis on the role of agency in personhood. Taylor argues that a person can be described as an “agent-plus” – an individual able to “make life plans, hold values and choose” (1985:261) and who is also capable of reflexivity. Harris writes that, “To be a person means to be “somebody” whose behaviour is recognised as action”. A person is therefore an “agent-in-society” (1989:602). According to Fortes, Taylor and Harris, personhood, then, is also evaluative. It relates to social expectations of the individual. I emphasize this evaluative aspect of personhood in this dissertation by referring to “positive personhood”. In Chapter Two I illustrate that young women’s ability to construct positive personhood is currently crumbling.

In Chapter Four I make my own contribution to theories of personhood. Here I examine the relational nature of personhood through looking at the importance of children’s belonging to social and kin networks. In this, I utilise Edward LiPuma (1998), who critiques anthropological presentations of societies as either predominantly dividual (where social relatedness is the defining feature of personhood) or individual (where beings are fundamentally discrete agents). LiPuma argues that individualism and dividualism are, in fact, coexisting social identities. Isak Niehaus (2002) further develops this critique by looking at persistent notions of the body, and ideas about the transmission of bodily substances, in a context of growing urbanisation. Niehaus critiques meta-narratives of modernisation and illustrates that the shift from dividualism to individualism is not necessarily related to increasing modernisation. I ratify his argument from a different angle. I show that children’s identities are more closely related to that of their peers and families than those of adults. As such, I show that the shift from an emphasis on dividualism to individualism can occur generationally within one context.

Theoretical frameworks provided by local ethnographies

There are two full-scale ethnographies that deal with issues of identity in the Manenberg vicinity, and their contributions thread through the entire dissertation. In the neighbourhood, albeit on the other side, Elaine Salo (2004) examines how local notions of *ordentlikheid*, or respectability, structure local notions of personhood, particularly for women. *Ordentlikheid*, as Salo utilises it, refers to the shared values of feminine respectability that were historically grounded in religious ideals resulting in an emphasis on “sobriety, religious observance, submission to authority, literacy, sexual propriety, modesty and family loyalty” (R. Ross, 1999 in Salo, 2004:101). These, according to Salo, were influenced by a shared history of marginalisation. *Ordentlikheid* served to structure social relations, to imbue spaces with meaning and to ascribe moral value to actions, appearances and character traits all of which are related to personhood. Personhood, according to Salo, is about who the individual is in relation to society, and how they fit in. In her model, it is directly linked to agency, for the actions individuals serve to situate them in society. This situated-ness is not singular, for multiple, coexisting worldviews manifest as consequence of multiple options for personhood. Though Salo does not say so explicitly, personhood in her utilisation implies positive social evaluation, something I choose to make explicit by using the phrase “positive personhood. Salo’s contribution has been widely used in the academic field by others working in similar areas (see Ross, 2010; Jensen, 2008; Botha, 2010; Chipkin, 2003). I, too, utilise it extensively. Chapter Two confirms and develops Salo’s analysis of the building blocks of personhood for women.

However, Chapter Two it also raises questions about Salo’s depiction of the construction of male personhood. Salo (2004, 2007) argues that young men’s personhood is constructed in articulation with the power of the female *moeder* (mother) identity. In the face of structural marginalization that disallows the majority of men from attaining the social ideal of supporting their kin and children, men are recognized as persons through their roles as “good sons”, as *ouens* (“streetwise men” or gangsters), as fathers and as ex-prisoners in later life (2007: 165). Salo argues that their personhood is, as such, relationally constituted, and the construction thereof is particularly closely related to young men’s role as *ouens*. She argues that *ouens* demarcate the spatial boundaries in which women operate, through the violent operationalisation of gang turf boundaries. As such, men confirm older women’s personhood by defining the areas in, and over,

which they preside. This includes control over younger women, which is shared by *ouens* and older women, particularly in relation to young women's movement. Salo's emphasis on the relational nature of the construction of personhood is, I suggest, critical. I am, however, questioning of the degree to which Salo emphasises the spatial dynamic to the development of male personhood. This is because, as I show in Chapter Two, the turf dynamics Salo describes were not prevalent in the Druiwevlei area, yet dominant masculinities were much the same as she describes.

In presenting personhood as this closely linked to the violent maintenance of social boundaries, the many men who labour quietly, consistently and peacefully in order to support their families and carve out social recognition for themselves slide somewhat into the background in Salo's work as the holders of an "alternative cultural process masculine respectability" (2007:179).¹⁰ In contrast, Steffen Jensen (2008) - while still emphasising this aspect of masculine identity - shows that these identities are equally powerful, if differently so. Jensen's research took place in the suburb of Heideveld, which lies directly across an arterial road from the Northern side of Manenberg. He explores local identity through the concept of dignity, which is, he writes, "the ontological core of self" (2008:9), something that everyone is presumed to possess, but also "something that no one wants because it is actualized in situations of dominance and humiliation" (2008:11). Jensen examines the ways in which dignity (which he implicitly uses to mean a positive sense of self), is sought after and achieved in the face of the long history of negative stereotypes attached to Coloured people.¹¹ He suggests that the negative image of the "*skollie*"¹² continues to haunt people's sense of self in Heideveld. I critique this argument in Chapter Two, where I make the case that given that the *skollie* was a stereotypical male figure, the effects of the imagery cannot be assumed to have had equal applicability to both sexes,

¹⁰ I, however, found myself falling into much the same trap. This is because these men were not the subjects of much conversation or gossip. Nor were they particularly visible on the street, as they tended to be at work during daylight hours. After dark I either went home or, like most residents, kept indoors. This limited my contact with the men who upheld norms of "respectable" masculinity.

¹¹ I capitalise all apartheid racial designations throughout to illustrate that these were labels ascribed to people. While the label of Coloured was appropriated by some, it also was, and continues to be, a designation actively resisted by many.

¹² The word "*skollie*" can be indirectly translated as ruffian. According to Don Pinnock (1984:24) the work *skollie* most likely has its origins in the Dutch word "*schoelje*" (scavenger). This was initially shouted at seagulls picking on ships waste, but later came to refer to vagrants who begged - or scratched through rubbish dumps - in the city of Cape Town.

especially as the stereotypes relating to Coloured women in the dominant discourse were very different to those relating to men.

Jensen grounds his work in a detailed historical analysis of the construction of the racial category “Coloured”. This is impressive in its range and analysis, and as such forms a strong base for my own account of historical processes (see below). Similarly to Salo (2004), Jensen argues that the form that notions of *ordentlikheid* took was contingent on their “structural relations” (2008:147) to the state and to the labour market. He also argues that a third important aspect of women’s attainment of *ordentlikheid* the degree to which they were related to (and associated with) violence. His ethnographic analysis is, however somewhat confusing in that he does not distinguish clearly between respect and respectability. While he argues coherently that masculinity requires that men gain respect, and that this can be done through two avenues, either through gang activity and violence, or through work and religion, he does not make clear that while respect can be gained through both, respectability only relates to the latter. In Chapter Two I illustrate that respect and respectability are not commensurate; as masculinity and respectability are frequently in tension, the two terms need to be held as analytically distinct. My contribution to this set of debates is to explore the differential ways in which ideas and ideals about personhood inform access to spheres of belonging and coping systems.

An uncomfortable silence in both Salo and Jensen’s work relates to the prevalence and patterns of substance use and abuse and addiction.¹³ Habitual drug use was prevalent in both Manenberg and Heideveld and, as I show, it related intimately to personhood and identity. Yet neither Salo nor Jensen theorise it in any detail. This is perhaps due to the difficulties inherent in studying and representing illegal activity (discussed below). I argue in Chapter Three that when studying the everyday in areas such as Manenberg engagement with substance use is critical because it correlates to important social forms.

¹³ There is, in popular parlance, an evaluative difference between describing drug use, which assumes a degree of control, and abuse and addiction, which imply that the individual has lost control over their use. However, the lines between controlled use and addiction are blurry. The medical definition of addiction does not help us in distinguishing, because it only refers to physiological responses to a substance, not psychological ones (Oosthuysen, 1998:162). Seeking to avoid the negative connotations of the term “abuse”, I follow Glen Oosthuysen in referring to habitual use. I do, however, use the terms addiction and abuse when they were used by participants themselves.

Fiona Ross (2010) does deal with substance abuse (and violence) in her depiction of the fragility of lives steeped in poverty among residents of a former shack settlement “*Die Bos*” (The Bush) on Cape Town’s outskirts. (Like the work of Salo and Jensen, Ross’s work is also a hinge for the analysis throughout this dissertation.) Ross followed the people and community as they moved into formal, state-provided housing. This physical shift threw into relief numerous aspects of social dynamics. These included the means by which people orientated themselves in space and time; the dynamics of social relationships both in public and private spheres; strategies and tactics of getting by, obtaining work and ensuring sustenance; sociability and responses to illness; and, importantly, people’s aspirations for decency. In this latter exploration there are many similarities to Salo’s work on respectability. Both terms – decency and respectability – relate to moral attitudes and the outward expressions of those, such as appearance (of self and home) and the adherence to gendered norms of comportment. Ross makes the point that decency required outward projection of managing one’s life. This meant that reputations were carefully policed and suffering was kept discrete even under very difficult circumstances such as those of gender violence (2005:180). In this Ross raises the darker side of *ordentlikheid*, and the ways in which it could “operate as a mask, particularly in relation to domestic violence” (2010:41).¹⁴

Another important observation Ross makes is that there is an aspect of decency that relates to the ability to ensure a degree of stability and order – of both material circumstances and social relations – in a very insecure environment (2010:36–43). Furthermore she examines the counterpoint of *ordentlikheid*, that of being “*rou*” (raw). To be accused of being raw is, she writes, “to stand accused of being less than fully human” (2010:42). Being “raw” then, relates to non-personhood. In this examination of rawness, Ross engages with the difficult aspects of life, not just substance abuse, but also domestic violence, in a way that has barely been done in South African anthropology. She does this carefully, avoiding the entrenchment of stereotypes (see my discussion below) by presenting the interactive relationships between structure, violence and substance use. In this she makes the powerful argument that “there seems to be a reciprocal relationship between social abandonment and living with abandon” (2010:7). In this she sets a

¹⁴ Whereas gang violence often relies on an audience for its effect its impact and is therefore often public (Horowitz & Schwartz, 1974); intimate gender or partner violence performs power largely within the confines of a house, and a relationship. This makes it much harder to study. Its presence is, however, evident in the ways in which it rendered intimate relationships tenuous, and ways in which it affected household mobility – with women and children moving regularly in an effort to avoid violence (Ross, 2006).

precedent that it is possible to speak ethically to and of issues of substance use and the violence that often relates to it. In Chapter Three I suggest that this precedent needs to be followed up by other ethnographic researchers in South Africa.

Finally, there is also remarkably little about children in any of these authors' work. Granted, Ross does reflect on children's experience of violence, and Salo does deal with the socialisation of girls into respectability, and boys into being tough. However, none of the authors settle any detailed focus on preadolescents. During the 1980s and 1990s there was an abundance of ethnographic work on young children and childhood in South Africa, driven by the impetus to show the devastating effects of apartheid on children's lives, this included full-scale ethnographies including those by Jones (1993), Henderson (1999), Ramphele (1993) and Reynolds (1989). Recently, the focus on young children has shifted to explorations of care in a context where families are being affected by HIV (see Bray, 2003; Bray & Brandt, 2005, 2007). In Chapter Four I illustrate that including children in our analysis of personhood beyond an examination of their socialisation into adulthood adds much to our general understanding of personhood.

This section has briefly outlined the key aspects of local ethnographies that have informed my own work. I now turn to further grounding my own work by providing an overview to historical processes that have been influential in my research field.

“Hey! Whitey!”: Racial classification and the making of Manenberg

“Anna, Anna! Hello!” I was called by children on bicycles, dodging the hooting traffic as I walked the streets. “Hey! Whitey!” I was called by men who did not know me. “We’ll look after your car” assured blurry-eyed knots of men who did know me.

In Manenberg I was distinctly White, in contrast to the population the area, who were classified Coloured during apartheid, and who mostly still self-ascribe to this classification. I was White by virtue of my education, my spending patterns, my language use and accent, my family history, my lifestyle, the place I was assumed to live,¹⁵ the texture and colour of my (curly) hair, the pallor of my skin, and the lightness of my eyes. The latter visible markers were the most obvious,

¹⁵ It was generally assumed that I lived in a predominantly White suburb, which I did not.

though they were poor signifiers; one family I worked with was almost entirely blond, with green eyes. Straight hair was aspired to (Salo, 2004) and many people had straighter hair than I (naturally, or with the assistance of products). Despite this, I was obviously White – made so by centuries of colonial and apartheid conditioning.

Conceptions of Coloured people as a distinct racial category are seated deep in colonial South African history. Official reference to Coloured people as a race distinct from African people can be traced back at least as far as the 1830s, to discussions in the British House of Commons about representative government in the Cape (Trapido, 1964). Mohamed Adhikari notes that the coalescence of a sense of Coloured identity occurred in the decades after the emancipation of slaves in the Cape, in 1838 (2006:2). The title “Coloured” became widely self-ascribed amongst people of slave heritage between 1875 and 1890 (Bickford-Smith, 1994).

Jensen (2008) has brilliantly shown how this notion of a classifiable group was fortified and gained parlance through various commissions of inquiry through the first half of the 20th century. This was prior to the initialisation of official apartheid,¹⁶ which started in 1948 when the Nationalist Party (NP) came into power, ousting the more moderate United Party.¹⁷ The NP rode in on promises of implementing strict racial segregation in a climate of mounting concern about the growing population of poor Whites amongst the ruling classes. They wasted no time codifying racial segregation with the implementation of a series of Acts. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 outlawed marriage between Whites and non-Whites. This was followed by the 1950 Immorality Act, which attempted to place a legal chastity belt on sexual relations between Whites and non-Whites; and the 1951 Group Areas Act, which demarcated the urban landscape into racial categories. The requirement of defining the nebulous boundaries of racial categories came along with the creation of these acts. This was done through the 1950 Population Registration Act, No. 30, through which every South African was given a racial designation of White, Coloured, African, or Indian.

¹⁶ “Apartheid” is, literally, the Afrikaans word for separation.

¹⁷ The United Party was by no means non-racial. In the 1930s it offered White women the vote as one way of doubling the White voting population so as to dilute the power of the Coloured vote (Gunther Stuhardt & Le Grange, 1940; Walker, 1974).

Classification was not a neat process, particularly for Coloureds, who were ambiguously defined as a residual racial category made up of those who were not White, African, or Indian. Included in this group was any White person seen to be consorting with Coloured people. With this blurry definition exactly what made an individual not White, African or Indian was an interpretive task that fell to the 1951 census takers, who each found their own criteria for categorisation (Posel, 2001).

The Group Areas Act of 1951, which designated prime property close to urban centres and sites of natural beauty for Whites, was the blueprint for the creation of mono-racial communities. Over the next four decades people were forcibly separated into residential areas demarcated for specific race groups, and often also distinguished into classes. Manenberg was set aside for poorer Coloured people. The first residents near the Druivevlei centre were young couples or single mothers who could not afford to buy their own properties or homes in the better off neighbouring areas – also demarcated Coloured – of Surrey Estate or Athlone. They came from surrounding areas, such as Kensington and Kewtown, many on a rent-to-buy scheme in the first half of the 1960s.¹⁸ As such, in classificatory terms, they lay somewhere in-between lower middle class Coloureds who moved voluntarily to the Cape Flats in the 1930s and 1940s and the largely working class Coloured people who were forcibly removed to the Cape Flats between the 1960s and 1980s (Salo, 2004).

The spatial layout of this corner of Manenberg contrasts with the denser, newer areas of the suburb to the south, dominated by the Courts. These were first populated by people from District Six and other areas close to the Cape Town city centre who had been forcibly moved during Group Area Act enforcement processes. This history of difference meant that people close to the Centre did not generally share the common bonding sense of loss and resettlement that Salo (2004) found to be present in people in The Courts. Rather, I found that there was nostalgic talk about how, on request, the apartheid government would supply one with a house. (It must be noted, however, that those who had not been given houses, or benefitted from houses given in Manenberg would not have been part of these conversations.)

¹⁸ These areas were established in the 1930s and 1940s due to forcible removals in response to the 1934 slum clearance act (Salo, 2004). By 1976 more than 90% of urban Coloured residents were in “dwelling units erected by the state” (van der Horst, 1976:60).

Finding the Centre

I was directed to the Druivevlei Community Centre corner of Manenberg in early 2009 by Self Help Manenberg, a non-governmental organisation located behind the Courts. I had approached them seeking a hall in the Manenberg area from which we could run a community programme for the non-profit organisation I co-founded and directed, the Capoeira Educational Youth Association (CEYA).¹⁹

At the time the majority of social programmes in the area were running out of the Manenberg People's Centre. Built in 1987 on land donated by the United Church, the Manenberg People's Centre nestles in the thick of the Courts. This corner had, for a number of years, been dominated by the Hard Livings gang, one of the largest local Cape Flats gangs, and was widely reputed to be the most "*woelig*" (wild or disorganised) part of Manenberg. The combination of this reputation and the existence of the People's Centre meant that the majority of the non-governmental organisations operating in the area worked in the area of the Courts. This left other areas more poorly serviced. Moreover, movement in the area has historically been restricted by gang structure and affiliation, particularly during times of tension between different gang entities. This meant that programmes such as that of CEYA, had largely been limited to one gang's area of operation because crossing gang boundaries was difficult for community members. Consequently, staff from Self Help Manenberg suggested that we look at starting a programme on the Western side of Manenberg, at the Druivevlei Community Centre.

The CEYA programme started there shortly afterwards. The people of Druivevlei Centre took to us, as we did to them. CEYA developed a strong programme with approximately 30 children from the surrounding area, ranging between the ages of six and sixteen. My co-founding colleague, Marcio Lopes, and I taught capoeira twice weekly during term times. Through this the Centre served to bring local children to CEYA. With the start of research it further served as a portal for my entry into the local community. Staff became prime informants, tutoring me in the ways of the area. (They and I spent so much time peeking out from behind the curtains and the grill of the Centre office while they informed me as to the tales of individuals passing that I

¹⁹ CEYA uses the Afro-Brazilian dance-art of capoeira as a tool for youth development by running classes in community centres in areas that have few available opportunities for children to engage in positive afterschool activities. See www.ceyassociation.org

started to tease them that in Manenberg one never looks, one always *loers* (peeks).) It was from the Centre's seniors' group that I found two well respected community elders, A'ntie Rachel²⁰ and A'ntie Sara, who took me into their care during my stays in the area.²¹ They fed me, assisted me and kept me safe through their community knowledge and status. And, finally, it was in the Centre that I conducted meetings and interviews, facilitated workshops and held discussion groups.

Finding participants and finding my feet

It was fundamentally through CEYA, and the children involved in CEYA that I found my way into Manenberg and into the community, via the Centre.²² There were 20 children that were consistently, or particularly, involved in this research. These were the children most involved in workshops that I got to know well. In Chapter Four I provide a table with basic home context information for these 20 children. This serves not only to ground my arguments about them, but also provides a solid indication of the socio-economic context, for there is no reason why the children featured should come from homes not representative of the general environment. The women featured in Chapter Two, were all directly related to these Centre children. As such these children were far more important than is indicated by the fact that they are only featured in one chapter (Chapter Four).

In seeking to understand the context of children's lives I, with the help of Judy, sought out homes to stay in of older women whose grandchildren were in the capoeira group and part of my research programme. The defining criteria in seeking these homes were:

- Children in the research lived there
- There was no overt substance use that we knew of
- There was sufficient space in the house to fit me in
- There was a toilet attached to the house
- The household head was willing to have me stay

²⁰ A'ntie is used to denote respect for older women and comes from the female word "aunty".

²¹ Finding homes that were free of any members that used substances, had sufficient space to accommodate me, and were willing to host me was a challenge.

²² I use the word community with full recognition that it is a nebulous term. I use "community" in Manenberg to refer to the cohort of people who accessed the Druiwevlei Community Centre.

The high levels of overcrowding and substance use in the area meant that meeting all these criteria at once was something of a challenge. Moreover, it required that Judy – my ever-willing facilitator and protector – knew the households well, so as to be sure of their circumstances. The two homes I stayed in – those of A’ntie Rachel and A’ntie Sara – were headed up by grandmothers who were actively involved in the Seniors’ Club at the Centre, and it was Judy who initially negotiated my visits.

Though my research stretched over two years (more if my time working with the children through capoeira is included) I ended up spending only three weeks actually living in Manenberg; far less than I had initially intended. This was partly because it was difficult for households to find the space for me. In A’ntie Rachel’s a space availability was contingent on her not having lodgers, something that was constantly changing (see Chapter Two). In A’ntie Sara’s house two grandsons moved out of their beds (to share with other family members) in order to make room for me. While the household members did all they could to make me comfortable, I was aware that I was an additional body (and one who needed her own bed) in a context of limited space. This meant I was not comfortable staying in any one house too long. The problem was that Judy and I simply couldn’t find other houses that met all the criteria.

There was, however, another critical factor that led to me curtail my time actually living in Manenberg: as my focus shifted towards female substance addiction, my interests became less innocuous, and more intimately related to local power dynamics. When a woman arrived at the Centre to ask about a recent shooting and police chase, and she was laughingly told by Centre staff, “Ask Anna, she knows more than any of us”, I decided that for my own safety, and that of the people I associated with, it was probably better for me to spend days in and around the Centre, but to sleep at home. However, by that time I had gained the reputation of someone who was willing to come and “live” in Manenberg, which opened numerous doors, and gained significant trust.

Chapter Three, in which I examine the feminisation of drug use, diverges somewhat from this sample group of children and adults who regularly spent time at the Centre. This was for a two reasons. Firstly, children from the homes most affected by substance use found it difficult to consistently be part of programmes such as CEYA (see Chapter Four). They were therefore

under-represented in the research group. Secondly, though there was substance, if not drug, use in the homes and the yards of many of the children in the core group (as the table on pages 83 – 84 shows), I chose not to delve into it with these family networks. This was because, (as also described in Chapter Four) I was aware that substance use and shame were linked, and I did not want to make children uncomfortable with me, or with my interest in them.

The women featured in Chapter Three did not, however, come from households that were distinctly demographically different from those of the children tabulated in Chapter Four, and while most did not spend time at the Centre, they nevertheless came to me via the Centre staff. I was linked to others by Richard, the local dealer, whose trust I had also gained by virtue of his long-standing relationship to people at the Centre. Others were sent by friends who had spoken to me, or sought me out independently because they had stories to tell, and they had heard that I would listen with an ear unclogged by judgement. All lived in the immediate streets around the Centre. With these drug using women I largely used life history interviews. This contrasted with the methodologies I relied on with most of the people in this study, as described below.

Methodology – Ethnography and more

Participant observation was, very productively, my main research methodology. In general the intimacy of the ethnographic method allows insight into community dynamics that may be obscured and/or obfuscated to a less embedded researcher. For me, time, and the slow solidification of close relationships that came with it, had a dual effect on my research. As I lost the patina of an outsider, participants ceased to overtly explain events and happenings to me. However, they also decreased their efforts to conceal aspects of their lives that placed them at risk of (my) negative judgement. Consistent interaction had other benefits, too. It allowed me to notice the ebb and flow of conversational emphases. This alerted me to social shifts, such as the feminisation of drug use discussed in Chapter Three.

My research methodology with adults was largely traditional. In addition to participant observation it included discussion groups and many life history interviews. With children, in contrast, I found that immense creativity was needed.²³ “Hanging out” with children had a

²³ For more details on the participating children see Chapter Four.

distinctly different feel to hanging out with adults. It was largely in public spaces – in the Centre, or on the street – rather than in homes over cups of tea or meal preparation. As such it allowed less privacy and space for note taking. Any scrawl on a notepad or photo taken was duly examined by a crowd of craning heads. Additionally, it required a very different type of concentration: intense focus on fleeting, but illuminating, snippets of information. Unlike adults who would answer my questions – particularly the less delicate ones – forthrightly, children’s worldviews were not accessible through flowing sentences that relieved me of my ignorance. Rather, I had to become adept at catching the rich terms and phrases thrown out, or muttered under breath – such as “*Skollie!*” said out the side of a mouth at a passing child. If I was lucky, my request for further explanation was granted: “Why is he a *skollie?*” I asked. “Because his parents are *skollies*, they sell drugs”, came the answer. Often, the response was more reticent: “*Wat bedoel jy hy is baie besig?*” (What do you mean he is very busy?) I asked an eleven-year-old girl who had made a sideways comment about a boy we were passing on the street. “*Ek sluk my mond in*” (I’m swallowing in my mouth) she replied and was further mute on the matter.²⁴

My research methods with children were, therefore, somewhat unorthodox. Given this, I include a detailed description of them here. Structured research with children was done through multiple drawing, writing and radio workshops. These were open invitations to all children from the capoeira group who had written parental consent. In these sessions, for example, children drew their homes and everyone who slept there regularly; the street they lived on; and the broader neighbourhood. These gave me demographic information for each child and it provided information as to where the children lived in relation to one another. This is particularly important in an area such as Manenberg, where different streets have distinctly different reputations.²⁵

Diary writing was used to great effect, particularly because the words inscribed in diaries were written on the trust built up by the year and a half of capoeira teaching that I had done before starting research. Diaries became a place where children could tell me things that the crowded environment of a capoeira class, the street, or group workshop did not enable: for example, “Dear Anna,” an eleven-year-old girl wrote, “I do not even know who my daddy is”. Diaries

²⁴ See my ethics section below for a discussion on silences.

²⁵ This was partly due to gang turf dynamics.

also became a place where children could communicate the unspeakable things to those close to them. A sibling pair together composed a letter to their father: “Dear Daddy...We know you have a child with your girlfriend...” In addition to providing children with free spaces to write and express themselves, directed diary writing also served to open new areas of communication. In a group diary writing session I would give them an open-ended phrase, such as, “I feel safe when...” All the children would then use the phrase to start their entry that day. With the children’s permission, I took home and read and copied the diaries on a regular basis. After reading each child’s diary, I would write a note back, acknowledging the writing, and asking the child to describe aspects of their life to me. Essentially, then, the children who engaged most aptly with this methodology became my pen-pals. Consequently, as I explain in the ethics section below, I have chosen to use very little from the diaries overtly, rather keeping them private.

Writing did not suit every child. It proved beyond the skills of the younger ones; an effortful reminder of ineptitude at school for some; and a space too unframed for others. (“What must I write, Anna?”) As an alternative place for expression, together with the help of a friend and colleague Clemence Petit-Perrot and the Children’s Radio Foundation (CRF – see, <http://childrensradiofoundation.org/>), we introduced the participants to the techniques of radio. Through a programme that started in 2011 (and was still running as I was writing up in early 2012) thirteen children were trained in radio skills.²⁶ They learnt how to ask directed questions, to create structured narratives and to craft detailed descriptions. Importantly, they learnt how to take ownership of situations and stories. These children were then given access to recording equipment, and, in structured sessions with us spent time fashioning representations of their lives and community. Then, with the microphone as a mediator, and us facilitators in supporting roles, they went into their streets and homes, to the local police station and to Child Welfare,²⁷ and exercised their skills.²⁸

Through this methodology, then, young people were much more than active informants – they were very capable researchers, too. This was particularly because the microphone acted a tool to legitimate the questions children asked that stemmed from insights beyond our own. (A child

²⁶ Participation was entirely voluntary

²⁷ Child Welfare is the state organisation for social work relating to children

²⁸ The three resulting radio programmes are included here as Appendix 2

with a microphone – attached to a recorder – in hand needs to be answered, in some way or other.) It also gave reason to request privacy. It was understood that quiet was needed for the sake of recording. In a space-compromised area this gave children a reason to find the quiet space that allowed them to exhale and tell the stories they had cramped inside them.

Consequently, many of the stories that came out were not for public consumption. In all cases, we re-listened to the stories with the teller in order to make decisions about whether they would become public in any way. We and the children played personal stories to their parents before finalising the programmes. It was here that I realised the importance of this methodology beyond its inputs for research. Parents and carers were unequivocally and emotionally proud of their children, often voicing to us that they did not know their children were so capable. It became evident that research that recognises, uses and illustrates children's agency and capacities can enable adults to re-evaluate their perspectives of them.

Blurred boundaries: Insider-outsider, teacher-researcher

Like many anthropologists I arrived, and largely remained, an outsider in my research field. Though Manenberg is an easy commute from my home (and indeed, a daily commute in the opposite direction is not uncommon) I was rendered an outsider by virtue of my skin colour, class, residential area, language and education. Yet, there were a number of important differences to the usual anthropological research experience. This was particularly because I first entered this research field as a capoeira teacher and as the manager of CEYA. This positioning, especially at the start of research, overlaid the usual insider-outsider role played by the anthropologist.

I started my research as someone who was already, to some degree, a confidant; someone who inhabited the circle of carers that worked from the Centre and who was innately concerned about the wellbeing of the children in the CEYA programme. This general faith that I was not present simply for the extraction of information lent itself greatly to the richness of my data. This built relationships of trust not only with children, but also with parents and carers, which allowed difficult topics to be broached, and that kept me safe as I learned sensitive information. It was this that allowed me to tackle the difficult topic of addiction dealt with in Chapter Three.

Though for the most part I ceased to teach capoeira once I started research, I was still a teacher to the children. This may well have obscured or warped certain information. CEYA has a strict no drinking and no drugs policy for the children in the programme and this has developed into a norm amongst the capoeira children. This meant that children involved in the programme, and therefore the research, were less likely to get involved in substance abuse than those completely uninvolved and, if they did use substances, they would likely go to lengths to hide it from me (though I would be quite likely to find out from others). It also meant that the children were very largely keen to please me and spend time with me. Diaries, workshops and neighbourhood walkabouts were all opportunities to spend more time with me and therefore particularly well attended, all to the benefit of the research.

Research ethics

This dual and shifting role that I played required careful attention to ethics in my research practice. I transferred gradually from being primarily a service provider to principally being a researcher, and for a period I played both roles. This meant that I needed to take great care in situating myself in conversations with regards to what my capacities and interests were. As a researcher, I was always clear about the subjects of my curiosity, and formulations of my research questions. These evolved over time and as they did I went through a process of continually checking my views and understandings with research participants to ensure I was both within the bounds of acceptability, and correct in my analysis.

Perhaps the most important attention to ethics in my research practice was with regards to silences. Children, particularly, used carefully constructed silences to negotiate complex and dangerous topics for protection, theirs and my own. Participation was never forced, and silences were noted and respected. At the same time, once stories started being told – by both children and adults – they often tumbled out unrestrained. Consequently, I became well trained in holding silences and secrets myself. I was hugely selective in what I spoke about in Manenberg. That which I made public I only did so with permission, and sometimes only after receiving legal advice. Maintaining the privacy of young participants while acting within the realms of the

Children's Act (2005) sometimes required a dexterous balancing act.²⁹ I worked closely with local service providers when I became aware of situations in which children's rights or safety were compromised. This required some careful navigation of relationships with parents and caregivers, but at all times children's involvement in the research came second to concerns for their general safety.

This active engagement with ethics that ran through my research practice is also implicit in my writing. Explicit consent was sought from everyone actively involved in the research and featured in this dissertation, or in radio programmes. I have used pseudonyms throughout the dissertation in order to veil identities, unless explicitly asked not to. I have also chosen not to include pictures of research participants – though I have a wonderful, demonstrative collection – in order to protect privacy. Children did mostly choose to use their first names in radio programmes, though. Due to this I have been careful not to make any clear links between radio stories and the individual's featured here. In the radio workshops, and the construction of radio programmes we engaged in a similar process on seeking continual consent. In this work I followed the Children's Radio Foundation's ethical guidelines and processes. Further concerns, discussed below, shaped the nature of my representations.

Ethics of Representation

In the front of Angie's* diary (fifteen years) I found a letter on a torn scrap of paper. In a very precise hand it started:

“Dear Anna

Please keep this diary secret, it is only for you, me and my parents. I don't want people to know how hard my life is, because life for a child in Manenberg is very, very hard...”

The contents of Angie's diary have remained private, but with her permission I have repeated the request in her letter here, for it captures the questions and challenges of researching and

²⁹ The Children's Act both dictates that at all times the “best interests” of the child must be taken into account and that any child care worker is legally obliged to report any abuse. I found these to be, in some ways, contradictory requirements. The vast majority of children in areas such as Manenberg are subject to some degree of corporal punishment, which is defined as abuse. However, reporting every instance would not have been possible, or well received by social services.

representing painful realities. When indications are not explicit such as Angie's was, what of the harsh realities of life should be revealed, and what should remain veiled?

I have taken the approach that not to write about the ever present and pressing struggles of daily life would have been an unforgivable case of ethnographic exclusion, or "refusal", as Sherry Ortner terms it (1995: 176, cited in Goldstein, 2003). I had assumed a responsibility to share the circumstances, and tales that have been shared with me, in the good faith that I will render them sensitively. I have attempted to solidify these enough so that they can be felt, but not to filter them so much as to do an injustice to the experiences I relate. In order to ensure that I was both accurate, and sufficiently respectful in what I had written, I returned to Manenberg once writing was complete to go through what I had written with those featured. Through this I hope to have adequately expressed the suffering experienced despite the necessary process rationalizing and providing neat edges to people's experiences inherent in writing (Das, 2006; Taussig, 1991; Nordstrom & Robben, 1995).

A larger concern has been the danger of pathologising and/or demonising the people that I feature. In this I have written against the "culture of poverty" school, based on the work of Oscar Lewis (1962). I do not regard people as perpetuating their own poverty through their cultural systems.³⁰ In order to guard against representation that implies this is the case, I emphasise history and structure. The people of Manenberg have been subjected to slow, systematic violence through the attitudes, policies and actions of apartheid, through wilful neglect of the wellbeing of the people there, and, as I discuss in Chapter Two, through the unintended consequences of a post-apartheid neoliberal system. Through this I hope that I successfully demonstrate that accountability for social failure fundamentally lies at the centres of power and that individual choices, and the consequences thereof, are circumscribed by structural forces. I ask that the reader holds in mind that violence, almost always, begets violence. Moreover, I illustrate in Chapter Four that systems of belonging that may seem to be cultural processes that ingrain poverty are, in fact, important processes for getting by under difficult circumstances.

I have also tried to emphasise structure and context through following Angela Garcia (2010) – who examines the relationship between societal structure and the development of social forms

³⁰ For a recent work that reinforces this notion, see Anderson (2008)

related to drug addiction – in utilising the concept of escape. Garcia seeks to show “how the desire for escape and its local forms...delineate a set of vulnerabilities that are common and shared and from which the possibility of an ethical responsiveness can emerge” (2010:21). I suggest that escape — understood as to “get freedom from detention or control, or from an oppressive or irksome condition” and/or a “mental or emotional distraction” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989: 385) – becomes an attractive option, when everyday possibilities for being a valued being are curtailed. Among those with whom I worked escape came in various forms. It came either from an individual’s economic success and movement out of the area, or, more commonly, in the forms of flight from the pressures of respectable norms through involvement in violence, gangs and drug use. Historically these have all been predominantly masculine pursuits in Manenberg. The latter, as I show in Chapter Three, has become feminised as more and more women have found their current situations untenable. By understanding behaviour that has destructive effects as attempts at escape, I hope to foreground and bring to attention that which is being escaped from.

In this, I hope I have succeeded to some extent in the manner that Donna Goldstein has in her ethnography of life in a Brazilian favela (shanty town). Through the lens of humour, Goldstein examines particular events and situations which are abhorrent in their violence and destructiveness, but appear humorous to her participants. Through providing the context of these situations she elucidates why people laugh in the face of their own pain. In this way, through each chapter Goldstein highlights the ingenuity and strength of the Brazilian poor struggling for survival and sweeps away their alienation. Similarly, I hope that I have illustrated the phenomenal tenacity, strength, courage, and ingenuity of people whose life options remain hugely constrained.

Finally, in respect of individuals and the risks that might be inherent in my publicising events that could negatively affect any individual there are also many stories that do not appear overtly – the words in Angie’s diary do not. But that have shaped my thoughts; they have crept out obliquely in the rhythms of my words and in the breaks that are my silences. In this, they present themselves, and I them.

Chapter outline

Chapter Two builds on work done by Salo (2004) and Jensen (2008) relating to the development of Coloured women's identities in working class areas. I confirm their assertions that, in a context of relative deprivation, the apartheid attitude towards Coloured women (in contrast to Coloured men) positioned them in such a way that they could develop reproducible, socially acceptable and venerated identities related to local notions of respectability. In contrast, men were not in the position to construct uncontested, socially acceptable identities. I develop my concept of positive personhood in relation to this, showing that post-apartheid shifts have eroded young women's ability to attain established models of positive personhood. I argue that for young people the genders in the Manenberg are equalising: young women are increasingly in a similarly precarious position to men with regards to developing their positions as valued members of society and ensuring their everyday survival.

In Chapter Three I unpack and examine one huge ramification of the processes described in the previous chapter: the feminisation of the use of hard drugs. I argue that Manenberg, and likely the Cape Flats in general, has seen an unprecedented rise in women's use of hard, addictive drugs to a far greater degree than treatment centre statistics reveal. I illustrate that this needs to be framed and understood as a dynamic between the breakdown of women's ability to achieve positive personhood (and their correlating exclusion from coping systems) and the consequent increased desirability of the escape; the implementation of the Western Cape Liquor Bill (2005); and the influx of crystal methamphetamine, a drug that articulated with local notions of female propriety.

The critical importance – in conditions of relative marginalisation – of achieving a social identity that fosters belonging is a theme that runs through these chapters. In the fourth chapter I explore this further. Here I explore the ramifications of children's circumstances (in the context provided in the prior two chapters) for the options for their futures. Through three exemplary case studies I show that the need for belonging both guides and restricts children's choices, actions and options. It will therefore, inevitably, affect their futures. In this I show that children are more "dividual" (socially related) beings than adults. I end this chapter with a brief engagement with the psychological theory that is widely used to predict children's outcomes, which I refer to in

brief as the risk-resilience model, and I suggest that anthropology and psychology would profit from cross-pollination in this field of enquiry.

I conclude this dissertation by raising two examples of attempts at creating community-state partnerships. These are a meeting called by the local police social police officer in Manenberg in response to a spate of local shootings; and round table discussion between state actors and local stake holders about substance sales. Through these case studies I show that in many attempts by the state and service providers to instigate change there is an emphasis on individual accountability and locally driven responses. These do not have the desired effects because local responses to issues such as gang violence often require actions that threaten individuals' and communities' own requirements for belonging to networks necessary for survival; and the more marginalised an individual is within their greater political-economic framework, the more important their inclusion in small spheres of belonging becomes.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 2

AllPay and No Work: the equalisation of genders

On a cold winter's day in July 2010 Judy, a community worker, and I set out a circular huddle of chairs in the Centre hall. Mothers and grandmothers slowly, shyly, came in and sat down. We were there to discuss why I would be coming to stay in Manenberg, for me to explain my research in more detail, and for them to voice possible concerns. The meeting atmosphere started out awkward as I outlined my reasons for coming to stay in the area; I was making a shift from being a capoeira teacher to being a researcher and parents seemed unsure of how to reframe me.

The meeting then became formal and furrow-browed as we discussed their concerns for their children: child abuse and neglect, health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, metal heads, gangsterism, education and school drop outs, unemployment and teenage pregnancies. We finally cracked a barrier of hesitation and seriousness when Judy told them that in a drawing workshop their children had drawn me suitcases filled with everything I would need to bring for my stay and that a number of the girls had drawn me "sexy clothing". Quick as a flash Leila, a woman in her early thirties involved in assisting with the capoeira group, said, "You don't need sexy clothes to come here to Manenberg, you just need pyjamas and a *swirlkous* (head-stocking)!" To great hilarity other women started chipping in and we drew up a list of things I would "need" to come to stay in the area. The list, as jotted down in my notes was:

Stukkende pentihose (Stockings with holes in them)

A *hokkie* (a shack) – for which I will need *planke* (planks), *plate* (roof sheets), plastic, board, and a ceiling board

Toiletries

Pyjama or silk boxers and a t-shirt

A salwar top so that I can just put that over my pyjamas when I want to go out – with the comment, "*Klere is net vir die weekends*" (Clothes are just for the weekends).

A *doekie* (headscarf)

A "feather double" (duvet)

A *swirlkous/kopkous* (head-stocking)

Morning slippers – "for the whole day"

An *okapyp* (a hookah pipe)

My notes continue:

The *okapyp* suggestion raised a discussion: “*Nee, jy nou nie meer 'n okapyp noodig nie, nou is dit n mixitpyp!* (No, you don’t need a hookah pipe, you need a mixit pipe!)”, said one mother. “What is a “*mixitpyp*”?” I asked. Someone explained that it is a pipe that one you put *dagga* [marijuana], *tik* [crystal meth] and flavoured tobacco in. Another corrected her, saying that *tik* doesn’t smoke well in a *mixitpyp* – it is just for *dagga* and tobacco. By then we were mostly giggling together, but there was also a concerned call from the side, from where Judy and Sister Celia, the nurse, were sitting (who both work in Manenberg, but live in neighbouring suburbs); they requested that I exclude *mixitpyp* in the list, they don’t use one.

Leila, who had started and led much of this joking ended it by saying, “And you don’t need a suitcase to come here, just bring one of those green Pick ‘n Pay packets, that’s all you need, you don’t need much to come to Manenberg!”

Notes 29 June 2010

In this way I was introduced to a caricatured version of local adult women – poor, jobless, living in back yard shacks, unkempt, not bothering to get out of sleepwear unless a special occasion presented itself, and using addictive substances. In this self-deprecating manner, the mothers and grandmothers of the children I was working with illustrated to me – then still largely an outsider – that they were well aware of the stereotypes that prevailed about them, and that they were in control enough of themselves and their situations to turn these representations into humour.

This caricature stands in stark contrast with the ideal, *ordentlike moeder* (respectable mother) figure theorised by Salo (2004), and further written about by Ross (2010) and Jensen (2008). Through an exemplar case study of an older respectable mother, Rachel I confirm the existence of the structural supports for women written about by Salo and Jensen – in the forms of available work, welfare and housing – for the construction of this identity. Rachel’s case study shows how, in the local context these structural bolsters acted (and were acted on) to allowed women to become central (venerated) figures in their homes and in the community. Recently, however, these support structures of old have crumbled, as I illustrate through another exemplar case study

of a young woman, Faziela.³¹ Consequently, young women currently trying to achieve positive personhood are largely swimming in unmapped terrain. Moreover, older women who successfully utilised systems of the past, continue to benefit. Young women are now in a more similar position to men who have for generations now, struggled to construct and maintain coherent positive social identities. It is in the shadow of these changes that the caricatured version of adult women I was presented with was becoming prominent as a local figure.

The respectable mother (of old)

“I don’t mind giving interviews,” A’ntie Rachel informed me – even though we had only met once before – as I sat down on her bed next to her, recorder in hand, to conduct a life history interview. For the next hour and a half, she narrated her tale, one hand smacking the duvet occasionally for emphasis.

Born in 1947, Rachel was one of thirteen children. Her parents had a fractious marriage. They were, she said, “*meer uitmekaar as inmekaar*” (more separate than together). She and her siblings lived with her mother and grandmother in a five bed-roomed home in Kensington. Her mother, who was illiterate, worked in factories. She cleaned chicken carcasses and packed sweets. Rachel grew up under the vigilant eye of her grandmother, who ensured that life was centred in the home, and that they didn’t “know the street”. Describing the depth of their poverty, she said, “*Ons het kaalvoet geloop*” (We walked barefoot), indicating that they did not even have money for necessities. Aged thirteen, she completed standard five (grade seven). Motivated by the fact that her sister, the “golden child” was not required to do household chores and the fact that her eleven-year-old brother was already working and assisting her mother with income, Rachel, without knowledge of her mother, sought work. She enlisted the assistance of a cousin and found work in the local I&J fish factory. Below the legal age of employment, she could not be on contract, and instead signed on as a casual worker at the beginning of each week.

At fifteen she and her family were forced out of their Kensington home in a first wave of forced removals. They were moved to Manenberg: dusty, street-less, school-less and farm-fringed, on

³¹ Whereas I have used pseudonyms throughout this dissertation, I have not done so for Faziela. I had initially asked her if I could profile her, saying I wouldn’t use her real name. She responded saying that if I wasn’t using her real name, she could be completely honest. Later, she came to me and said, “Anna I want to be part of this thing, but I want you to use my real name, because this is *my* story.”

the very outskirts of the city. At sixteen, walking home from work one day, Rachel was tricked into thinking she was needed to help a friend with a sick baby. Once in the friend's house she was raped by a local teenager who had his eye on her, and whose attentions she had rebuffed. Shamed, she was silent about the event. But after being raped a second time by the same man she became pregnant. She told an aunt, who in turn broke the news to her mother. Once the baby, a girl, was born her mother "took" the child (assuming responsibility for her) and Rachel was sent to stay with family in Woodstock, close to the city centre to get away from the continuing harassment of her rapist.

On weekends Rachel returned to Manenberg, to visit her family, and spend time with her baby. On these visits home she met and became friends with Gamal. Gamal was older than she, in his late twenties. He had already served two prison sentences (one for theft, the other for carrying a weapon) the longest of which had been ten years, though he had only served six. Her mother objected to the match, and initially Rachel resisted his advances. Then one night she went out with him to a party on the other side of Manenberg, at the Courts. Her mother had given her permission to go with strict proviso that she would be home by ten o'clock. Once there, she stayed too late and then – fearing returning home in the danger of the late night – she slept in the house where the party had been held. She returned home in the morning to find her clothing packaged and waiting on the doorstep for her. Put out of home, she found shelter with some friends, and was "maintained" by Gamal.³² Following the local protocol for appropriate behaviour under the circumstances (Salo, 2004: 232), Gamal asked Rachel's mother permission to date her. Permission was grudgingly given, with the condition that if Rachel fell pregnant ("*as hy my oorkrap*"), he would be obliged to marry her, as, her mother said, she was not seeking to have "*hoerkind*" (whore child) on her hands.

In 1966, Rachel went to the City Council, and requested a house, which was granted a mere three weeks later. She and Gamal moved in and the relationship quickly turned violent. Gamal regularly beat her, and he was flagrantly unfaithful. Angry the abuse that Rachel was receiving, her mother forbade their marriage, despite her earlier demands. Attempting to control her fertility, Rachel tried injectable contraception, but she reacted negatively physically and stopped

³² Locally, the word "maintain" (taken from English) is used to connote the provision of the basic essentials of living: accommodation, food, clothing, and perhaps some spending money.

using it. She fell pregnant, gave birth to her second child, and found herself even more tied to Gamal. In a second attempt at controlling her own body she started using the contraceptive pill – but Gamal found these and tossed them away angrily saying that only bad women used birth control. Aged nineteen Rachel fell pregnant for the third time.

Despite the conditions of the relationship once Rachel was twenty-one and she no longer legally required to get her parents' permission, she and Gamal were wed. On marrying, her lease was retracted on the house in an attempt by social workers to force Gamal, who ran a spray painting business from home, to find other work premises. In place of the house, they were provided with a small flat in neighbouring Heideveld, into which they moved. The marriage lasted five years. Gamal continued to stray, continued to beat Rachel, and gave no support for the children. Rachel earned income to support her growing family through a small home sewing and knitting business. Aged 26, after two more pregnancies (the last with twins, only one of which survived) Rachel broke off the relationship. She explained to me that she had thought, "*Die man kastei my te veel...slaan my te veel. Ek werk my dood vir my kinders...ek kan nie so aangaan 'ie.*" (This man punishes me too much...hits me too much. I'm killing myself working for my children...I can't go on like this.) Rachel tried to enlist police assistance in getting Gamal to move out of their leased flat, but "*In daai tyd kon die polisie mos niks doen*" (In those times, the police could not do anything). It was only after she was so badly beaten that she was bleeding copiously from the head that police acted and threw Gamal out of the house. This did not stop Gamal's harassment; he returned repeatedly at night, to beat Rachel while she was sleeping. The flat was in Gamal's name, and this limited Rachel's options.

After a couple of years of enduring this abuse, Rachel returned to the social workers, and requested another house. Her excuse was that the children in the flats teased Henry, her younger disabled brother who lived with her. Six months later she was given a two-storey, three-bedroom, semi-detached maisonette on a lease-to-buy contract. Aged 30, with six children, Rachel established herself in the house she still lives in. She covered the costs of raising her children singlehandedly through a combination of contract catering work, home care work, buying and selling goods, private late night sewing, and maintenance grants. Henry was still living with her when I stayed. Rachel married again, twice; however, neither relationship lasted long. In the first of these her husband's infidelity proved too much, and she bagged his

belongings, and deposited them outside the house. In the second, she moved in with her husband, but she struggled with his *dagga* use. She left and returned to her own home, which, as I show later, became her most important resource.

I stop relating Rachel's life history in detail at this point because it is the historical construction of her current circumstances, as a home-owning, resourceful mother that is pertinent for the analysis that follows after the next case study I present, that of the Faziela, a young mother today.

The new young mother

A'ntie Sara was the lease holder, and the grandmother in a small row house.³³ She ran a small, busy industry selling cigarettes, small packets of sugar, coffee and other necessities from the front room. In this she was assisted by A'ntie Rita, a pensioner who stayed in the house in exchange for her general assistance. Also in the house, in an added extension, were A'ntie Sara's youngest daughter, Lizette and Lizette's four children aged between sixteen and three years old when I started fieldwork. At 33, Lizette was also the grandmother to one – her oldest daughter Faziela's baby boy. Faziela had become pregnant aged fifteen, while in Grade 9 at one of the local high schools.³⁴ She dropped out when her son, Muiz, was born the following year. (This was the same year in which I started fieldwork.) Almost any time I drove past A'ntie Sara's house, on my way to or from the Centre, I could see Faziela lingering outside close to the gate, often with one or two friends. In the afternoons Zaid, Lizette's youngest child, would scoot about with his friends in the yard and the immediate piece of road in front of the house. Sometimes Faziela had Muiz with her, though often he was in the house, with A'ntie Sara.

Faziela's path to being a teenage mother was one that had been well trodden by women in Manenberg before her. She explained to me that in high school she was friendless until "I started hanging out with naughty girls, smoking *dagga*, being part of the gangs..." Of the group of eight girl friends that she joined, none of had completed school and all had children by the time they were eighteen years old. None had work. Faziela's situation was, as such, not unusual. Less

³³ The mother of three, her oldest son had been shot in gang violence in front of the house eight years previously. Her other son lived in a different neighbourhood and visited occasionally.

³⁴ According to Bray et al, teenage girls in Coloured communities who are sexually active are "more likely to have fallen pregnant than not". (2010: 276)

common perhaps, was the fact that she had not (yet) given up on the idea of getting an education, which she saw as the only option for constructing a future over which she had power. Once Muiz was old enough to stop breastfeeding, aged two, she had returned to school, leaving Muiz with A'ntie Sara during school hours. This was a concession reluctantly made; A'ntie Sara had been looking forward to quieter days, having already retired and raised her final grandchild past babyhood. On returning to school, however, Faziela was frustrated by the fact that she could not do the subjects of her choice, and her attention wavered. Moreover, she was trapped between the expectations of parenthood, and the lack of position implied by her school-going status. Describing the situation she said,

“I went back to school, Grade Ten again, so my grandma them, they *skelled* (scolded) about [how] they can't look after my child, and all that. So afterwards I told my mommy I'm going to drop out...I don't want my family to every time tell me, they must do this they must do that [for me]. And whenever Muiz got sick I must come home, and so...now I am at home for three years...I never got a job, everything is difficult. I'm turning nineteen, but everyone still treats me like a child. Even though I have one and I am mature, but they still treat me like a child. I tried to commit suicide three times.”

After dropping out of school the final time, Faziela started courses at a local college, but her enrolment there was short lived, too. For a period after that she worked at a local sweet factory, where the pay was minimal – with a basic salary of R350 per week – and the hours long, with days generally stretching to twelve hours. As local notions of respectable daughterhood required (Salo, 2004:279-280), she handed her weekly pay over to her mother, who managed the household finances. Discouraged, she quit after a few weeks. Towards the end of my research Faziela was still pinning her hopes on getting a job, in order to save up money to study, but she was at sea for how to get one. Her best efforts consisted of creating and printing a pile of curricula vitae, dropping these at shops and businesses in the city centre, and then waiting for a call. Her feeling of powerlessness about her situation became mine, too, one day after an interview session with her, during which her eyes were frequently filled with tears. Having packed up the recording device, I asked Faziela whether there was anything she wanted to ask

me, about myself, since I had asked so much about her. Shyly, looking at her feet she said, “There is something I would like to ask Anna. Do you have work for me?”³⁵

Faziela’s situation engendered significant amounts of strain and conflict in the house. While she was still at school there was tension about her not working hard enough at succeeding. At home there were conflicts about how much of the childcare for Muiz was left to A’ntie Sara; about her inability to complete other studies, or to find a job. There was tension about the lack of money being given by Muiz’s father, a local youth who had acknowledged paternity (something I was told was becoming more and more rare), but who had no more financial resources than Faziela. He, too had dropped out of school early, and work was scarce – he only picked up occasional manual labour jobs. His financial support was erratic in the beginning, and had dried up completely by the time Muiz was two, when he and Faziela broke off the relationship.

Faziela had initially wanted to marry Muiz’s father, but, she was too young to do so out of her own volition, and she was refused permission by her mother, Lizette. Lizette explained to me that Faziela was still a child herself: she was not yet able to cook or maintain the household; she was not yet a woman. By the end of my research period, Faziela was planning her marriage to another local youth – also eighteen years old. She had taken over cooking and cleaning responsibilities in A’ntie Sara’s house, and this potential marriage was the vessel into which Faziela was placing her hopes of becoming recognised as an adult woman.

Patterning propriety: women’s work and welfare

While Rachel and Faziela’s life stories were both thickly textured with strength and hardship, there was a sense in Rachel’s that though difficult, she had a certain mastery over her own position that was absent in Faziela’s. This was, I suggest, a generational difference, rather than simply the difference between two individuals, that was a consequence of political economic changes. The older women of Manenberg were bolstered in their positions as nurturers and providers through structures that ensured they had work, allowed them to find housing, and supplied sufficient welfare to stop the worst gaps caused by pervasive poverty. Young women no

³⁵ This conversation, therefore, ended with a discussion about our interaction and my position as a researcher, rather than the service provider I was with CEYA (see Chapter One).

longer have access to these structural supports. This next section provides historical perspective on these supports and their changes, going back to the industrialisation of the last century.

A pattern of poor women as the prime actors both in reproduction and production was set in South Africa as far back as the 1930s.³⁶ The international financial crisis and global recession of the times caused rural poverty to deepen. Home industries were subsumed by manufacturing industries – burgeoning in South Africa – at the time and young women (particularly young Afrikaans women prior to getting married) were sent to urban areas to find work in order to help support their struggling families. These women flowed into the recently created industrial jobs, which were seen to be suited to female delicacy and precision. In the Cape, these lower-end industrial jobs were largely occupied by Coloured women (Iliffe, 1987).³⁷

In 1955 the apartheid state implemented the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, as one of the plethora of strategies to constrain population movement, and ingrain racial segregation. Initially this policy ensured that Africans were not allowed to own property or build housing in the Cape and that their movement to and from the Cape was strictly monitored. In the 1960s the policy was further developed to ensure that only Coloured labour was employed in the Western Cape (Humphries, 1989).³⁸ This maintained a majority White population in the region, and sought to align the Coloured population with the White regime by preventing their need to compete for jobs with a growing African population (Erasmus & Pietersen, 1999). In addition, it further served to cement the racial profile of the feminised industrial work force in the Cape.³⁹

There was a high degree of protectionism of the new local industry. This, together with the Coloured Labour Preference policy together created ample – if poorly paid and often unpleasant – work opportunities for poorly educated Coloured women (Jensen, 2008). It was the continuing effects of these political-economic occurrences and strategies that allowed Rachel to leave

³⁶ Rachel's story, of being raised by a grandmother, and supported by her mother was, therefore, not unusual (see also Salo, 2004: 156 - 157).

³⁷ Nationally, however White women dominated. By 1930 there were 10,000 White women working in factories in South Africa (Iliffe, 1987)

³⁸ In addition, quotas limited the number of Africans employed, and employers were forced to reduce the number of African employees; and decentralisation benefits were only available to employers of Coloured and White workers (Humphries, 1989).

³⁹ This was one aspect of creating a racial bulwark – both in terms of raw numbers and in terms of political affiliation – between the dominant White regime and the growing African population in the Cape.

school, with a standard Five (Grade Seven) certificate in 1960, confident that she could mobilise family resources and find work.⁴⁰ This availability of work opportunities stayed much the same for women of Rachel's socio-economic bracket until after apartheid, when the new democratic government shifted from the protectionism of the past and implemented new neoliberal economic policies. South African borders became permeable to trade, and trade tariffs were reduced. Unshielded industries were squeezed by a rapid rise of cheap imports, an appreciating Rand (since 2002), and a global depression (Vlok, 2006).

These changes in economic strategy led to the rapid breakdown of industries. According to the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union in this industry alone (in which the majority of women in Manenberg had been employed) there were 18,450 recorded job losses in the Western Cape between 2002 and 2011 (SACTWU, 2011).⁴¹ The factories ceased to be the prime employers for women in Manenberg, and employment opportunities were dramatically curtailed for the local populace.⁴² The work situation was dire at the turn of the century. According to the 2001 National census, when the population of Manenberg was registered to be 46 238, 29 545 people had no income, and a further 1458 people received an income of less than R401 per month.⁴³

Statistics are not available, but anecdotal evidence indicated that unemployment worsened over the next ten years. The majority of employed older women still working were in domestic service. Young women – such as Faziela – lacking a good education, were no longer able to assume the paths of their mothers into steady, albeit poorly paid, work. They also could not rely on friends and relatives to assist them in finding work. Most who found work were employed on short-term contracts in super-market chains as cashiers and packers.⁴⁴

Not only had work opportunities shrunken dramatically, so had the options for acquiring a brick home. Formal housing in Manenberg was all originally constructed by the City Council. The

⁴⁰ In one conversation I was told the threat, “If you don’t behave, I won’t take you to the factories with me...” used to be used on young girls.

⁴¹ In the mid 2000s the percentage of women in the clothing manufacturing industry was 82% (Vlok, 2006: 230).

⁴² Describing very similar shifts in Chatsworth, Bayview, Benjamin (2007) writes about the “feminisation of poverty”.

⁴³ Note that these census figures do include children and scholars and are therefore somewhat misleading.

⁴⁴ In this, young women still had access to more regular employment than young men, whose work continued to be largely piecemeal. This corresponds to Ross’s (2010) findings in De Bos.

initial acquisition of a house had, during apartheid, been dependent on an allocation system that was modelled on the assumed norm of a nuclear family. This privileged male breadwinners who were married with dependent children, and mothers with dependent children (Salo, 2004:153). Given that conjugal relationships were rendered very unstable (often due to violence, see Ross, 1996) it was, in fact, frequently single mothers with children who were successful in accessing housing.⁴⁵ One evening at home Rachel made a scathing comment about a friend seeking accommodation, “*Sy’s nou net drie jaar jonger as ek, en sy’tie n huis nie. Dis al my derde huis!*” (She’s only three years younger than I am, and she doesn’t have a house. This is already my third house!). Rachel’s disparagement was because her compatriot’s inability to have secured a house was indicative of a lack of resourcefulness.

By 2010 most of the household owners or lease holders in the Druivevlei area had inhabited their homes for forty or more years.⁴⁶ Having received their houses as young mothers, most are now great-grandmothers. Their households reflected this. Most contained at least some branches of the two or three subsequent generations, if not in the immediate house, then in the yard. So, for example, A’ntie Delia, in her late 70s, lived in her own house with three daughters and seven grandchildren, but a further three children, with six of their progeny, all lived in structures in the yard.

Post-apartheid, the model on which housing was allocated had not changed much, but obtaining a house was no longer a matter of being young, female, Coloured (or White) and resourceful. While one of the huge achievements of the post-apartheid government has been the building of three over million houses in less than ten years nationally – and 48 232 houses in the Cape Town Municipality between 2005 and 2010 (Province of the Western Cape, 2011:48) – huge backlogs and rapid urbanization meant that in March 2011 there were 386 590 outstanding applications for housing in the Municipality (City of Cape Town, 2011). In this there is (rightly) no longer a racial hierarchy for recipients. Manenberg suburb has grown with new government Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing, but this has been across a highway

⁴⁵ All eight grandmothers I interviewed were the lease-holders of their houses. While there were great housing shortages (Wollheim, 1977) nationally at the time, it does seem acquiring a house, for those from Manenberg who knew how to work the system, obtaining housing was possible. However, it must also be remembered that I was, for the most part, only speaking to those older women who had succeeded in obtaining housing. Mine was, therefore, a skewed sample.

⁴⁶ Most home owners had bought their houses through a lease-to-buy arrangement with the Council.

from the Druivevlei area, and the new home-owners are almost entirely black South Africans. Faziela's mother, Lizette, had repeatedly sought a Council house for herself, her four children, and grandchild. She had been on a waiting list for over three years. Seeking a house for herself and Muiz was not an option Faziela ever mentioned. She and her husband-to-be had plans to go and live with one of his aunts in her two-bedroom apartment in the Courts once they were married.

I have, thus far, outlined two major structural supports that had allowed older women in Manenberg to establish themselves as nurturers, and the fulcra of families in the context of relative deprivation: the availability of steady formal work, and the possibility of acquiring housing. Here I provide a small, but necessary caveat. It must be remembered that the provision of housing and public infrastructure in Coloured areas was one way in which the apartheid government actively sought to create "Coloured citizens" thereby normalising the categorisation (Jensen, 2008). Coloured people were located between Africans and Whites, as a "modernising identity" (Salo, 2004:106) in a way which was used to gain Coloured support for the government agenda (Erasmus & Pietersen, 1999). The Druivevlei Community Centre was a prime example of this project of 'winning hearts and minds'. To some degree this was a successful project, as I show in Chapter Two. There was, however also, a clear recognition of the insidiousness of the Nationalist project. The fenced, gated, grilled look of the Centre today is as a consequence of violent attacks on it (and the staff working there) by community members in the late 1980s who were resisting being bought by a system that promoted their own submission.

The third way in which women were structurally privileged by the apartheid system was through the access to social grants and other directed forms of welfare. South Africa has a long history of social grants. After the Children's Protection Act of 1913, maintenance grants were made to destitute mothers and grandmothers of White and Coloured children (but not to Africans) by the Union government. In 1928, old age pensions were introduced for White and Coloured elderly over the age of 65. These were extended to Africans in the 1940s though Africans' pensions were significantly lower (Devereux, 2001).⁴⁷ In 1937, the updated Children's Act made welfare to children the state's second highest social responsibility priority, after old age pensions (Iliffe,

⁴⁷ In 1965 Whites received pensions of R322, Coloureds R137 and Natives R31 (Devereux, 2001)

1987:119–120).⁴⁸ Throughout the apartheid years, Coloured women continued to be prioritised in social support, over Coloured men, and all Africans. The 1976 Theron Report on the “Matters Relating to the Coloured Population Group” called for the creation of more community centres, the shift towards community orientated welfare services, an increase in social workers in Coloured areas, the support for crèches and the creation of after-school facilities for children of working mothers (See van der Horst, 1976; Jensen, 2008). Centres such as Druivevlei were constructed, not only to gain coloured support, but also to alleviate to working mothers of childcare responsibilities to the degree that they could continue their employment.

Post-apartheid, changes in welfare systems came about in an attempt to equalise service provision, in line with the 1994 Bill of Rights which states that:

“Everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care; sufficient food and water; and social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents, appropriate social assistance.

The State must make reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights.”

In this there was a shift from codified notions of the “deserving poor” based on ideological and racial difference, towards a policy that differentiated only on the basis of means. In the new system, being poor was equated with being deserving.⁴⁹

One of the government’s major drivers in the attempts to achieve basic, dignified living for citizens has been the implementation of a far broader social grants system – colloquially referred to as “AllPay” (AllPay is in fact, the name of the division of the large bank, ABSA, which is responsible for the distribution of grants.) This has been a huge programme; in 1997 there were three million recipients of social grants, by 2006 eleven million (approximately a quarter of the population) were receiving grants, and government expenditure on grants totalled 3.4 % of GDP, one of the highest rates of social support in the developing world (Pauw and Mncube, 2007:37).

⁴⁸ By 1930, 8.7 % of Cape Town’s “non-Europeans” (largely Coloured people) were receiving welfare grants. (Iliffe, 1987: 119)

⁴⁹ Internationally, welfare practices and policies have been shaped by moral notions of who deserves assistance and who does not. This has depended on the dominant ideological premises used in determining the parameters of who and what is worthy of assistance (Chunn & Gavian, 2004) .

As part of this process, in 1998 the Child Support Grant (one of the social grants) replaced the State Maintenance grant, which had, previously, been available to low income Coloured families. The Maintenance grant had consisted of a basic amount of R430 per month to the parent, with an additional R135 per child for a maximum of two children, up to eighteen years old.⁵⁰ This meant that a single mother could have been receiving up to R700 per month at the time of the change (Seekings & Natrass, 2006). The new child support grant was, initially, R100 per child, for children under the age of seven. This meant that mothers who had previously been claiming the Maintenance Grant for two children suddenly received R500 a month less. Mothers with children aged seven and up completely lost their grants in the early days of the new system (Seekings and Natrass, 2006: 361 – 364). While increases were fairly rapid thereafter, (by 2010 a pension was R1080, a disability grant R1140, a child support grant R240 per child for children up to the age of eighteen, and a foster care grant R740 per month) and the overall spread certainly was more equitable, the initial change was a serious blow to those who had previously been receiving – and depending on – grants (Benjamin, 2007; Bray et al., 2010, Jensen, 2008).

Ross noted that in De Bos there was an increased reliance on social grants post-apartheid (2010:105). Manenberg was no different. This was particularly because of the absence of readily available work for women combined with and the general decrease in other kinds of welfare provision. Social grants were critical sources of income. The table in Chapter Four (pages 83 - 84) illustrates that (means dependent) grants were received in all but three of the thirteen households the children I worked with belonged to. Grants were means dependent, and in 2011 required that single parents had an income of equivalent or less than R2600 per month, and that married parents R5200 or less per month. This gives some indication of the depth of poverty in the area. In six of these households grants were the only secure form of income. While this sample is small, there is no particular reason why this would not be reflective of the broader context, as is indicated by the number of grants collected from the Centre on a monthly basis.⁵¹

⁵⁰ These, too had been skewed during apartheid, with Whites receiving R768 and Coloureds receiving R408 for maintenance grants in 1974. (Standing, 2009:7)

⁵¹ I tried to work out what percentage of household incomes social grants constituted, but this proved extremely difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly, adults earning formal salaries were not comfortable revealing the value of their earnings, or how much they contributed to the household beyond the negotiated amounts handed to the household head (if they were not in this position themselves). Secondly, informal income fluctuated, and people were not necessarily comfortable revealing how much it was, or where it came from. Thirdly, people did not

In October 2010, there were 3505 social grant beneficiaries in Manenberg who collected their grants from the Druivevlei Community Centre. The majority of these – 2231 – were child support grants. Old age pensions were also significant - 834 were collected. Moreover, 515 disability grants were collected, and 33 grants were classified as “other” (Alec Aronson, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), personal communication). This equates to R2 051 380 excluding “other grants”, for which the amounts are unclear.⁵² The amount flowing into Manenberg may seem significant, but it translated to minimal amounts for individuals: in late 2010 a loaf of bread in a local household shop cost R7.00, a litre of milk R6, a school shirt for a ten-year-old about R30.

Social grants were, more than ever before, the lifeblood of everyday survival and knowledge of how to access a grant was therefore, quite literally, a valuable skill. It was one that had been finely tuned during apartheid (Salo, 2004: 155 – 156), with older women tutoring aspirant grant claimers on the shape of story they needed to tell for a successful grant application. This continued, with adaptations required by the changing systems and eligibility criteria. My notes refer to this a number of times, with the below example illustrating the nature of elders’ tutoring well:

Dina sits and sits. Rachel asks her why she doesn’t have a disability grant. Dina says that the doctor says she doesn’t need one, she can still walk. Rachel says that Dina didn’t say the right things. She should have said that she can walk, but with difficulty and requiring regular rests, she should have said that before she was working in the fish factory, or a canning factory, where she was standing all day and that she can no longer do that, and therefore she should have disability grant. Rachel says she must go back to the doctor and get that disability grant.

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In summary, we see then that young women in Manenberg no longer had access to the resources of the past in terms of housing, general welfare and jobs. While more may have accessed grants, in the form of the child support grant, this was of minimal value. Moreover, while the impetus

differentiate household income and outflow in neat mental maps. My attempts at doing so, about a sensitive topic, proved frustrating for all, and I soon abandoned trying.

⁵² Most people did collect their grants at the centre, though others had them paid into their bank accounts, or postal accounts. I was unable to gather data for these latter amounts. The actual amount paid out to people in Manenberg was, therefore, somewhat higher than calculated here.

behind providing “appropriate social support” to all people in need was undoubtedly appropriate, it also resulted in a lessening of social support in areas such as Manenberg where the bulk was previously received. This was not only in terms of grants. Older residents of the area remember Druivevlei as a vibrant, well-funded place with a strong staff cohort and daily afterschool programmes for children. By the time CEYA arrived there in 2009, there were only three Centre staff – including one handyman – and there were no programmes running for children. This shrinking of accessible social support in the area was visible. During my time in Manenberg there the local school nurse, who was very active in the area and also worked through the Centre, left and was not replaced; Child Welfare moved out of the area; and the local clinic made headlines for the inadequacy of its service (Cape Times, 2 June 2011).⁵³

Manenberg Masculinities

The focus of this chapter has been women and the shifts in the degree of structural support that has been available to them. Men have not experienced the same changes, because corresponding opportunities and support for men was simply not available to the same degree. Historically, most of the work that was available to men from Manenberg was casual, and irregular: in construction or on the docks (Salo, 2004: 316), and unemployment was rife. This gender difference is evident in a 1975 study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), which states that there was a ‘surplus of 77 000 Coloured male workers in the Western Cape in 1975, but a ‘shortfall’ of 46 000 Coloured female workers (van der Horst, 1976: 29). Not only were men excluded from work, but as described above, their access to housing was limited, and they were generally excluded from welfare practices. This is because there was a difference in state attitude towards Coloured men and women.

In general, attitudes towards those defined as Coloured (of both sexes) were by no means uniform. The societal position of Coloured people, and their relationship to White society, was hotly debated in official circles from the late 19th century (See Gunther & Stuhardt, 1940). However, negative stereotypes of Coloured people were widely held and promulgated by the White elite. One such stereotype was that Coloured men, in particular, had a propensity towards

⁵³ Pauw and Mncube note that nationally there seems to have been a decline in the average transfer for per poor person since 1995 (2007:32).

alcoholism. Other negative characteristics (deemed to have been innate as a consequence of Khoisan heritage) included workshyness, playfulness, rampant sexual appetites, and an inability to take responsibility (Adhikari, 2006; Standing, 2009).

Jensen (2008) illustrates how these negative characteristics were distilled in the stereotype of the *skollie*. In his study on Coloured identity in Heideveld, a neighbourhood bordering on Manenberg, Jensen argues that the image of the *skollie* – the “violent hooligan or thug, lurking around urban spaces, seizing the moment, and terrorising hard-working people...animated state and popular perceptions about Coloured men” (2009:2). He suggests that as this image threaded through public discourse, it shaped various Commissions of Inquiry, and underscored the policies that they prompted. As such, its pervasiveness, Jensen argues, caused the spectre of the *skollie* to become an orientating feature of Coloured people’s sense of self that constantly threatened to break through, and overwhelm, hard earned respectability. The attainment of personal dignity therefore required that the *skollie* image either be actively resisted, or displaced to others (2008).

Given that *skollie* was inherently poor and male, I am unconvinced that the *skollie* image pervaded all Coloured people’s identity. However, Jensen’s contribution is important because it gives us a framework for understanding why men and women were so differently regarded, and treated by the state (pre and during apartheid): the *skollie* image was powerful, and it was male. In contrast, Coloured women tended to be represented, and treated, as Coloured men’s foil. While the stereotyped male was unemployable, criminal and destabilised families, the stereotyped woman filled the factories as workers and struggled valiantly with limited resources to keep their homes and families together against the continual barrage of difficulties that resulted from their men’s ineptitude. Whereas men’s were framed as resultant of innate moral failure, women’s struggles were largely framed as a consequence of difficult circumstances. It was therefore women who were (and remain) the default recipients of work, grants and child support grants, of housing.

Little, in terms of work opportunities, has changed for men post-apartheid. In a group discussion with four men – all between nineteen and 21 years old, and all who had dropped out of school during their senior years – none had great expectations of finding decent paying, permanent

work. At best, they had found, and hoped to find contract work.⁵⁴ The longest any of them had held down a contract was for a year; the shortest was three days. For this kind of casual and contract work, they said they would earn an average of R80 per day. At this rate, even full time work would only earn them about R1800 a month, and this, they said, they were obliged to split (“50/50”) with their mothers or grandmothers, on whom they relied on for food and shelter. Like Faziela, they described searching for work largely as a waiting game: once you had handed out your curriculum vitae it was a matter of hoping for calls from prospective employers, or the word from a friend.

The calcification of position

The differences in men and women’s structural support was important, for as Salo (2004) cogently argues, historically the construction of women’s personhood was contingent on the general poverty of the working class Coloured population, and the disempowered position of men. Salo further argues that women “identified and ultimately control the ideological means whereby young men and women became persons within the community” (2003:353). This control, was, however, dwindling, she said, as jobs and welfare, the cornerstones of structural support for identity maintenance, decreased. This, she writes, led to a shift in the notion of personhood and associated behaviour, with young people increasingly influenced by the media and “global youth culture” (2003). While my research largely supports the prior assertion, I differ in that I argue that benefits accrued during apartheid in fact continued to confirm the construction of positive personhood of older women.

This was certainly the case in terms of housing. The demand for accommodation meant that house ownership, or lease maintenance, was an important resource for older. It served to confirm older women’s position because being the head of the household conferred authority. (Moreover, as Ross (2010) notes there is a strong link between decent living and brick houses.) Additionally, being the home owner, or lease holder, opened up the possibilities for income generation through

⁵⁴The discussants provided various reasons for dropping out of school. One said he had not had sufficient family support. One had received a decent work contract (for a full year) and he stopped school to help his mother pay the bills. Another had fought with teachers repeatedly and been expelled from two schools. The fourth had stopped focusing on studying and dropped out for fear of failing. For all, leaving had seemed more attractive than staying. Yet, all acknowledged that their lack of a Matric certificate hampered their chances of a job. One said, “I don’t have a job now, I was supposed to have a job now if I finished Matric, I wouldn’t be sitting here if I finished Matric.” (Matric is the final year of school.)

the leasing out of rooms, yard space for Wendy houses or backyard shacks and even through charging for toilet usage.⁵⁵

Rachel's house was a prime example of this. In addition to her and her younger disabled brother, Henry, the composition of her household changed frequently as her spare room and back yard extension were filled, emptied and refilled with paying inhabitants. During 2010 and 2011 there were at least twelve different people who at some point called Rachel's house home. This included two grandchildren who stayed during the week days, and a flow of couples that lived in the back yard: two daughters and their partners, (one of whom had two children of her own), a Congolese couple from Rachel's church, and a neighbour (and her husband) who had fallen out with her family. In addition, Zainab, a five-year-old neighbour, ate most meals at Rachel's house, as did Shakeel, who worked on the taxis and paid Rachel a weekly rate to eat, bath and spend most of his free time there, though he slept elsewhere. This kind of 'domestic fluidity' (Ross 1995) confirmed mothering (Salo, 2004), allowed a continued exchange of finance and labour for accommodation. It was an essential survival strategy for all involved (Ross, 2010).

Another way in which older women's status was continually reinforced by state processes was through their access to social grants. Bähre (2011) argues that when pensioners have more access to funds through grants than young, unemployed, but working-age grandchildren, it reconfigures kinship relations. This certainly played into generational dynamics in Manenberg. For those old enough to receive them, pensions were four times the value of child support grants. Given that many houses relied on grants for basis income, this often served to cement older women's position as principle providers.

For the most part it was also often the grandmothers, or great-grandmothers (rather than the mothers) who collected, or took control of the income, whether from work or from child support grants. "Good" children handed over their incomes in recognition of their mother, or grandmother's, role and responsibilities towards the family. A young person failing to recognise a mother or grandmother's nurturing through allowing them control of finances was deemed to exhibit a terrible lack of respect. My notes of AllPay days in October 2010 illustrate this:

⁵⁵ One afternoon, while I was spending time with a local police officer he was called to assist in a dispute between a landlady and shack tenants. The tenants were upset at the R10 fee she was charging per use of her indoor toilet.

I have seen occasional desperate scenes. A young woman and her grandmother have an angry stand-off. I come in to the hall to hear a young woman sobbing, “*Dis MY disability, en da’i vrou vaddit!*” (It’s MY disability [grant], and that woman is taking it!) The All Pay lady snaps, “*Dai vrou?! Wies dai vrou! Dis jou ma, wiet dji nie wat ‘n ma is ‘ie?’*” (That woman? Who is that woman? It is your grandmother. Do you not know what a grandmother is?)⁵⁶

Notes 18 August 2010

Thus Faziela, when working, had given her weekly salary to her mother (“keeping a R50 for me”), and Mila, aged 24, (see Chapter Three) explained that her relationship with her mother was strong because she was the only one of her three siblings who unquestioningly gave her wages to her mother. And, chin jutting up as if he were a demanding mother, one of the men in the discussion group theatrically demonstrated his grandmother’s response if he did not hand over his wages saying, “Otherwise it’s: ‘*Waar kom die suiker vandaan, waar kom die kos vandaan, huh?! Huh?’*” (Where does the sugar come from, where does the food come from, huh?! Huh?!)

In these ways, women’s already established positions, and welfare of the past and present, continued to have currency for the older women of Manenberg – especially for those who used the system with dexterity when they were younger – while young mothers struggled to find their feet in the post-apartheid market economy in a way in which confirmed their social standing, or, as I frame it, positive personhood, a point to which I turn below.

Gender and positive personhood

In this final section, I turn to already developed discussions of identity and personhood in the district, provided by Elaine Salo (2004, 2007) and Steffen Jensen (2008) and introduced in Chapter One. Salo largely focuses on female personhood in Manenberg, examining the way in which the notion of *ordentlikheid* (respectability) is a pivotal ideal; in contrast, Jensen examines identity through the lens of masculinity. If we look at these studies together we see that there are distinct threads running through idealised identities of both genders. These are parenthood, stable provision for their families (ideally through work), demonstration of religious ideals, and community leadership, and the three were often combined (Salo, 2004; Jensen 2008). Ross

⁵⁶ In local use, “ma” refers to grandmother, rather than to mother as it does in standard Afrikaans.

(2010:36-40), also makes clear that *ordentlikheid* as an ideal, was not exclusively the realm of women – men who are widely respected are also described as *ordentlike* (respectable).

For the purposes of my own analysis I have framed positive personhood as general social consensus on an individual as a valuable being. In this context, then, *ordentlikheid* and positive personhood are intimately linked, but positive personhood does not hold the same gendered connotations of *ordentlikheid*. Achieving positive personhood was extremely important because social worth enabled the individual to access the kindness and support of their neighbours for advice, material assistance, and child care support. Such belonging to reciprocal networks of assistance buffered women somewhat from the worst indignities and suffering that resulted from being poor and marginalised. While many fundamental aspects of positive personhood were applicable to both men and women, I have shown here that what *was* distinctly different was the structural support available for men and for women for them to achieve it. Women have in the past been in the position where they were more able (at least to a degree) than men to accomplish socially sanctioned ideals. This allowed the generalised characteristics of positive personhood have meshed with idealized notions of femininity. Female identity ideals were, therefore, largely coherent.

In contrast, the influence of the stereotype of the *skollie*, and the lack of available work, and access to basic resources meant that most men were structurally denied the opportunity to achieve the broadly acknowledged constructs of positive personhood. Consequently, a different kind of masculine identity became dominant. This valorised toughness, relation to violence (both the meting out, and the ability to withstand it) or, as Salo puts it, of “*sterk bene*” (strong bones) took precedence. Boys were trained from a young age to withstand pain, through the encouragement of fighting physically about differences and through the requirement of physical resilience playing sport (Salo, 2004:215; 2007). It was also, I noticed, through the unwillingness of parents to acknowledge boys’ assertions of discomfort. A life-threatening illness in an eleven-year-old went undiagnosed for months, despite his repeated complaints of feeling ill and obvious physical signs of illness, such as massive weight loss and hugely swollen glands. His family explained that they had not been concerned at his complaints because he was known to soft and inclined to whine. From teenage years on boys and young men were required to illustrate a willingness to withstand pain for gang involvement. Another all-important aspect of masculinity

was also men's ability to "stand their ground" and not be cowed into submission (Jensen, 2008:174). Thus a nineteen-year-old described to me how, when set upon by a gang alone, unarmed and unable to defend himself against a crowd, he invited his attackers to kill him. "You must be somehow connected – because if you walk alone there are *onnodige mense*" (unnecessary people)...people who will cause you trouble".⁵⁷ This salient masculine identity explains the presence of high levels of gang activity and violence, which in turn almost demanded that all men were in some way involved.

Salo (2004, 2007) argues that men's involvement in gangs was important because it served to define the boundaries in which local personhood was constructed. This, however, did not seem to be the case in the Druivevlei area at the time of my research. Though there was a lot of violence (which was often loosely related to gang structures, though not necessarily), it was not defined by, or restricted to, turfs.⁵⁸ Moreover, as a local police officer explained to me, gang structures had generally changed – there were no longer clear rituals of initiation, and gang affiliation was reportedly far more fluid and open to change than previously. Nor were violent activities by local youths located external to any particular spatial boundary. All the people subject to violent attacks during my fieldwork (there were more than seven) were shot or stabbed close, or in, the streets in and around their homes, by others who also lived in the immediate area. The lack of community boundaries and control defined by gang affiliation and activity meant that the dialectic Salo (2007) describes of older women conferring personhood on young men, and them, in turn, affirming respectable mothers' personhood through spatial delineation of their realm of influence, was not overt in my research milieu or area. However, the relational aspect to mothers' and sons' positive personhood *was* evident: after a violent event gossip would slide hot and fast through local communication channels, but silences were carefully maintained when the

⁵⁷ This need for attachment manifested in multiple loosely affiliated gang structures and protective friend groups in the area. By the end of my research I had a list of eighteen such groups, all represented in the streets around the Centre and most of them under the umbrella of the two main gang structures in Manenberg. Interestingly, while this group of young men described their own links as a matter of protection (see also Jensen 2008), they explained the involvement of those deeply enmeshed in the gangs as a consequence of the attraction of the money, drugs, rank, and the reputation.

⁵⁸ I was told that the area was somewhat unusual in that it had never had clear turf boundaries, and those that had existed had become even weaker as gang strife shifted to gun violence, rather than hand to hand combat that maintained turf boundaries.

older female relatives of the subjects of the gossip were present in order to avoid publically shaming mothers about their children or grandchildren's behaviour which was not respectable.⁵⁹

There is, then, a conflict inherent in this dominant masculinity, where violence is privileged, and the predominant ideal of *ordentlikheid*. Ross writes that in De Bos men involved with gangs, violence and substance smuggling were regarded as the opposite of decent, which she describes as “*rou*” or “*raw*” (2010:42) and Jensen writes that one of the “tragic paradoxes for Coloured men” is that as “they defend themselves against violence; they reproduce the criminalization of themselves in the eyes of the surrounding community, even family”.⁶⁰ Together these encapsulate men's difficulties: the most easily achieved (and dominant) notions of masculinity required the performance of violence. This could gain an individual a certain kind of respect, but achieving positive personhood required that violence be eschewed. Men's violent behaviour (towards women as well as between men) and involvement in crime was – at least in some measure – regarded as inappropriate, or shameful, by the community at large. Thus dominant masculinity and positive personhood – two aspects of identity – stand in opposition. Thus, while Salo and Jensen do not frame it as such, it is important to note that the masculine identity that became dominant was “alternative” in that it conflicted with generalised notions of positive personhood.⁶¹

Conclusion

One afternoon, an older female visitor to the house berated Faziela, who was enrolled at school at the time: “*Hoekom is jy nie by die skool nie?*” (Why are you not at school?) Faziela replied that there was nothing happening at school. The visitor slapped Faziela's knee and said, “*Jy't al*

⁵⁹ This acknowledgement of sons' involvement in violent behaviour did not, however, disallow the concurrent affirmation that their sons were good sons, in their treatment of them, as mothers. Thus A'ntie Sara acknowledged that her oldest son's death was a consequent of his gang involvement, even saying that it was perhaps better that he had died before tik arrived in Manenberg, to save her the heart-ache that accompanied the troubles related to tik addition and trade. Yet she also frequently asserted that when alive had behaved respectfully to her as a mother.

⁶⁰ Criminal records were, it seemed, easily gained. All four young men in the discussion record had them – all, however, for possession of dagga.

⁶¹ An example of the ways in which this conflict played out was patently evident for me on a weekend retreat run in 2010 by a government aligned organisation, the Chrysalis Academy. This was for 45 boys from a high school in Manenberg who had all, in some way or other, been associated with the murder of one of their peers. During the workshops the boys were asked about their hopes for the future, and every one that stood up included in their answer, “to be a good father”. To my huge frustration, the facilitators failed to probe why this was important.

klaar een kak gemaak; nou wil jy nog 'n ander ook maak!” (“You’ve already messed up once; now you want to mess up again?”)⁶² Faziela looked away and laughed awkwardly. The mess that the visitor was referring to was Faziela’s child, Muiz.

Historically motherhood had been a path to womanhood for young women. While (unmarried) teenage pregnancy had generally been followed by social disapproval, it had also formed an essential rite of passage for girls into womanhood, as they became mothers and contributing members of the family through work. Respectability was closely linked to the nurturance of kin (Salo, 2004; Ross, 2010). I have shown that this was, however, wavering with the decline in available unskilled factory work. Moreover, other changes to welfare provision meant that motherhood no longer provided women with access to important resources, such as housing.

The political economic landscape has changed rapidly. In her description of the sense of dislocation residents of De Bos experienced after they moved to formal housing Ross (2010) explores how living in the newly created Village meant “adhering to dominant social values at the cost of being spatially and socially lost”. Quoting Solnit she points out that being lost means that “the world has become larger than your knowledge of it” (2010:22). I suggest that in my research site the people did not move, but social circumstances have changed quickly. Parenthood and welfare of old continues to uphold older women’s position, but younger women have lost the historical means to assert themselves as venerable beings. This has left women like Faziela – neither a child, nor a respectable woman – socially unable to find belonging in value systems of old.

Returning to school has become an important strategy for future survival. Yet it is one that undermines young women’s ability to stake their claim as women. Being at school marks them out as children themselves, and not earning an income means that they continue to be a drain on, rather than a contribute to, the household. Faziela’s struggle to achieve positive personhood affected her to the point that she had sought the ultimate escape, suicide. She also regularly sought temporary escape through drinking alcohol. In the next chapter I illustrate that the effects

⁶² The direct translation for this is, in fact, “You’ve already made one shit; now you want to make another one?” The meaning is as it stands in the text is, however, correct.

of this narrowing of opportunities for the development of positive personhood in Manenberg have been widespread, as I explore the feminisation of drug use.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Three

She was Such a Pretty Girl: the feminisation of habitual drug use

I can barely see Vanessa on the bed; the light is shut out of her shack to protect her painful eyes. She is curled up into an unhappy skeletal question mark, back to us. Her four-year-old daughter, small as a child half her age, lies on her back next to her mother, staring at the roof, bright pink vest striking against the dark of the blankets. I wave at her, she gives a little palm shuffle in return. Vanessa winces as she turns to face us, and sits up with effort, hair wild, and skin scaly dry. Judy says Vanessa should look at her – Vanessa raises her chin slightly – her eyes are red, swollen, and seeping. She agrees that she will talk to me tomorrow. I say I will come at eleven. She says she will wash herself for the occasion. She is 26 years old, whittled down, shrunken up from years of substance abuse and concomitant infections.

Notes 13 October 2011

“The girls that I know, like Vanessa, who we just talked about, she was on drugs, on mandrax, all the time she was using mandrax. After that she was using the tik, after that she was on the unga...you see, that’s why Vanessa is looking like that, and she was a pretty girl...”

Interview, Masoodah (40) – Interview, 12 October 2011

Vanessa was one of the eight female habitual drug users who shared the stories of their lives and addictions with me. At the time that I met her, her situation was dire. We got to know each other better as we travelled to and from hospital for her medical attention and treatment. A gentle woman, she required nothing of me, but asked occasionally, “How is it going with my story?” Her comments and experiences – and those of the other women who shared their stories of life and addiction with me – weave through this chapter in which I examine the interplay of social dynamics and the trends of substance use and addiction. Though the experiences these women relate are deeply personal, they also reflect the stories of many other women like them on the Cape Flats.

In this chapter I illustrate that there has been a dramatic increase in female drug use in Manenberg. I show that while the currently available statistics do indicate this trend, they under-represent the extent of the growth of it. Building on Chapter Two I argue that a this feminisation

of habitual drug use needs to be understood partly as the attractiveness of escape in the context of women's growing inability to construct and maintain positive personhood. Other important factors include the closing down of illegal shebeens,⁶³ and the pharmacological nature of tik. In unpacking this I start from the assumption that gender both influences the ways in which people use substances, and substances also influence the ways in which gender is played out. For, as Fiona Measham argues, "people construct their gender identity, their masculinities and their femininities in both traditional and non-traditional ways through their experiments with, and experiences of drugs, the socio-cultural context of drug cultures, and the drug related attitudes of women and men within those drug cultures" (2002:351–352).

In emphasising the concept of escape I follow Angela Garcia, whose delicate ethnography examines heroin usage in New Mexico as "an analytic in which culture, politics and history coexist as a site of struggle", the understanding of which requires the careful "unravelling" of personal and collective histories (2010:9). Garcia illustrates that the patterns of addiction there are related to a long history of Hispanic dispossession. The "contemporary conditions and historic struggles" she writes, are such that they constitute a need for local transcendence, or escape. Similarly, I argue that the inability to achieve positive personhood manifests in a higher likelihood that women will seek escape through substance use. This, in turn, isolates women from local systems of support and reciprocity, further undermining their capacity to access the resources, both social and structural that they need in order to get by. This negative feedback system characterises many addicts' lives.

Representing substance use and abuse

Substance habituation did not form part of my initial research aims. However, crystal methamphetamine, internationally shortened to "crystal meth" and locally known as "tik"⁶⁴ was on the tip of everyone's tongue during my fieldwork; it was soaked into local consciousness, and saturated conversations. It pervaded my notes, long before it became a central research concern

⁶³ Shebeens are alcohol outlets. At the time of fieldwork those in the immediate area of the Centre were informal, and illegal.

⁶⁴Tik is officially called crystal methamphetamine. I use tik when referring to the South African context and I use "crystal meth", the shorter version of the official name when referring to it in an international context.

I am left feeling the tremendous, huge, destructive force of tik and drugs in people's lives. I wonder whether my research can take any direction, but exploring this...I sense that this is a community that is imploding, and that there must be an additional explanation for the dramatic rise in tik usage in Cape Town – the worst hit city in the world.

Notes 18 August 2010

The pervasiveness of this drug still astonishes me. Just in this one house today, I have spoken to three addicts, and of another one. Having, a few days ago, been made aware of how conscious Elias (aged five) is of his mother's addictions I asked Zainab (aged five) if she knew what tik was, she named some neighbours, saying tik is something people smoke. And Rachel corrected her, saying "No, they smoke *dagga*". Zainab is getting the drug wrong, but she is only five years old and knows that tik is something that is smoked.

Notes 18 October 2010

I found myself compelled to delve into the dark and difficult aspects of substance habituation and abuse, for while most people were not using drugs, everybody was affected. This was not, however, a task I took on with relish, for writing about issues of substance abuse is fraught with ethical challenges. In Chapter One I discussed the difficulties inherent in writing about poverty, misery and violence, particularly the danger of pathologising the people represented. With substance abuse this risk is exacerbated because in popular perception the locus of blame is frequently assumed to be, and represented as, the individual drug user. Researching and writing about drug use holds the additional complication that the sale and use of restricted substances is illegal. With ethnographic studies, where long-term relationships foster trust, the researcher is more likely to become privy to information of illegal activities, placing him or her in a tenuous position between research participants and the law.

It is likely these difficulties that have, as mentioned in Chapter One, resulted in there being no detailed ethnographies on drug use and habituation in the local context. Ethnographic studies of substance abuse are, however, extremely important. Not only does substance abuse have massive public health ramifications for South Africa (Integrated Crime Prevention Strategy, 2011)⁶⁵ but,

⁶⁵ While there is little available on the public health costs of habitual drug use, various studies have shown that alcohol is closely related to domestic violence, homicides, rape and child abuse. For example, data from the Non-Natural Mortality Surveillance System (NNMSS) indicates that in "2002 46% of non-natural deaths in South Africa

more importantly, for those involved substance use becomes a critical organising principle for relationships. It is reliant on them, builds them, and has the potential to destroy them (See also Garcia, 2011; Brown, 2010; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009). Various participants made this clear to me. For example, Ruth explained to me that when one person had cash available, they would buy and share the drugs with others. This ameliorated the problems of intermittent personal cash flow. The owner of the tik pipe, or “pop” would also get to smoke in exchange for the group use of the pipe. These webs of need built relationships. However, she was also clear, that by the same token, drug use broke relationships and friendships. Jealousy and anger quickly flowered in relation to drug availability, sharing, who was invited to smoke and who was left out, and this made people fight. This sociality of substance use makes it a relevant topic of ethnographic enquiry, especially when it is as prevalent as it is in Manenberg.

A further reason to engage ethnographically with substance abuse is that the motivation for participants in large scale studies of illicit activities to tell the truth is low. Consequently many extensive studies gather and analyse fabrications (Bourgois, 1995). Ethnographic studies have the important job of holding a mirror up to large-scale research – particularly quantitative research. This chapter does this by illustrating that available statistics are under-representing female addiction. Similarly, ethnographic research can (and should) produce an important counterpoint to media representations of substance abuse. Media frequently cements and regurgitates prejudices, reiterating negative images of the substance users due to the fact that broad ideologies relating to race, class and gender shape perceptions and underscore reporting about addiction (Logan, 1999). Media therefore, frequently places drug users and producers as “cultural scapegoats that divert public attention from social/structural issues such as poverty and homelessness” (Boyd and Carter, 2010:220, Ross, 2010).

A classic illustration of this was to be found in the South African media frenzy that surrounded the story and legal trial of Ellen Pakkies a Cape Flats resident. In 2007, Ellen Pakkies murdered her tik addicted son. In an unprecedented case, she was convicted of murder, but given a suspended sentence on the grounds that her actions were mitigated by extreme abuse, and a failure of instruments of the state to assist her. The story was written up by Sylvia Walker

involved persons with blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) greater than or equal to 0.05g/100 ml” (Matzopoulos et al. (2003) in Parry and Dewing, 2006). 0.05g/100ml is the national legal limit for driving.

(2009). Walker acknowledges that she did not have permission from Ellen Pakkies to tell her tale, and that she therefore relied heavily on newspaper articles as sources. Unfortunately, in doing so she produced a book that presented the Cape Flats as ridden by neglectful, incompetent people – a smear not wiped away by her occasional assertion that good people, also, exist there. Like most of the media surrounding the case, she focused on cycles of personal abuse, and failed to examine political and macro-economic processes that have shaped patterns of habituation on the Cape Flats. Careful to shift guilt off the shoulders of Ellen Pakkies, she shifted it squarely onto the shoulders of Pakkies' son, and moral culpability remained individualised.

South Africa does not have an example of an ethically sound, detailed ethnography of substance abuse. This is a critical gap in the local literature. In America, Philippe Bourgois's (1995) seminal study of crack cocaine dealers in East Harlem during the crack boom of the 1980s and 1990s set the precedent that a sensitive representation of people involved in illicit activity can render a substantive and respectful ethnography. Through this empathetic, but not sanitised, account of the lives of people involved in the drug trade, Bourgois illustrates the powerful forces of structure in people's lives, consequent social suffering, and the degree to which, in their everyday activities, those involved in the drug trade seek to be valued persons. In Brazil, a country head-to-head with South Africa as the most unequal in the world and with pervasive gang and drug problems, such studies are more common (See, for example, Bourgois, 2009; Leeds, 1996). A similar precedent needs to be set in South Africa, especially given the long histories of substance use and sale in areas such as the Cape Flats. In the section below I outline a rough historical trajectory of the addictive substances that have had an effect on Manenberg.

Drink 'n dop, slat 'n skoot (drink a drink, hit a round)

High levels of substance use have long been noted amongst poor Coloured people by the authorities. As early as 1918, there was a parliamentary special committee investigation into drunkenness in the Western district of the Cape Province. In this, concern was raised about the perceived excessive drinking habits of the "lower class of coloured man", access to alcohol of Coloured women, and the "*dop*" system: the system of paying farms workers for their labour in part with alcohol (Martens, 2001: 322). The *dop* system had been in place in the Cape from the 1700s. Alcohol as a form of payment was banned in 1961, but the practice of providing it free to

workers as a “gift” continued to be widespread into the 1990s (London, 1999). Alcoholism made its way into the urban context, too. It remains the most widely abused substance in the Western Cape (Shisana & Simbayi, 2002). In Manenberg, alcohol use is pervasive. Many of the children involved in CEYA regularly complained about their parents’ regular drinking with one child (six years) explained the gravity of the situation to me by saying, “My mother drinks Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday *and* Sunday!”. I avoided Manenberg, especially Mimosa Street, on the weekends, for then the street swayed with people coming to and from the backyard shebeens.

Another substance with a long history of local use is marijuana, colloquially referred to as *dagga*. *Dagga* remains common in Manenberg, but was not widely spoken of. (One participant explained to me that this was because “it doesn’t get on the community’s nerves”.) In the 1970s *dagga* started to be smoked in combination with methaqualone (widely referred to as mandrax, and locally called buttons, or just “drugs”). At the time methaqualone was a legal, inexpensive, but addictive, sleeping tablet. For a high it was crushed and mixed with the dry *dagga* leaves and smoked in a pipe made of a broken off bottle neck, known as a “*witpyp*” (white pipe). A “downer”, smoked in this way mandrax gives users feelings of euphoria, but also sends them into a deep slumber. Mandrax was banned in South Africa in 1977, by which time its procurement and sale had become a lucrative activity on the Cape Flats (Standing, 2006). The ban did little to dampen its appeal, and South Africa has the world’s highest levels of mandrax use (South African Institute of International Affairs, 1998).⁶⁶

In the early 2000s a new product came onto the local market: crystal methamphetamine, otherwise known as crystal meth, and locally referred to as “tik”. The “acute behavioural effects of methamphetamine include feelings of alertness, wakefulness, energy, wellbeing, euphoria (at high doses) and suppression of appetite” that can last for up to eight hours (Kish, 2008:1680). In its smoked form, crystal meth had first started to be widely used in Hawaii ten years prior (Groves, 1991). It shifted rapidly into mainland America, where it became a recreational drug associated strongly with male sex parties due to its libido-enhancing properties (Green & Halkitis, 2006). Later in the same decade, and through the early 2000s, it started too be more

⁶⁶ Harker et al (2008) have observed that Coloured men were the greatest users.

commonly used in lower income, working class populations and in other countries. Most people tracked in Manenberg tracked tik's arrival back to 2002 or 2003.

The South African epicentre of tik use is the Cape Flats, though by the time of my research tik was becoming more prevalent in more affluent areas. About the same time as tik made an entrance on the Cape Flats another new substance became available in South Africa, mostly in the Durban area of KwaZulu Natal. This was a low-grade, smokeable heroin. The effects of this an immediate sense of euphoria, followed by a period (of up to eight hours) of calm. Narrative reports indicate that though this heroin made an appearance on the Cape Flats at around the same time, it only became widespread enough to enter the local lexicon from about 2009, going by the name of "unga".⁶⁷ I found the use of alcohol, *dagga*, mandrax, tik and unga all to be widespread in Manenberg.

Evidence of addiction

The illegal nature of substance abuse means that collecting accurate quantitative data on the patterns of addiction is notoriously difficult, and the most widely used indices are, at best, oblique indications: quantities of drugs seized by the criminal justice system, and treatment centre statistics. The latter have been collated over the last ten years by the Medical Research Council (MRC), through a programme run by the South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU).⁶⁸ These are the most accurate reflections of addiction patterns that are available. These SACENDU statistics are divided into "ethnic population" groups. This holds uncomfortable echoes of apartheid notions that genotype is linked to behaviour, especially as reasons for these racialised divisions are not provided. However, as Bray et al. (2010) note, racial classification, levels of poverty and residential area are still commonly related. As such, these statistics do indicate a number of important things.

At the turn of the millennium, less than 15% of people reported mandrax as their primary substance of use at treatment centres (Cerff & Plüddemann, 2002). Ninety-five per cent of those reporting mandrax as their primary substance were men, and 75% were classified as Coloured.

⁶⁷ This is not reflected in treatment centre data, where heroin use, for the whole city appears to have been relatively stable since 2005 (Plüddeman, Dada, Williams et al, 2011). It must be noted that these data do not, however, distinguish between heroin that is injected and that which is smoked.

⁶⁸ These statistics are accessible in bi-annual reports on <http://www.sahealthinfo.org/admodule/sacendu.htm>

This pattern has remained stable in the SACENDU statistics since, as is evident in the bi-annual full report proceedings. It is clear that either very few women were using mandrax, or very few women were reporting at treatment centres due to mandrax use.

Secondly, they reveal the rapidity with which tik addiction became prevalent in Cape Town. In 2003, SACENDU reports were not even registering crystal meth in treatment centres in the Western Cape. By 2005, it was reported to be the main substance abused by 35% of people coming to treatment centres. Approximately one third of these were women. By this time, more people were attending clinics for tik addiction than for alcohol addiction. By the first half of 2007, this had skyrocketed to 49% of all people reporting at addiction centres (Plüddemann et al., 2007). The total percentage of users reporting tik as a primary or secondary substance of use has ranged between 40 and 50% since. In this, gender breakdown percentages have changed little throughout the records of tik addiction, with approximately one third of users being female.

SACENDU uses large data sets, drawn from the entire city. Evidence from Manenberg suggests that while trends are similar, there are also important differences between these data and what is happening locally. I illustrate this through evidence of addiction, starting with my notes from AllPay days at the Centre during August 2010.

On the first day, old age pensions are collected; on the second, disability grants and a portion of child support and foster grants; on the third, the rest of the child support grants are collected. During these days the gate and the doors stand wide open, and protection comes, instead, from armed guards, guns casually (but menacingly enough) slung over shoulders, or tucked in a holster on a hip. Over the three days the intensity and tension in and around the Centre has increased as the grants have shifted from being collected by the old and the disabled, to young mothers collecting their child support grants. On the third day, there are four, rather than two, guards standing on either side of the entrance, checking the identification of those entering – the young mothers are seen to be more likely to cause trouble.

Since the start of AllPay the pavement to the right of the Centre has been crammed with hawkers and tables lined with socks, sweets, smoked *snoek*,⁶⁹ fruit and vegetables, detergents and all the other bits and pieces needed for everyday life. On either side of the gate the spiky fence is lined with people. To the left are the loan-sharks,⁷⁰ and their crew (the scouts and the henchmen). They seem to have a distinct style: natty fedora hats pulled low over their brows, checked or striped shirts. They sit in their

⁶⁹ A popular indigenous fish

⁷⁰ Money lenders

cars or roam the front of the Centre; available to make business from the desperate, or take it from the defaulters. Loans come easy (you just leave your grant card, or your green ID⁷¹), but not cheap – the going rate is 100% interest over a month.⁷² They are not short of trade. Judy and I, “*loer*”-ing (peeking) through the window, count seven separate moneylenders. For a time Judy insists that I stay observing. I watch as various young women sidle up to the cars to speak. The transactions that follow are so quick that I barely see the money change hands.

Judy says that the pension payout was moved from the LoveLife Centre, which lies closer to the Courts. The LoveLife Centre is walled in, and therefore has ample place, and corners, for covert intimidation. The shift to Druivevlei, early this year was an attempt to ensure the payments went to the intended recipients. The system may now be cleaner, but it is certainly not clean. The front of the Centre is conveniently demarcated with cones, kept clear by the security staff of all other cars and people so that the loan sharks’ scouts and henchmen can spot defaulters and take the “necessary” measures. “It makes me sick!” Judy said about the loan sharks, “It makes me sick! But you can’t tell people not to go and borrow money from them.” These are exactly the same words that A’ntie Rachel uttered a few weeks ago about family members who wait outside the Centre on AllPay days to extort money for tik from their elders.⁷³ Indeed, the right of the Centre was lined with friends and family members. Many are there to escort their kin home safely. Some – I am told but do not see directly – are there to ensure that some of the pension money reaches them for their personal use, safely.

The stream of people in and out of the Centre is almost continuous. As they come to the gate an identity card is pulled out of a pocket or from undergarments, the grant recipient’s pass for entrance to the Centre. Inside, a hall lined with chairs. It fills and empties as the flow waxes and wanes. The atmosphere is generally muted. At times young children run up and down between the isles. Once in front the grant recipient identifies themselves at a desk, and gets a payout from a metal big box, then quickly steps back up the aisle.

Inspector Johnson, a local and socially involved police officer, is called to intervene in an argument between a grandmother and her granddaughter when he happens to be on site. The grandmother says that the young woman has a child, but the child had been temporarily removed by social services. She is demanding that her granddaughter’s disability grant is given to her, because, she says, the young woman has mental health problems, and immediately on arriving home spends all the money on drugs

⁷¹ National Identity Book

⁷² In multiple ways, these money lenders are contravening the National Credit Act No. 3 of 2005, which seeks to protect consumers. Amongst other things, this Act prohibits reckless credit granting (the granting of credit to a loanee who does not clearly have the income to repay the loan) and limits maximum interest rates (Government Gazette, 2006).

⁷³ The next month I was staying with Rachel during the AllPay days, and she spent much of the time peeking through the lace curtains of her second floor window at the happenings across the street.

for herself and her friends, leaving none for the care of her baby. The grandmother pulls out photos of her great-grandchild and shows them round petitioning those present to allow her to take the money to care for this three-year-old. Inspector Johnson tells the young woman that she must stand up and look up, he asks her how old she is, she says 20 and he tells her that she; too, is beautiful. He tells the pension people to give the money to the grandmother. He tells the grandmother that she must make a legal application to gain responsibility for the young woman's money, claiming that she is not of sound mind. He also says he will come to their home and speak to the friends exploiting the situation. They leave all looking satisfied. Judy mentions the situation later and Inspector Johnson says, "That was an easy one, I just told her that she and her child are both beautiful".

Most grant recipients hesitate before the door to wedge their money in close to their bodies. I notice a number, seemingly already trapped in a cycle of debt, leave the Centre, lean into one of the money lenders cars, and surreptitiously hand over a fistful. One old man emerges through the Centre gates, pension clutched tightly in his fist. Already bent from age, he does not need to bend down further to the window of the money lenders car. He hands over his fistful and gets R20 change from the bundle he has received, which I assume to be a standard pension of R1080. Those who are seeking loans have to wait until after 14:30, and towards the end of the days, knots of broken people wait quietly for the loan sharks to make the pay-outs. Judy and Rachel have both made the connection between people seeking loans and tik addiction. If this is the case, this is a completely alternative way that the drug trade is enriching people who don't even touch the drugs. At about 15:00, or 15:30 the day draws to a close the activity slows to a trickle.

Notes 16, 17 & 18 August 2010

These notes paint an unhappy picture of a financial stream towards drugs and those who sell them, and money lenders. This was certainly not always the case; as discussed in Chapter Two, social grants supported the vast majority of families. On AllPay days, the children I worked with expected to eat well and likely receive a small treat or two. It was true, however, that while business was fairly steady for dealers through the month, the last two days of AllPay were the busiest days for the dealers, one of whom was Richard.

Richard worked in one of the eleven dealing houses selling substances in the immediate area (approximately 2 square kilometres). Tattoo-laced, his wide smile displayed toothless front gums – "*Ek lyk right, so, Anna*". (I look right like this, Anna) he said when I teased him about this. He agreed to talk to me openly about his life and history and about substance sales in Manenberg.

“*Ek doen nie baie anders met my lewe*” (I’m not doing much else with my life), he said. It was he that linked me to most of the female addicts in this study.⁷⁴

Richard and his business partners sold mandrax, tik and, occasionally “*rotjies*” – a prescription drug for HIV, that was also crushed and smoked.⁷⁵ They did not, he said, sell unga, which he claimed was too vicious a drug. One weekend in late 2011, after an AllPay day, Richard tallied his sales. In small, neat counts, he had documented number of buyers, their sexes, and the number of packages of each drug (tik and mandrax) they had bought. In summary:

		Tik		Mandrax	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
customers	Number	54	46	57	20
	Percentage	54	46	74	26
packages	Number	72	60	62	25
	Percentage	54.5	45.5	71.3	28.7

Over the two final days of AllPay this single dealer said that he sold approximately as much as he would during a standard full week: 132 packages of tik and 87 packages of mandrax.⁷⁶ While Richard’s small sample of statistics do not accurately indicate the total number of people buying from him, as some people would have bought both tik and mandrax, they do indicate some important things. Firstly, they hint at the extent of the problem of addiction in the area. This outlet was only one of eleven such drug sale operations at the time, in an approximately two kilometre square area around the Centre. Given that all the treatment centres in the city only had a total of 3,134 intakes in the first half of 2011 (Plüddeman et al., 2010). Manenberg data suggests that a far bigger response to drug addiction in Cape Town may be required.⁷⁷

Secondly, at 26%, the percentage of women using mandrax is significantly higher than that indicated in the SACENDU treatment centre data (5 – 9%) over the past ten years for this drug.

⁷⁴ A few months later, Richard exited the drug trade completely, and then left Manenberg, due to an attack on his person in which he was shot numerous times.

⁷⁵ *Rotjies*, Richard said, were bought by people who came from outside of Manenberg. He did not count these sales.

⁷⁶ Most packages were R20, but occasionally bigger, R50 packages, would also be sold, Richard did, unfortunately, not differentiate.

⁷⁷ This is compounded by the fact that according to statistics collected by the head psychiatrist of GF Jooste Hospital, the closest hospital to Manenberg, indicate that over 80% of people admitted to the unit use substances (Dr Small, Head Psychiatrist, personal communication).

Thirdly, almost as many women as men are buying – and likely using – “tik”. While these data may be skewed towards women due to the fact that child support grants were largely received by women, my qualitative research indicates that they are fairly accurate depictions of female usage. This perspective was confirmed by the general consensus, which was that almost as many women, to which I turn next, were using “tik” as men did.

The feminisation of drug use

In a general group discussion I ran with five teenage girls, aged fifteen and sixteen years, about their lives, substance use entered the conversation. Following up on this, I asked them about the current preponderance of tik and unga and Susan, clear-spoken and confident, explained to me, “*Dis soos die dingetjies kom in, nou is dit die tolletjies season, nou is dit die klappertjies season, so is dit met die drugs. Miskien is dit nou die tik season, dan is dit die wyn, so is dit, elke drug kry sy kans...*” (It’s like the little things come in, now it’s the season for tops, now it’s the season for fire crackers, that’s how it is with drugs. Perhaps now it is the tik season, then the alcohol season, that’s how it goes, every drug has its day...)” Susan was astute; addictive substances do go through fashions, as different drugs are manufactured, imported and made available. However, the manner in which, and by whom, they are adopted is influenced by the confluence of their pharmacological effects, socio-cultural norms, and structural context.

While there are discrepancies in degree, both my data and the treatment centre data illustrate that, with the advent of tik, more women are now using hard drugs than previously. This was consistently confirmed by community members. “*Dit was ’ie altyd so nie*” (It wasn’t always like this) was a frequent comment on women and drugs. “*Almal wil net tik gebruik*” (Everyone just wants to use tik) said Faziela, and “My friends are all using drugs, I don’t care, all my cousins are using” said Susan.

“What do people say about young girls doing drugs?” I asked Susan, in response.

“They say nothing, there are lots of young girls going there doing drugs,” she replied.

Rebecca, in answering my queries about women’s tik usage said, “*Vrouens warrie nie meer ’ie. Almal doen dit, nou wat moet ons warrie? Met die buttons was ’it ’ie so nie, die vrouens was nou*

'n bietjie skaam en soe, wat dit nou is, is die vrouens nou uiter as die mans.'” (Women don't worry any more. Everyone is doing it, so why should we worry? It wasn't like this with mandrax. Women were a bit shy. Now the women are more open [about their use] than the men.) It was patently clear that there *were* more women using tik than had ever used mandrax, and that their use was less concealed from the public eye. Tik was, thus, the first drug that caused, or coincided with a substantial increase in female use of hard drugs and the extent of women's drug use was more than indicated by treatment centre data.

The discrepancies between local activity and treatment centre indications are partly due, as mentioned above, to the fact that collecting accurate information on substance abuse trends is exceedingly difficult. This is not only due to the illegality of drugs. The concurrent use of multiple drugs and the vagaries of individual use, make the real extent and the patterns of substance abuse hard to determine (Harker et al., 2008). I was repeatedly confounded in my attempts to delineate substance use pattern norms of the women I worked with because individual life stories articulated with available substances and social trends in different ways. This resulted in very different substance habituation patterns, as indicated by the table below:

Participant	Age	Reported drug use pattern	Start age of drug use
Tilly	30	mandrax – tik – mandrax	17
Kyla	22	tik	15
Rebecca	25	tik	16
Vanessa	26	mandrax – unga – tik, tik and mandrax – unga and tik – tik and mandrax	14
Kirsten	31	alcohol – tik	20
Nazeera	22	alcohol – tik	14
Masoodah	40	mandrax (for four years)	23 (15 years ago)
Tasneem	50	alcohol – mandrax and <i>dagga</i> – tik	16

Discrepancies are likely also due to the factors that determine who attends treatment centres, and therefore who constitutes the sample represented in centre data. A number of the treatment centres in the SACENDU data were private, catering largely to foreign clients. These were well beyond the resources of people from areas such as Manenberg. Statistics collected from them may well have been unrepresentative of local dynamics. Public treatment centres were often a

forced, rather than chosen, port of call: a required part of a bail process, or, occasionally, child welfare processes. In Manenberg a much higher proportion of men pass through the criminal justice system than women, which has likely resulted in statistics for the area being disproportionately high for men.⁷⁸

My research indicated that for the most part, women did not report to treatment centres out of choice for a number of reasons. Firstly, attending rehabilitation centres for women was complicated by their role as primary care givers. Almost all the young women I did interviews with were accompanied by their small children for whom they did not have alternative carers. Secondly, there was a general negative perception of treatment centres. This was evident in the derisive manner in which they were spoken about and the fact that few of the users I spoke to were able to tell me where the closest centre was. Most women held that the success rate of women who go to rehabilitation centres was low. They said that women either only managed to stay clean for a couple of months before relapsing, or (counter-intuitively) they exited these centres using more drugs than when they had entered. *“As hulle terug kom dan tik hulle weer...wat ek gesien het, tik hulle nog altyd”* (When they come back they carry on using tik...what I have seen, they continue to use tik), said Vanessa. Thirdly, and importantly, seeking treatment requires the admission of addiction and loss of control. All the women who participated in my research stated that they would, and could, stop when they wanted to. Even Vanessa, too weak to get to hospital, and tied to an abusive partner because of his drug supply insisted that she wasn't an addict, *“Ek is nie addicted, as ek wil stop, ek stop”* (I'm not addicted, if I want to stop, I stop).

Women made a variety of claims, such as the above, that emphasised that they were still in control. Central to these claims was the assertion that they had previously been heavier drug users, but had subsequently cut down, only using in moments of extreme stress. Other assertions included that they only used drugs at night and that they were in control enough to keep their use hidden from their families (particularly their mothers). They also asserted that they did not use drugs when they did not have money to buy them; or only used when an opportunity arose spontaneously: only then would they *“trek 'n lekker skyf”* (have a good pull). However, women

⁷⁸ According to Kane-Berman (1995 cited in Foster 2012) nationally the female prison population (both sentenced and unsentenced) stands at a stable 2%.

often contradicted themselves in these claims. Vanessa, for example, said at first that she only really used on weekends with friends. However, later, when I asked more specifically about the frequency of her smoking, she told me that when she had her own tik, she smoked alone through the day on weekdays. I asked how often, and she said “*Ek slat ’n skoot and dan wag ek ’n bietjie, dan slat ek weer*” (I hit a round, then I wait a bit, then I hit it again). I asked her how long between smoking, “ten to fifteen minutes” she told me.⁷⁹ Women also asserted that they were not using unga, which had the reputation of being uncontrollably addictive. As one 30 year-old participant explained to me:

“Daai’s die drug wat jy moet gebruik, ons tikkope kan dit nog fight as ons’ie geld het’ie, maar nie hulle nie. Hulle is worse, they must use it. Hulle kannie vir hulle op lig uit die kooi nie, daai’s die ding. Ek het gesien, dit is die ding Daai drug is nou badder as tik...hulle sommer slaap met jou vir daai vyf rand. Ons tikkope kan nog baklei, ons kan dit fight, as jy’ti’ gellie, jy kan daar deur gaan.”

(That’s the drug that you must use, us tik-heads can still fight (the urge) when we don’t have money. They are worse, they must use it. They can’t get themselves out of bed, that’s the thing. I have seen, that’s the thing. That drug is worse than tik...they’ll just sleep with you for five Rand. Us tik-heads, we can still fight [it], we can still fight it, if you don’t have money, you can go through it.)

My observations, though, led me to believe that whilst their use may have lessened, it was still regular for almost all the women I spoke to. That women were less in control than they readily admitted was indicated by the fact that the majority I spoke to did not manage to stop during pregnancy, or breastfeeding, despite knowing that this could negatively affect their child.⁸⁰

This section has shown that there were numerous practical and social barriers to women attending treatment centres. This would explain why the statistics indicate that fewer women use, and are addicted to, hard drugs than actually are. My research indicates that there has, in fact, been a dramatic rise in female drug habituation with the advent of tik.

⁷⁹ Heavy users would use up to three packages of tik a day, smoked over time in a blown glass pipe.

⁸⁰ The effects of crystal meth use on foetal development are difficult to determine due to the fact that drug use is commonly accompanied by multiple other developmental risk factors including chronic poverty, alcoholism, malnutrition, domestic violence and disease. However, studies are indicating that crystal meth use during pregnancy affects birth weight and brain development (Vorhees, 1994).

Starting with tik

In most parts of the world, crystal meth, like most other substances, has been recorded as being significantly more prevalent in male populations (Brown 2010). An exception is Hawaii where it was mainly used by young people, and significantly more popular amongst women than other drugs (Groves, 1991:152). What is it then about tik, and the way it has related to women in Manenberg, that captured the female market?

An article in the *Lancet* (Kapp, 2008) suggests that South African women's uptake was related to the fact that tik was marketed as a weight-loss drug. I did hear this reported. However, of the eight women who discussed their addictions in detail with me, only one said weight loss was a factor in her initiation of tik use. Moreover, weight loss did not appear to dominate young women's concerns, for it was generally seen as more attractive not to be very thin. When Rachel said to me, "You've got nice big legs," she was giving me a genuine compliment. There were also other, positively framed, rumours about tik. For example, Kirsten said that it helped women who were struggling to get pregnant conceive quickly if they were using tik and that it enabled women to clean three houses in the time they would otherwise take to clean one. Only this latter rumour held any real local currency, though.

On the whole, positive claims were drowned out by extremely negative stereotypes relating to young female users. These were largely sexual in nature. "*Hulle se meisies duck vir die tik*" (They say girls have sex for tik)" said Vanessa. "*Hulle se hulle is sleg, slegte vroue*" (They say they are bad, bad women) said Rosie. "They'll have sex for a package [of drugs]" said Jessie.⁸¹ Moreover it was frequently said that drug use, especially tik addiction, robbed women of their attractiveness. A mother, lamenting the addiction of her 21 year-old daughter, who was incarcerated for being involved in a hijacking to support her habit, started off her interview with me describing her daughter, "She grew up beautiful, everyone said she was beautiful..." The implication was that her daughter was no longer attractive. The past tense phrase "she *was* a pretty girl", was frequently applied to female users.

⁸¹ Similar, sexual negative stereotypes are not applied to men.

The negative connotations attached to tik use, then, far outweighed the positive ones, and the latter do not explain women's tik uptake. In this next section I suggest that the reason for the dramatic uptake of tik needs to be understood, rather, as the result of a confluence of the closing down of local options for being socially recognised and women's correlated need for escape, and the ways in which the pharmacological effects of tik dovetailed with local ideologies of personhood.

Escape

The famous escape artist, Houdini, made a living in the early 20th century from publically breaking out of binds and shackles. His appeal was his ability to achieve what seemed to be impossible: the breaking out from rigid bonds that entrapped him apparently against all odds.⁸² I use the notion of escape as “mental or emotional distraction” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989: 385), emphasising temporary flight from the stresses of social marginalisation. I do so because the need to escape implies the presence of bonds that hold, restrict and confine.

Garcia (2010) and other authors (Bourgois, 1995; Bourgois & Schonberg, 2009; Brown, 2010) have shown a sudden increase in levels of drug usage in working class people tends to correlate with moments of social crisis caused by the adoption of neoliberal policy, the concurrent loss of blue collar jobs, and curtailment or withdrawal of welfare support. In the California Bay Area, Bourgois and Schonberg (2009) show that the local adoption of neoliberal policies caused an older generation who used to work in industrial labour to become obsolete as workers. At the same time opportunities for their children to become disciplined, productive labourers disappeared. This phenomenon correlated with a local spike in heroin use. Similarly, writing of young men in Appalachia, Brown has shown that crystal meth use amongst young men has been facilitated by the rapid loss of what was regarded as “appropriate, venerable work” (Comaroff and Comaroff cited in Brown), placing “strain on identities and everyday experiences of youth” (2010:256) and resulting in boredom, and the desire to escape.

Drug habituation had a long history amongst men in Manenberg – in correlation with their entrenched social marginalisation. Chapter Two illustrated how women, particularly young

⁸² Houdini achieved this through detailed knowledge of locks and clever devices to pick them; through arduous training of his own body to be quick and dexterous; and through tricks of illusion (Kellock, 1928).

women, were struggling to attain positive personhood. In a context of relative deprivation they were no longer able or likely to access the fundamental resources that allowed them to set their positions in home and community as nurturers and home heads such as access to finances through work and welfare, and access to housing. I suggest here that the increase in women's use of hard drugs has been a rapid, correlating process which is a consequence of women seeking escape from a situation where they do not feel able to construct positions for themselves as valued members of society. Flight out of Manenberg was an option that those who could sufficiently leverage their resources to be able to afford it. More common was seeking escape from the immediate context through the use of an addictive substance.

There was, however, another important factor in women's uptake of tik: the nature of the escape tik offered was one which was suited to notions of appropriate female behaviour. Mandrax is a "downer" – it blanks out the stress, causes a loss of spatial awareness, numbs and puts the user into a deep slumber. This was problematic for women. As Rebecca explained:

"'n Button is mos nou nie vir 'n vrou nie, dis iets wat jou lat omkap, mense praat mos hulle eie goeitjies... hy kan mos daai doen met jou en daai doen. Daarom het de vrou mense wat buttons gerook altyd stil gehou, jy sal 'ie soos 'n mans mens dik gerook uitkom uit die yart uit dat almal sien jy's gebutton of so nie."

A button is not for a woman. It knocks you out, and people say their own things...he can do this and that with you. That's why women who smoked buttons always kept quiet. You wouldn't come out in the yard having smoked a lot so everyone can see you've smoked.

The mandrax slumber temporarily removed the users from the environment. This opened the user up to gossip, but also, importantly, meant that they could not care for their children. In contrast, crystal meth has confidence-enhancing properties (Semple et. al. 2004). Though "the experience of a high is, to a degree, incommensurable" (Garcia, 2010:11) – due to the fact that substances interact with each person's physiology and mental state differently – on the whole, tik was described as giving the user a sense of control, and a feeling that they are not overwhelmed by circumstances. Rebecca gave the clearest explanation in our interview:

Anna: Can you tell me how it feels with the tik?

Rebecca: *Almal voel mos hulle eie way* (Everyone experiences it in their own way)

Anna: *Maar hoe voel dit vir Rebecca? (But how does it feel for you ?)*

Rebecca: *Ek voel net rustig. Ek is jonk, [maar] ek het baie dinge op my mind. Dis net as ek geroek het, ek kan clearer dink. Ek kan focus op een ding. Ek het 'n baie scatterbrain. As ek stil gesit het dan kan jy sommer sien daars iets fout met my, want dan gat ek oor alles: Ek het so gemaak aan my ma en my ma't'ie lekker gevoel daar oor nie, en as ek so gemaak het sal sy nou so gevoel het. En van daai af is dit nou sommer net... Yoh! Kyk wat het daai en daai gebeur. So man, alles...dinge wat ek verkeerd gedoen het. Ek reminis op my verkeerde dinge. Nou as ek geroek het, dan is daai uit my kop uit, nou sit ek net...*

(I just feel calm. I am young, but there are lots of things on my mind. It is only when I have smoked [that] I can think more clearly. I can focus on one thing. I am scatter-brained. If I have been sitting still, you can see there's something wrong with me, because then I ruminate over everything: I did this thing to my mother and it didn't make her feel good about it, and if I had done this [other thing] she would have felt like this. And from there on is it just...Wow! Look at all the things that have happened. Like that, everything...things that I have done wrong. I reminisce about the things I have done wrong. But when I have smoked, all that is out of my head, I just sit...)

Similarly, Vanessa said, "*Dit maak jou comfortable*" (It makes you comfortable), though the agitated manners of those high on tik seemed to indicate the contrary. Generally, participants told of how tik made them feel like they could look after their children better, it gave them the energy to clean their homes, and fundamentally, it made them feel capable and confident. This also justified their use. As Richard said:

"So miskien, die huisvrouens, wat heel dag die man werk, en heel dag in die huis met die kinders, sy rook, sy rook'ie on addicted te raak'ie, sy rook omdat hy heeldat besig is met die skoonmaak, en die wasgoed... nou rook sy net om energy te kry..."⁸³

So maybe, the housewives, when the husband is working the whole day, and she stays the whole day in the house with the children, she doesn't smoke to become addicted, she smokes because she is busy the whole day with the cleaning, and the washing...now she just smokes to get energy..."

Thus while both mandrax and tik offered the user an escape, tik offered an escape that allowed women to feel that they fulfilled some of the essential requirements of being a venerable woman, living up to gender ideals of keeping their homes clean, and being busy and active parents. If not that, while high, tik at the very least, allowed them not to feel the stress of having failed.

⁸³ The switching of male and female pronouns is not unusual in Manenberg.

A note on alcohol

In the above section I pointed to two important factors that influenced the feminisation of habitual drug use – women’s need for escape from a situation where they were unable to achieve socially sanctioned identities, and the pharmacological effects of tik. There is, perhaps, a third reason tik has become so widespread across genders so quickly, and this relates to alcohol. I was unable to trace patterns of alcohol addiction, but my research did indicate that the 2005 Western Cape Liquor Bill which was implemented to try to regulate liquor sales may have had the detrimental effect of encouraging tik sales and consumption. “*Wat het gebeur toe hulle die nuwe lei ingebring het?*” (“What happened when the new [alcohol] laws were brought in?) I asked Rachel. “*Dit het mooi plek gemaak vir die tik!*” she replied. (“It made a nice space for the tik!”) Though I heard a similar assertion from other participants,⁸⁴ whether such a neat shift actually occurred remains unclear. It is notable, however, that people reported a decrease in the number of that liquor outlets in the area while reporting a concomitant increase in drug outlets since 2005. This implies that the uptake of tik by women may have additionally been unwittingly fuelled by a law intended to lessen substance abuse.

While alcohol remained terribly disruptive, tik’s rapid arrival heralded a new threat to community order. The general perception was that tik’s extreme addictiveness meant that the consequences were greater. “At least with alcohol there is a piece of bread in the cupboard”, said Rachel, “With tik the cupboard has been sold”. Moreover it seemed that once the switch was made from liquor to harder drugs, the latter took precedence (over alcohol) as money was prioritised for their purchase.⁸⁵ A fundamental difference between alcohol and habitual drug use, however, was the degree to which drug use caused, and perpetuated, social isolation.

Isolation and Entrapment

On the long vibracrete wall that edges the local *veld* (field) the word “monsters” is scrawled in huge letters. “Monsters” is a reference to a local gang, but more notably, it is a reference to tik: addicts, who are commonly referred to as “tik monsters”, or “*monstertjies*” (little monsters). The

⁸⁴ Researchers from the Sustainable Livelihood Institute who conducted an investigation before the implementation of the Liquor Bill found that a number of shebeen owners on the Cape Flats threatened to shift to selling tik if the bill was enforced. (Leif Petersen, personal communication).

⁸⁵ For similar trends in female users in San Carlos see Semple, Grant & Patterson (2004).

implication of this term is that people on tik lost some of their humanity, and took on monstrous characteristics. Positive personhood and addiction were polar opposites.

Addiction denigrated women in the eyes of other community members who were seeking to uphold respectability. While the high of a tik made women feel they had control over their lives, addicts knew that the relief was temporary. All the women I spoke to related their experience of actually being high as extremely positive, but they were also clear that their experience of drug addiction was fundamentally one of loss and isolation. Thus Tilly, despite being the most defiant defender of her addiction said:

The drugs have brought me nothing. *Die drugs maak dat ek my lewe verder kan op mors.* I think the drugs can help for the stress, but they don't help. *Hy kan niks [positief] maak'ie, hy maak, hoe kan ek sê...in die mense sien hoe gaan jy al agteruit. Jy verkoop die laaste ding wat jy het om daai drugs te take. Verstaan? Dit maak niks aan jou nie...* (They've allowed me to mess my life up even more. I think the drugs can help for the stress, but they don't help. They can do nothing [positive]. How can I explain...in people's eyes you just go backwards. You sell the last thing that you have to take those drugs. Understand? It does nothing [good] to you...)

Addiction distanced women from local systems of support, entrenched their marginalisation, and curtailed their access to local coping systems. Vanessa's story is a case in point. Vanessa's partial blindness turned out to be related to an infection that required hospitalisation for treatment. On a Saturday afternoon, halfway through her internment, Judy and I picked her children up from her home to take them to visit her. Judy had coordinated the visit with her family, who showed reluctance to be involved. Frustrated and angry at their – and the general community's – apparent disinterest in Vanessa's plight, Judy lamented, "They can't even put together some taxi money to visit."

It was apparent that this indifference was partly related to the fact that her family was mired in habitual substance use. A female cousin who had told us she was taking care of Vanessa's children and who had said she would come along for the hospital visit had disappeared into a drinking *hokkie* on the Saturday afternoon of the visit. It was, however, also likely that their disinterest was related to the fact that Vanessa's years of drug habituation had dried up her access to community and kin support networks. She, like most of the women featured in this chapter suffered under the weight of the social stigma attached habitual drug users. Her isolation

was so entrenched that she had struggled to find the ten rand taxi fare for her own hospitalisation. In the end, with faltering vision, she borrowed money from the very source of her destitution, her drug dealer. This was the terrible irony of drug addiction: While seeking escape women often entrenched their own isolation. Kyla explained in an interview that she no longer felt she had friends due to the circulation of accusatory gossip that implied that when she was seeking privacy order to be sexually promiscuous, when she was in fact seeking privacy to smoke tik without her mother seeing. And Rebecca described her isolation:

“Hier’s nou hele slange in die Manenberg...jy kan niemand trust’ie. Meeste van die tyd is dit hulle eie goetes wat hulle opmaak, because ek gat nêrens’ie, want ek was al bewus gewies daar van, as ek gat loop, kan hulle iets sê, dan kan hulle sê, want niemand loop saam my, dan kan hulle sê ek het dit en daai gedoen, ma’ as ek heel dag in die huis is, dan kan jy nie vir my sê ek het geroek’ie.

There are a lot of snakes in Manenberg...you can’t trust anyone. Most of the time they make up their own stuff, because I don’t go anywhere, because I was already aware that if I go out, they can say something, because nobody goes out with me, they can say I did that, but when I am [indoors] the whole day, then you can’t tell me I have smoked.

This social isolation was largely because drug users broke multiple codes of propriety. Tik often kept users awake at night, and they walked the streets in agitation long after decent women were strictly inside (see Ross 2010). (Rachel called me to her window a number of times to point out a neighbour, pacing in the dark.) Their addictions, and consequent inattention to their children, often meant that cupboards were bare and their children were not regularly fed, neatly dressed with hair combed and controlled, attending school regularly, and called in at dusk. In this, female tik addicts were publically failing as mothers, and therefore as venerable women.

Addictions also strained local systems of reciprocity. Rachel’s household was a frequent port of call by hungry drug users seeking assistance. This placed her in a difficult position and made her uncomfortable. For while community norms would have her supply some “old bread” (Salo, 2004) to those who were hungry and came asking, drug addicts, desperate in their needs, tended to transgress carefully crafted local systems of asking, giving and receiving. This is illustrated in my field notes below:

This morning I emerge late to an insistent knock on the door. It is a woman of late thirties, wearing a long black dress over her clothing. She has no front teeth and a flicking, tik intensity to her stare. She has come in asking for food. Rachel makes her coffee and bread, but it makes clear that she doesn't want to sit down and chat – she is planning on finishing sewing commissions. The woman, Mahdiya, sits down in the front room anyway and doesn't leave, instead asking for more bread. Rachel tells her there is no more bread. Mahdiya does not leave, but sits lamenting ill-treatment at the local hospital. She eventually goes out leaving the bag she was carrying, Rachel says, "I don't like it when she leaves her bag here, I don't trust her".

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The next day, Mahdiya returned a number of times. She came at lunch time, and again at dinner time. Each time Rachel gave her hard looks and said there was no bread in the house, though I knew that there was. Rachel was losing patience. To me she said, "She's lying about all those bullets; she only has that one she showed us!" Usually Rachel would not refuse food, nor be bothered by someone temporarily leaving her bag at her house. But Mahdiya was overstepping the bounds of requesting help, especially as she had no means of reciprocally offering support.

Many addicts broke even more fundamental community laws: whilst certain illicit activities were to a degree accepted if not condoned, stealing from family and neighbours was completely prohibited. Yet addicts are renowned for stealing from their kin. Rachel explained how she only discovered her grandchild's addiction when she realised the extent of his theft from her house. One child in the CEYA programme repeatedly suffered from her mother's theft of her clothing and goods. One of the consequences of these transgressions was the exclusion – to some degree – from local spheres of belonging and assistance.

Conclusion

In Chapter Two I outlined how young women in Manenberg no longer have clear paths to achieving positive personhood. This chapter has shown that there has been dramatic increase in habitual drug use, particularly of "tik" amongst female users. This, I have argued, is related to the struggle to be, and feel, valued that women, particularly young women, are now facing. There has, thus, been an increased search for escape – or respite from an untenable daily reality – at the same time as alcohol outlets were closed down. Moreover, the pharmacological nature enabled women to feel as if they were achieving the necessities of womanhood.

Addiction to hard substances, however, gnawed away at women's social right to the assistance of their peers. It knotted the ties to abusive men as women stayed with men who supported their habit.⁸⁶ It bound them to money lenders, with exorbitant charges and violent ways. Most importantly, it undermined individuals' ability to lay claim to being valuable members of society and divorced them from local coping systems – systems of support and reciprocity.

Under the best circumstances, such systems built a little fat into women's survival strategies, for, in a situation of extreme marginalization, they were able to rely on each other for advice, for childcare, for financial loans, for food on a bad day, and for support during gender or gang violence. In seeking temporary escape from untenable personal realities, addicts were in fact falling further and further shy of community requirements for the attainment and maintenance of what I've called positive personhood. While habitual drug users may not have become definitive social outcasts – there was a sociability to substance use and, as Rachel's house shows, there was still substantial interaction between respectable mothers and substance users, not least because those users were often kin – in general, women not accessing, or excluded from coping systems were denied very necessary access to the pool of resources they needed if they were to maintain the appearance and comportment of valued human beings. In a terrible negative feedback cycle, habitual drug using females were excluded from coping systems. This cemented their marginalization and the abuse that they suffered.

The dynamics between a sense of self, and belonging and exclusion are, then, fundamental in determining women – and their children's – day to day existence. The next chapter turns to exploring the ways these dynamics play out amongst children in this context of a fraught political-economy and fraying local coping systems. It will examine the ways in which the children grapple with possibilities at hand to craft places of belonging and options for their futures.

⁸⁶ Substance habituation, generally, and partner violence were intimately related. As one participant said, "*As jy saam met jou man tik doen, dan is daar altyd violence.*" (When you use "tik" with your partner, there is always violence.)

Chapter Four

Belonging and Personhood

In March 2010, well before embarking on this research, I came home one day from teaching capoeira with an immense need to express recent events. The first paragraph I wrote was this:

“As I arrived at one of the classes this week, one of our students, a nine-year-old girl old took my hand and said, “Anna, I had a dream last night...I dreamt that Beleza⁸⁷ was with these men, and they shot him here.” She bunched the fingers of a hand together and jabbed them hard into the middle of her chest. “They shot him here, and there was blood everywhere, and he died.” I felt a cold stone in the middle of my own chest. Then the other students arrived, and the class started and I got lost in teaching. I forgot about those bunched, punching fingers until today, when, as I left another class, a boy, from a different community group took my hand and said, “Anna, can I tell you something?”

‘Of course,’ I replied, blithely.

‘I am having nightmares and when I wake up I don’t feel normal anymore...I don’t feel normal anymore because of the nightmares.’ The cold stone returned.”

Personal notes 16 March 2010

It was these confessions from children involved in CEYA about their night time dreams that truly set me wondering about their lives, beyond their quotidian actions and happenings. If their night time dreams were pervaded in this manner by the insecurity of their present and their all-too-real everyday exposure to violence, how were the figurative dreams of the futures affected? How did children go about actively engaging with their day-to-day realities so as to construct a future, when the present was so very insecure? Was it safer, I wondered – terrified at the thought – for young boys to join local gangs than to try to craft formal working lives for themselves. Was this encouraged by the fact that they would, likely, have a fair sense of the possible outcomes of the prior due to repeated exposure, and would, more than likely, be thwarted in attempts at the

⁸⁷ Beleza was the capoeira name for Marcio, my colleague with whom I had founded CEYA.

latter? Would we, at CEYA, have any long-term impact on children's life chances, or was the work valuable in its immediate results only?

Two years later, still roughly following these trains of thought, this chapter examines how children, in a framework of fraying coping systems described in previous chapters, act in order to secure their present and create options for their futures. Through three exemplar case studies I illustrate that children are very active in fashioning their environments, and the ways they go about doing this are shaped by (and shape) local systems of meaning-making. These systems define what it is to be a worthy human being. For children being valuable is intimately linked to the spheres of their belonging.

This chapter takes a theoretical turn in two ways: I show that an exploration of children's personhood opens an interesting window on anthropological notions of people and societies as fundamentally constituted of individuals (self-contained beings), or individuals (relationally constituted beings), such as that of Edward LiPuma (1998). On a different bent, I also show how recognizing the importance of belonging and meaning making for children indicates that there can, and should be fertile cross-pollination between anthropology and psychology with regards to understanding children's choices and prospects.

Situating belonging – children in the research

In Chapter One I introduced my research sample: twenty children who ranged between the ages of six and thirteen years when research started and who all lived within a few minutes walking distance of the Centre. These were the children who were consistently – of their own volition – part of the research and radio workshops.⁸⁸ In some senses twenty is an arbitrary cut off, there were more than a dozen other children with whom I engaged with extensively, and who were, through their and their carer's permission, actively part of this research.

⁸⁸ Radio workshops were run in part ship with the CRF

Below I provide a fuller picture of their circumstances with a table that summarises some essential contextual information. This chapter features only three of these twenty children. I have, however, chosen these case studies carefully, as exemplary rather than unusual. The table below outlining basic home circumstances illustrates that they are not remarkable cases. .

A few notes are required for the interpretation of this table:

- The children's ages are as they were when I started research in mid-2010. Through the text I have listed their age as it was in the particular example to which I refer.
- I have recorded as 'abode' the type of structure where children slept because all children living in attachments to brick houses, Wendy houses or informal structures also had access to and spent varying amounts of time in the primary brick abode to which their sleeping residence was affiliated (See Ross (1995), who differentiates between domestic spaces that serve different purposes.)
- Income sources in the home did not necessarily correlate directly with income that supported the child. While income was often shared within households, individuals did not necessarily choose to support their grandchildren, or nephews and nieces.
- While I came, with time, to have a fairly good sense of the substance use in households, there may have been households where the use was more surreptitious, and where I was unaware of it. Substance use patterns were also subject to change, to which I was not always privy.

Manenberg Young Research Participants details									
Name	Age	Kin in group	Mother's presence	Father's presence	Care provision income (excluding grants)	Grants received in household	Substance abuse	Sleeping abode	Other occupants of sleeping abode
Elizabeth	12	NA	Largely absent (in another town)	In Cape Town	Insecure – no one in house employed	Pension, disability grants, child support grants	Alcohol and drugs in home	Wendy house behind grandmother's leased house	Two younger brothers
Amanda	7	NA	In home	In home	Secure – father formally employed, mother largely formally employed	Pension	None	Wendy house behind grandmother's leased house	Parents
Craig	10	NA	In Cape Town	In Cape Town	Insecure – reliant on mother's partner	Pensions Child support grants	Alcohol	Great grandmother's leased house	Great grandmother, grandmother and two uncles
Moosa Maheer Zaid	11 8 3	Brothers	In home	In M-berg	Secure – mother working, father working, grandmother home industry	Pensions, child support grants	Sister using alcohol and <i>dagga</i>	Built on attachment to grandmother's leased house	Mother and younger brother
Aliyah	10	NA	In home	In home	Secure – father employed in taxi industry	None	None	Leased Wendy house	Parents, two older sisters
Ida	10	Cousin to Sasha	Deceased	Unknown	Secure – supportive kin formally employed	Child support grants	None	Grandparents' home	Carmelita's parents, sister (Sasha's mother) and partner. Sasha's younger sister.
Sasha	6	Cousin to Ida	In home	In Cape Town	Secure – mother formally employed				
Carmelita	13	Aunt to Ida and Sasha	In home	In home	Secure – supportive kin formally employed				

Manenberg Young Research Participants details (continued)

Name	Age	Relationships in group	Mother's presence	Father's presence	Care provision income (excl. grants)	Grants received in household	Substance abuse	Sleeping abode	Other occupants of sleeping abode
Angie	12	NA	In home	In home	Insecure – mother's work erratic, father unemployed	Child support grants	Alcohol in house, alcohol drug use in yard	Informal structure in grandmother's yard	Mother, father, two brother and two sisters
Shawn Rose	11 9	Brother and sister	In home	In home	Insecure – mother's work erratic, father unemployed	Child support grants	Alcohol in home, drug use in yard	Informal structure in yard of grandmother's house	Parents and younger brother
Lucille	10	NA	In home	In home	Secure – father formally employed	None	Alcohol in home	Parents' owned house	Parents and brother
Lotta Aldo	6 9	Brother and sister	In home	In home	Secure – father employed	None	None	Grandmother's owned house	Grandmother, aunt, parents and younger sister
Sadie Crystal	6 8	cousins	In Home	In M-berg	Insecure – mother's work erratic	Pension, child support grants	Alcohol in home and drugs in yard	Grandmother's owned house	Mothers and grandmother, 1 aunt, 2 cousins, Crystal's sister, Sadie's 2 siblings
			In Home	In Cape Town	Insecure – mother's work erratic				
Carlos	9	NA	In home	In home	Insecure – parents informally employed	Child support grants	Alcohol and drugs in home	Grandmother's leased house	Parents, uncle and various others (unknown)
Whitney	7	NA	In home	In M-berg	Secure – mother working	Disability Child support	Alcohol	Grandmother's leased house	Mother grandmother and two others (unrelated)

This table grounds the information in this chapter, and reflects arguments made in previous chapters. The twenty children I worked with closely came from thirteen household units (some were relatives living together). Eleven of these household units were either in the home owned or leased by a grandmother (or great-grandmother), with only one being in the name of parents (and one being leased from non-relatives). This was a widespread pattern (as illustrated in Chapter Two), younger parents often found privacy through building informal structures in the yards of family. Thus the children from five of these household units slept in Wendy houses, or informal constructions (with one sibling set sleeping in a Wendy house without an adult present). All the children, however, had access to the facilities in the brick houses their sleeping abode was attached to.

Mothers were more likely to live with their children, and be active caregivers, than fathers. Of the sixteen mothers (to the twenty children) thirteen were permanently in the same home as their children. (Of the three that did not, one mother was deceased, and the other two sometimes stayed in the same house with their children, but mostly spent time living with their partners.) Fathers were less likely – though not unlikely – to live in the same household as their children as nine of the sixteen fathers did. (This was partly due to the fact that children tended to stay with mothers when parents separated.)

The insecurity of daily life is also evident in this table: in only five of the thirteen households was there consistently secure income during my fieldwork time. (For many people, even formal work was temporary and erratic.) The vast majority of households in the area received some form of social grant, with nine of the thirteen households reflected in the table receiving child support grants. The high levels of substance use discussed in Chapter Three are also evident in this table: in nine of the thirteen household units children spoke of substance use either in their immediate abode, or in other residences in the parameters of their yard they lived in. What this table doesn't reflect was how many informal structures there were in the backyards. This varied, some had none. The yard Crystal and Sadie lived in contained five additional *hokkies* that housed fifteen people. In general, local conditions – described in previous chapters and illustrated with regards to the young research participants here – meant raising children was an immense challenge for parents, and few were able to provide the kind of childhoods they would have wished for their children; which I turn to next.

Neatly at home: Ideals of childhood and childcare

In Rachel's life history interviews (presented in Chapter Two) she made it very clear that as children she and her siblings 'did not know the street'. By this she meant that as children, when not at school, they were indoors, either at home or safely in the homes of close friends. This was one aspect of the idealised model of childhood – dependent on a particular model of childcare – that was still prevalent in Manenberg over fifty years later. This model dictated that young children, especially girls, should either be escorted by an adult, or walk in groups. When they did the latter they should walk directly from point A to point B, and, as far as possible, they should avoid the “veld” (field). Many children had assimilated this notion that they should be protected and largely in the home, and the most common response my colleagues and I got when we asked the children why they liked being part of the capoeira or radio programmes was, “It keeps us off the streets”.⁸⁹

There were numerous ways in which child care was assessed – well cared for children were neat and clean and girls had their hair neatly braided, or tied up. (Untidy hair was the ultimate sign a girl was not well looked after, and Judy would frequently point out a child to me as neglected by pointing out the state of their hair.⁹⁰) They took their school clothes off directly after school, so as to keep them clean for the week, except for Fridays, when they would be washed, anyway. They wore shoes – as one interviewee described her childhood to me she said, “*Ons was 'ie vuilgatte nie, ons het skoene gedra*” (We weren't dirty bums, we wore shoes). They attended school without fail, they had enough to eat, and they took their hands out of their pockets when speaking to their elders, who they greeted politely.

Amanda, aged ten at the end of research, was an example of a child whose parents ascribed to, and largely achieved, the idealised notions of care. Always neatly dressed, with hair usually in

⁸⁹ This sense that children did not belong on the streets may have been particularly prevalent in the group I worked with. It seems likely that it was the children who had most strongly assimilated this ideal that came to the Centre which was a safe and socially appropriate alternative to home.

⁹⁰ This worked in the reverse, too, and children would judge adults by the state of their hair. My own hair is long and curly, and has a tendency to be unruly when loose. I was frequently told by one of the girls that my hair didn't look pretty if I left it untied. When I did bother to put it up, my favourite mode at the time was to braid it into two, interlocking braids. This, too, I was informed by the girls was inappropriate – girl's hair was braided, not adult women's. Occasionally, when I scraped it back into a neat pony tail – which I did when I was lacking in time - I was met with approval by the girls: “Today Anna's hair looks pretty.”

plaited pigtails, Amanda moved in a closely circumscribed pattern as she was escorted by her mother between home, school, the Centre, and the houses of a couple of close friends. Frequent trips outside Manenberg saw her accompanying her mother to the local shopping centre, Vangate Mall, or church in a different neighbourhood. Mimososa Street and “*die veld*” were strictly out of bounds. Typical diary entries read: “Tonight I am going to watch American Idols. It is going to be lots of fun” (Thursday 2 June 2011). Or, “Today I went to the Centre. It was fun doing capoeira. I love it.” (Monday 20 June 2011)

Amanda was, unusually, an only child of older parents, both who were working at the end of my research period (though her mother had sought long and hard for this work). She and her parents lived in a Wendy house, but it was the only one in her grandmother’s yard, meaning that her home context was unusually bounded. This was in contrast to most children, where the endemic poverty and crowded home conditions meant that staying inside was not an available or attractive option. As such, between school and nightfall the streets were filled with children playing with their friends. Being out and about provided children with freedom and space, but also exposed them to the vicissitudes of life in a violent neighbourhood.

Amanda, sheltered as she was, was far less acquainted (though, as was evident in her radio stories, not unacquainted) with the messier sides of life in the area – the cutting poverty, violence and substance abuse – than were most of her peers. This protection, however, also had its downsides. Somewhat socially isolated by the care she was under, Amanda was frequently teased by the other children for the degree to which her movement was controlled by her mother and her consequent lack of knowledge about local happenings and trends.⁹¹ Perhaps, had more parents in the area managed to manifest this idealised notion of care, she would have been less isolated, but few parents had the resources or home stability to achieve this. Amanda was unusually firmly entrenched in a home and social system that privileged local notions of appropriate behaviour.

⁹¹ This became worse towards the end of research, for by the age of ten, most girls had considerably more freedom than she did.

The home and the street: Craig

Like Amanda, Craig was very actively involved in the capoeira and the radio programmes. Craig's life, however, was a very different to Amanda's, and he was one of the children who suffered the nightmares I refer to at the start of the chapter. In general boys had far freer reign of the street (and therefore exposure to happenings on it). This was only part of the reason his life stood in contrast to Amanda's though. More significant was the fact that Craig came from a home where members did not ascribe to, or achieve unclouded positive personhood. Substance abuse was rife and his uncles were reportedly involved in gang activity.⁹²

Aged ten at the beginning of the research, Craig was striking for his incisive intelligence. He was almost always the first to ask unsettling and astute questions to the guests that frequent visited the programmes: "Why do you find us poor people so interesting?" he asked visitors to a capoeira class. "Do you also have violence in your communities?" he bravely asked a group of anthropology students and academics at a seminar that he attended with me at the University of Cape Town about the radio programme. He was also stood out for his frequent disruptive behaviour during group events. He was the most likely one to punch a contemporary, lie, stalk out of class, or talk over others, and it was with him I most often had words during classes and workshops. Yet he, unlike some others, continued to participate.⁹³

Craig lived in his great-grandmother's house, with her, his grandmother, and two uncles. His mother, Lauren lived elsewhere. She had lived a life history of extreme hardship. She had experienced sexual assault as a child, become involved in local gang structures and fallen pregnant with Craig as a teenager (resulting in her not completing high school), and suffered domestic violence at the hands of Craig's father. By the time I met her, Lauren was thirty years old, and had found some stability by partnering with a significantly older man who she described as "actually a good person". They lived in other areas on the Cape Flats (Bonteheuwel, and then

⁹² Craig himself denied that the families in his house were involved in gangs, though he conceded that other uncles, who lived elsewhere, were.

⁹³ Often Craig's intelligence and his 'acting out' presented themselves to us together; when the local nurse was running sexuality workshops for teenagers in the area, and Craig found out that only those aged twelve and up were allowed to attend, he announced to everyone in the Centre, just before the programme started, that it was his birthday. He was, he said, turning twelve. He accepted all well wishes graciously. He had, in fact, turned eleven a few weeks prior, something only discovered half way through the holiday programme.

Delft) with their young son born during my fieldwork time. While Craig did not live with them, Lauren's partner did supply some of his basic needs, such as school fees and school shoes, and Lauren explained to me how she had tutored Craig in behaving respectfully to her partner in order to ensure the continuation of this support. At home, however, he was largely left to fend for himself.

Craig therefore established a wide network of people who assisted with his basic needs. A'ntie Ivy, Amanda's mother, told me that occasionally, when he had been thrown out of his own home, he would come seeking shelter with her. A'ntie Brenda, another Centre elder, acted as a guide and a parent representative for school events. And, towards the end of my research period, A'ntie Kashiva, another well respected elder who was part of the senior's club, was providing all his meals, even packing school lunches for him. Moreover, Craig actively used the programmes at the Centre in order to take control of his own future. He was the first in the radio programme to say, "I'm going to be a radio presenter" and knew he had to grasp at every possible opportunity that came his way if he was to avoid being trapped in the cycles, of substance use, gang involvement and unemployment so prevalent in his kin network.

In order to access these care networks, Craig was required to behave deferentially towards his elders, achieve at school, attend the Centre programmes regularly (all of which required significant self-regulation), and generally present himself as a child respectfully in need. At the same time, Craig was also being pulled in other directions. The boys his age on his street had formed a social group with a name, "Young Money" and a symbol: a dollar sign and a Y. He and the other boys in this group would doodle this on any paper in front of them and scribble it on their hands. Craig even cut it into his hand to create a scarification.⁹⁴ The members of the group I was in close contact with assured me that they were just a group of friends that liked music of the American hip hop record label with the same name, but I was concerned.

Don Pinnock, in his seminal study on Cape Flats gangs in the early 1980s, wrote about how groups of boys from the same street or block of flats – who he called 'corner kids' – would coalesce into friendship groups. These, he contended, often acted as substitute families, and

⁹⁴ Judy asked me to follow up on this. When I did Craig said he didn't want to talk about it, but he said he was willing to write about it in one of our writing workshops. In big, green letters on a blank sheet of paper he wrote, "I was angry". This he handed to me, and then left the workshop.

would offer for camaraderie and protection. They would also often mimic the style of gangs in the area, though not be formally involved in gang activity. They differed fundamentally from gangs in that there were not defending a turf or commodity (1984:4–5). Pinnock argued that in the long run these youth fed into the gang structures, as they passed through reformatories and prisons.⁹⁵ Standing (2008) further illustrates how these friend groups were often interpreted as a gang and treated as such by other existing gangs. This pushed non-violent friend groups into violent engagements and precipitated the hardening of a gang structure (See also Jensen, 2008). This was the background to my concern about the development of the Young Money group, and indeed, the young men’s discussion group listed “Young Money” as one of the boy gangs in the area. My apprehension was, however, perhaps unwarranted, for over the last five years gang activity in the area has lessened dramatically (though by no means completely). Though almost all teenage boys and young men had a loose gang affiliation, this did not necessarily require particular or abiding loyalty to a gang structure. Nevertheless, it was clear that Craig, and the other boys in the group, were following the trends for representing their developing masculinity amongst themselves⁹⁶ and on the streets through their appropriation of a group name and identity. I also heard rumours that Craig, and others in the group were smoking *okapyp*.⁹⁷ Given that the vast majority of teenagers smoked, and used substances, this was almost a prerequisite for social inclusion in social street groups.⁹⁸

Craig was a child in conflict, actively seeking belonging in two different spheres that required different models of personhood. He did not have easy access to the model of positive personhood due to the fact that his mother was largely absent, and his kin were associated with gangs and substance use. Yet he needed to access spheres where people were achieving and ascribing to positive personhood in order to secure his survival. In order to do so he was required to exhibit the respectful comportment of a respectable child in order to access his daily needs. Moreover, Craig was bright and ambitious, and he wanted to forge a life for himself that included work, and

⁹⁵ In a later work (1997) Pinnock makes a more defined argument that gangs form important spaces of recognition and belonging that was often absent in families.

⁹⁶ See Chapter Two for details.

⁹⁷ Afterwards, while going through his story with him, Craig said that they were in fact smoking before making the group, but not after.

⁹⁸ I presumed this to be cigarettes and *okapyp* (hookah pipe). CEYA was not, it was evident, entirely succeeding in their no drugs policy.

success on the positive personhood model.

At the same time, in order to be part of the boys' social group of his street Craig needed to exhibit independence from adults, and he was required to exhibit the toughness valorised by boys and men described in Chapter Two. In this latter social sphere, it was the masculine aspects of personhood that necessarily came to the fore. Yet these often conflicted with behaviour that was broadly socially sanctioned as appropriate. Craig was therefore navigating tensions, indeed, contradictions, in his identity creation and portrayal. The next case study, which features Carlos, further illustrates the identity conflicts that children need to navigate when their parents are not achieving positive personhood.

Carlos

My first image of Carlos was as I walked in the door of the very first capoeira class at the Centre. Small and wiry, he was curled over another boy, whom he had in a clinch, and whom he was punching ferociously. This image, of a young ruffian, was soon muted in my mind as Carlos became one of the most disciplined, precise and dedicated capoeira students. He would follow my colleague, Beleza, with an adoring look in his eye, and would mirror his capoeira style (and the way he walked) perfectly. Beleza and I had learnt early on that Carlos's home was turbulent and frequently raided by the police. (We had had a panicky moment one Friday evening when we were returning the children home after an event, and a police raid had turned into a shoot-out just after we had dropped Carlos at home.) His one and only diary entry read, "The police shot my dog because they thought it helped my uncle, but it lived". Carlos's grandmother, when making a decorative hat that represented her life in the seniors' club tied on a dummy, credit cards and baby doll, plastic flowers, a toy gun, and a tik "lolly" (pipe).

Despite his obvious talent and enjoyment of capoeira, about a year into the CEYA programme Carlos's class attendance became erratic. He then missed an important show for which he had been selected and rumour had it (from the other children in the group) that he had been smoking mandrax at the time. Judy informed me that he had been seen smoking cigarettes in the bus shelter. He stopped coming to class, and his grandmother told us that one of the other mothers of other children in the group (then working at the Centre) had taken it upon herself to inform him

he was no longer welcome at capoeira. We lost Carlos to the programme. Thereafter, and in order to avoid me, he would purposefully turn his head in the other direction whenever he passed me on the street.

One sunny afternoon, a few months after he had left capoeira, I was sitting on the Centre steps with a group (of three girls and a boy) between the ages of nine and thirteen. Carlos walked past with his cousin, who had become his constant companion. Teasing him and trying to get him to engage with me I called out, “Hey Carlos, why it is that every time you walk past there is something really interesting in the other direction?” Carlos kept walking, but Angie, a composed fifteen-year-old responded in a way that threw some light onto Carlos’s avoidance of capoeira:

“*Hulle’s skollies!*” (They’re *skollies!*) She spat.

“*Hoekom sê Angie dit?*” (Why does Angie say that?) I asked,

“*Want hulle roek.*” (Because they smoke) She said.

“*Wat roek hulle?*” (What do they smoke?) I asked.

“*Entjies, okapyp en dagga!*” (Cigarettes, hookah pipe and *dagga*) she replied. Then, filling me in, “*Weet jy hoekom is hulle skollies? Want hulle ouers is gangsters, nou maak hulle die selfde dinge.*” (Do you know why they are *skollies*? Because their parents are gangsters, and now they are doing the same things.)

This interaction illustrated something to me that I had been unaware of: being part of the capoeira programme must have been difficult for Carlos; his association with his parents tainted his chances of being regarded as valuable in the group, which had largely assimilated dominant notions of positive personhood. His inclusion in the group of capoeira friends would therefore always be limited, as it involved a struggle against popular perception of him in the group. Officially, group membership also required that he actively reject and avoid the drug use that prevailed in his family. Belonging to the capoeira group, as a social and activity cohort therefore required presentation of beliefs that were in conflict with his belonging to his kin network. Perhaps then, it was understandable that he chose to exit the capoeira group.

Various other events illustrated to me that Carlos was not unusual. While many of the children came from homes that were not fully succeeding in achieving norms of positive personhood, those children whose families were the most on the margins, whose parents frequently exhibited socially undesirable behaviour, experienced multiple challenges in being involved in programmes. This was particularly when their involvement brought their home circumstances into the public arena in a way that provided reasons for social denigration and shame that threatened fragile social bonds with friends.⁹⁹ Thus, for example, Lorraine, aged ten with wild hair and clothing frequently dirty, was only briefly part of the capoeira programme, and then equally fleetingly part of the radio programme. While I was not privy to the reasons for her exit from capoeira, she explained her departure from the radio programme to me. Lorraine had found that the stories about her home life that bubbled forth in the radio training programme caused us, the trainers, to remind the other participants of the privacy agreements we had all made. For while the group was accustomed to stories of violence, hers caused wide eyes at the level of horror she described. She was humiliated. Moreover, her involvement in the programme required focus and concentration, which were difficult to maintain when the tension and fighting at home were constantly tapping on her consciousness. She explained that it was easier just to play foosball (table football) in the games room.

Similarly, Rose a charming (but often reticent) eleven-year-old girl was repeatedly embarrassed by her mother's alcohol use in a way that inhibited her programme involvement. Rose struggled when she could not get permission slips signed at late notice (having forgotten to do so on time) because her mother could not be roused from a deep slumber. And she was embarrassed when her mother arrived at a parents meeting intoxicated. She found herself awkwardly guarding against visits to her home – something I and my colleagues did regularly –fearing what they would reveal. Rose's involvement in the programmes brought her mother's frowned upon alcohol use into the public realm. This ashamed her and, after one of these events, her attendance was often erratic.

⁹⁹ Similarly, writing of youth violence in South Africa, Don Foster makes a link to shame saying, "Hostility is triggered as efforts to ward off humiliation, shame and disrespect...the pathway to violence is probably via unacknowledged shame" (2012:45).

Relational identities

All these case studies indicate that children's identity formation was intimately connected to their spheres of belonging. Achievement of positive personhood for children was deeply compromised when this was not widely achieved by the close kind network they belonged to. Rachel Bray et al. (2010) made similar observations in their work on being young in post-apartheid South Africa. They argue that children seek to guard their parent's reputations in order to protect their own, and that their identity is particularly related to that of their mother. As such, they assert that "children are tacitly, but powerfully, weighing the care responsibilities of mothers and fathers differently" (2010:86). Mothers, they write, carry moral liability when their care is not present and active. I certainly found that parenthood was differently judged for mothers and fathers. Whereas children frequently commented on mothers' lack of care, silences tended to prevail over fathers' absences. This is likely related to Salo's observation that it is through achieving respectability that women confer personhood on others (2004: 172 – 180). Therefore, children without mothers (or with mothers who are not positively socially regarded) are under additional strain in developing positive personhood.

Not only were children's identities related to their parents', but parents' identities were also connected to their children. This was in a number of ways. Salo (2004:157) illustrates that women's personhood was affirmed by the local practices of sharing childcare. Presiding care over children generally served to confirm senior women's role as guides and extended their role of engendering personhood beyond their own immediate descendants. Salo also writes that mothers are defined by the movement and comportment of their teenage daughters. "Good daughters" were an illustration of mother's strength and value. These were daughters who attended school regularly, remained home during their free time assisted with domestic chores, dressed modestly, were accompanied by friends when outdoors, were indoors after dark and were not sexually active (Salo, 2004:157). Additionally, I argue, good daughters were those that did not use substances, particularly drugs. An example from Masoodah illustrates this.

On hearing that I was gathering stories, Masoodah (40) had sought me out to talk about her daughter's drug addiction. In our interview she said, "She's my child when she's in the house, but when she's outside my door then she's not my daughter...She's outside. I don't walk with

her; I can't say what she does outside." This initially confused me, for by acknowledging a lack of control over her daughter's actions and movements, Masoodah seemed to be undermining her own positive personhood. However, Masoodah was the first, but not only, mother to make this assertion to me. It became clear that she, and other mothers like her, were, in fact seeking to salvage their own positive personhood by emphasizing their lack of power over their children's agency. The stigma attached to drug abuse was powerfully linked to non-personhood – the denial of an individual's humanity – with young crystal meth addicts, in particular, being described as "*monstertjies*" (little monsters).¹⁰⁰ It was, therefore, worse to be seen to be linked to their daughters' drug abuse, than to acknowledge a lack of control.

Dividualism and Individualism

We see then, that parents' and children's identity formation and maintenance was intimately intertwined. This leads me to a theoretical note about the anthropological distinction between dividualism and individualism. Dividual societies are those considered to be made up of relational beings. Dividual beings are, as Niehaus (2002:190) explains "the compound sites of relations that define them". Their actions, he writes, "are always viewed in context; and societies are embodied in their dispositions".¹⁰¹ In contrast, individualistic societies are seen to be those characterised by independence, where, for example, the individual is seen as in opposition to society, behaviour is seen as an expression of inner qualities and persons mature as a consequence of biology. Individuals are, then, understood to be self-contained, self-shaping, independent agents (LiPuma 1998).

Working in Melanesia, LiPuma (1998) critiques the anthropological dichotomy of the West as constituted of individuals, and Melanesia (and other, pre- or non-capitalist societies) as constituted of relational, dividual persons. Rather, he contends, personhood in the West and in Melanesia are comparable precisely because individuality or dividuality are not exclusionary. Instead, he suggests, personhood is composed of dividual and individual aspects in all cultural systems, though one may be fore-grounded over the other. Thus, he reasons, while the Western person "appears as the natural and transhistorical individual", this is an ideology that "only

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter Three

¹⁰¹ Niehaus is utilising Wagner (1986) and Lipuma, (1998) in this characterisation of dividual beings

partially conceals the reality that Western persons are interdependent, defined by relations with others, dependent on others for knowledge about themselves, grasp power as they do and to act, grow as the beneficiaries of each other's actions and so forth" (1998:59).

Moreover, LiPuma asserts that this duality is critical because "persons emerge precisely from that tension between dividual and individual aspect/relations" (1998:57, original emphasis), and that the ethnographic goal is to reveal when and how dividual and individual aspects of personhood are evident, or concealed. For LiPuma these conditions relate to capitalism and modernity, and shifts in political-economic context. He argues that the emphasis on individualism and autonomy is a product of capitalist modes of relation. This has been well critiqued by Niehaus (2002). Niehaus critiques the "meta-narrative of modernity" that "often posits an inevitable shift from "dividual" to "individual" modalities of personhood" (2002: 189) as people enter into the market and are extricated from social networks of reciprocity. Working with wages-earning workers in Bushbuckridge, South Africa, Nieuhaus shows that notions of bodily substance exchange are not relegated to the past, but remain defining features of contemporary life. In fact, he suggests, contemporary situations may perpetuate – rather than result in the disintegration of – notions of the unboundedness and interconnectedness of bodies.

I build on this critique of dividualism and individualism as relating to modernity by showing that children are more dividual beings than adults. They physically depend on adults for their care and shelter, and their reputations and ability to construct positive personhood are intimately linked to the personhood of their close kin. As such, this study shows emphases on the dividual or individual nature of a being varies by life stage. While this supports LiPuma's claim that cultural systems in different societies constitute differently emphasises but co-occurring individualism and dividualism, the generational nature of this also illustrates that, as Niehaus claims, this is not necessarily related to a shift towards modernism.

Risk and resilience: recognizing disciplinary parallels

We see then, that an exploration of children's centres of belonging and identity in a context of difficult life circumstances, such I have done in this chapter, opens up a new perspective on anthropological theory of personhood. It also, I suggest, illustrates that there should be more

communication between anthropology and psychology in research about children. In general, anthropology – so steeped in the here and now – has limited capacity to speak about what the possible future effects of current contexts might be. In contrast, various psychological models have been developed for predicting the outcomes of individuals experiencing or living in adversarial conditions. Early frameworks suggested that life outcomes are a consequence of the interplay of risk and protective factors on the individual. Risk factors are those variables that cause individuals to exist in a state of being “at risk” of developing antisocial behaviour; where risk is understood to be vulnerability to “psychopathology or susceptibility to negative developmental outcomes” (Goyos, 1997 in Boyden and Mann, 2005:6). Their converse, protective factors, are those variables that allow children to create a state of being resilient in the face of adversity, where resilience is achieving “relatively good outcomes despite risk experiences” (Rutter, 2012:34), or the ability to withstand the negative driving forces of risk factors to develop, or maintain prosocial behaviour.¹⁰²

In this, the individual was located as the central unit of analysis, and there was the assumption that all individuals (irrespective of context) would have similar responses to the same risk or protective factors. This has shifted in more recent work to a strong recognition of the importance of context (Ungar, 2012). Thus, for example, the Social Development Model emphasizes that children and adolescents learn both pro- and antisocial behaviours from socializing agents within a range of developmental contexts such as family, school and community (van der Merwe, Dawes & Ward, 2012). From this perspective, risk and protective factors are not only inherent within the individual (for example through biological characteristics and temperament), they come from a range of social spheres, and they are understood to interact dynamically and incrementally over time, in context (van der Merwe et al., 2012).

An alternative, though similar, psychological framework for understanding and predicting life outcomes is the risk-resilience framework. This theoretical framing emphasizes states of being (i.e. ‘at risk’ and ‘resilient’), rather than factors of influence (risk and protective factors).

¹⁰² Thus whereas the link between the presence of risk factors and being “at risk” is seen to be immutable, resilience is something that is achieved against the odds. Consequently, much of the recent psychological literature on child well being seeks to understand how the state of being at risk can be superseded by the state of being resilient, or how protective factors can triumph over risk factors (Boyden & Mann, 2005).

Exactly what resilience consists of has been contested (Boyden & Mann, 2005). However, similarly to work that emphasized risk and protective factors, the “risk-resilience” framework has shifted from being individual-centric to emphasizing context, relationships and environment. Thus a recent definition of resilience states that it is “a set of behaviors over time that reflect the interactions between individuals and their environments, in particular the opportunities for personal growth that are available and accessible” (Ungar, 2012:14). Moreover, recent resilience studies have included an exploration of individual agency, meaning and opportunities. They have also, argues Michael Ungar, illustrated that “*nurture trumps nature*” (2012:1, original emphasis).

These more contemporary psychological approaches to unpacking the possible consequences of adversity on individuals have, then, distinct parallels to anthropological ways of understanding the world: there is an emphasis on relationships, on the complexity of human action and interaction, and on the multiple levels of influence behaviour in the world. However, the disciplines have limited cross-pollination in their respective studies about children’s lives. From the perspective of anthropology, this is perhaps due to the psychological model of personhood has been largely a-historical and a-cultural. Moreover, psychological tenets of behaviour as classifiable as anti- or prosocial grate with anthropological tenets of relativism. While psychology defines antisocial behaviour as normatively disapproved, and prosocial as normatively approved behaviour (Van der Merwe et al., 2012), ethnography illustrates how normative is a relative concept, and therefore difficult to apply cross contextually. Moreover, as I have illustrated in Chapter Three with drug addiction, behaviour that might be psychologically classed as anti-social is, in fact, intensely and importantly socially. This highlights the difficulties with the negative connotations of the concept “antisocial”.¹⁰³

Despite these differences, the strong similarities imply that anthropology and psychology could, and should, yield productive results. Psychology has developed useful tools to assess the likelihoods of children’s outcomes later in life through work on risk and resilience in a way that anthropology is unequipped to do. Conversely, anthropology can provide an important additional

¹⁰³Boyden and Mann (2005) in a comprehensive (sociological) critique of the concept of resilience argue that it problematically relies on assumptions as to the way the relationship between individual and society is envisioned, and as to appropriate models of childcare as being seated in the “industrialized, minority world” (2005:9). They also maintain that too little research done with children themselves – relying on adult interpretations and utilizing a passive notion of protective factors, rather the perspective that children actively construct their own worlds.

perspective on the ways in which children craft – or do not craft – their futures, and the degrees to which they have agency and autonomy in this process. As such, ethnographic elucidation of children’s processes of local meaning making adds an important layer of understanding to psychological approaches.

Conclusion

Children are not only socialised beings they are also social, and socialising. Like adults, they assess each other on the basis of relationships and actions and these assessments build and break boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. This chapter has shown that their personhood and their sense of value, belonging – and the corollaries of shame and exclusion – have profound influences on the choices they make, the ways in which they act in the world, and their sense of possibilities.

I have highlighted two domains of belonging that are extremely important to children – belonging to care networks, and belonging to peer networks. These spheres were by no means mutually exclusive and they may be complementary, but they may, also, be in tension. Moreover, as more dividual beings (than adults) children they are intimately linked in their personhood to their close kin relations. Children in my research, whose families were not achieving the models of personhood privileged by the majority of their peers, withdrew from programmes when this difference was exposed, to their shame. In this it is evident that when systems of meaning in children’s worlds of belonging are in conflict, children struggle to maintain access resources and coherent strategies for securing their everyday existence, let alone their futures.

This not only highlights the complexity of identity formation and maintenance for children in fraught circumstances, it also shows us that children’s prospects are far more than a sum of the risk and protective factors they inhabit, and which inhabit them. Systems of meaning are critical in enabling, or disallowing, children’s access to resources, both social and material and that they are therefore in determining children’s resilience. While dreaming was the prerogative of all children the more insecure the home a child came from, the less likely they were to be able to

exercise their own agency effectively to be part of any programmes designed to provide productive spaces for their growth in a continual and constructive way.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Five

Manenberg is Not a Policing Case

One afternoon Inspector Johnson, a local police officer dealing with social issues (mentioned in Chapter Three) and I went to the closest business precinct, Athlone, to buy all the Centre staff fish and chips for lunch. As we passed the massive scrawl of the “Monsters” graffiti running along the wall of the *veld* (field), I asked him what it meant. He confirmed what A’ntie Rachel had told me: that people who used tik were referred to as monsters, because “They will steal anything; and hurt anyone”. Driving on, we discussed his areas of work and the problems facing people in Manenberg. I asked him, “What is the solution here, what is the way out?” Sighing he said to me, “I always tell people Manenberg is not a policing case, it is a prayer case...”

A few weeks later, Inspector Johnson and I were together again, at the Centre on a Saturday morning. The Inspector had called a community meeting to discuss the current problem of gang activity and shooting in the area. At the time there was almost daily shooting in a couple of streets not far from the Centre. In the days before the meeting he went around handing out pamphlets, and Judy stuck up posters at the Centre and at the neighbouring clinic. I arrived for the meeting on time, 11:30, to find a few people on the Centre steps. Half an hour later we started the meeting. There were only ten people present: Inspector Johnson; the local Ward Councillor;¹⁰⁴ a man who stumbled in accidentally, looking for another meeting, but who stayed; members of two families that had recently been directly affected by recent shooting incidents; and me.

Inspector Johnson started the meeting by saying “*As julle nie sake maak nie, kan niks gedoen word nie.*” (If you don’t make a case, nothing can be done.) He lamented at how few people were present, complaining that the desire for help was not accompanied by the community’s willingness to get involved and help themselves. He announced a march in opposition to the shooting and the violence for the forthcoming Saturday. He asked the Ward Councillor to arrange a loud speaker system, so that they could gather people. The next weekend the van with the loud hailer, came, but the people did not. The march never materialised.

¹⁰⁴ The Ward Councillor was the local political representative.

Almost a year later, a local city radio station hosted and aired a round table discussion on substance abuse in Cape Town as part of Crime Line's fourth anniversary celebrations. The discussants included representative of the larger established nongovernmental organisations working with substance abuse, government and police representatives and a number of community representatives from the Cape Flats.¹⁰⁵ The severity of the problem was outlined in statistics: R7.9 billion worth of drugs had been confiscated in the prior nine months; tik accounted for 31 % of treatment admissions to drug rehabilitation centres in the Western Cape, 70% of crime was related to substance abuse. The round table had been set up to seek solutions. Instead, law enforcers and policy makers riled at communities for not "playing their part" and irate community members champed at law enforces and the government for not being responsive and supportive. Inspector Johnson's laments and Manenberg people's responses echoed through this open forum.

This disconnection between the perspectives and desires of the state, and the people of Manenberg and similar areas is, I suggest, due to a number of reasons. First, the police – the actors of state protection – are not consistently trusted.¹⁰⁶ The children involved in the radio workshops demonstrated this clearly. They had decided to make radio programmes of visits to the two institutions they felt they could turn to when faced with difficulties. In the process of planning the group was divided as to whether the police played a fundamentally positive or negative role in their lives, and in the area. In scripting the final show, therefore, the other facilitators and I asked them whether they wanted to produce a show where the overwhelming perspective of the police station was positive, which was the tone that had developed in the police station recordings. There was hesitation in the group. This turned out to be related to the fact that, having spent time at the police station the children had developed more nuanced understandings of the police. They could no longer define them as predominantly constructive, nor destructive forces in their community.¹⁰⁷ This was more aligned to adults' perspectives. People *did* frequently call on police for interpersonal issues, such as those relating to gender violence. Numerous women in this study, including a fifteen *year-old* girl, had taken out interdicts against men by whom they were threatened physically and I also heard of instances in

¹⁰⁵ Most came from Mitchell's Plain.

¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁶ Jonny Steinberg (2008) makes a coherent argument that police only have power that they are granted by the people they are policing, Manenberg was a prime example of this.

¹⁰⁷ See track two of the attached CD for the radio programme they made at their local police station.

which the police were called in to deal with intra-family theft. There was, thus, a shifting relationship with law enforcement officials, who were widely used, and regarded as effective interventionists, in gender issues, and trouble in the home; but not trusted when it came to issues that tapped into more complex community dynamics, such as shootings, illicit activity and general gang violence.¹⁰⁸

Secondly this disconnect is a consequence of the fact that people are navigating a situation where they feel that they have, in broad terms, been abandoned by the state. This may seem counterintuitive, given the history of oppression and the invidious nature of apartheid and the increasingly widespread availability and reliance on state grants.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, I was stunned the first time I heard “*Dit was beter onder die NP*” (It was better under the Nationalist Party), or “*Ons het lekker onder die witmense gelewe*” (We lived nicely under the White people). It became clear to me, however, that for many of the people of the area, the post-apartheid changes in social welfare, and the decrease in their immediate access to it, (other than in the form of social grant pay-outs) were seen to be illustrative of a more just society, but of a government that had ceased to care.

In order to understand this, Michel Foucault’s concepts of governmentality and biopower are useful. By governmentality Foucault means the historical shift away from the sovereign state towards the administrative state, which has access to, and uses, economic knowledge for apparatuses of societal control (2003:244–255). Foucault argues that the state procures individual’s compliance through “biopower”, the promotion of the health and wellbeing of citizens. The production of systems of apparent care and support require that the individual controls the self in a way that is submissive to governing structures. Through this the individual appears to be morally responsible for his/her own wellbeing, whilst the exclusionary structures of power are obscured from view (Bourgeois & Schonberg, 2010). The apartheid government’s paternalistic, welfare-orientated approach to Coloured people was a prime example of governmentality. Whilst it provided an aura of care for those who succeeded in accessing it, it

¹⁰⁸ This also had to do with police insensitivity to community dynamics. A’ntie Sara explained to me that she had once called the police about drug dealing, only to have them conduct a raid, and then knock on her door to thank her for the information, severely compromising her safety.

¹⁰⁹ Pauw and Mncube estimate that nationally, between 1997 and 2006 the total number of beneficiaries grew by 15.4 per cent per annum – largely due to uptake of grants related to childcare, 2007:35).

entrenched their social exclusion through requiring submission to the system in order to ensure basic survival. This is particularly evident in the 1976 Theron Commission Report, in which the social problems in “the Coloured community” were described as a consequence of “the breakdown of family life, widespread crime, alcoholism and excessive drinking” (van der Horst, 1976:76). The report’s answer to the alleviation of these social problems was better provision of welfare services. The recommendations include: better pension systems; the creation of a multiplicity of institutions (for rehabilitation for substance abusers, for children in need of care, and for the aged and the disabled); increased police efficiency; and better trained social workers, who focused on communities, rather than individuals and families (van der Horst, 1976:82-86). In this, we see how the structural causes of poverty and social dislocation were masked by emphasis on individuals’ moral failures. This may underpin the nostalgic harking back to the pre-1994 era, despite the racist attitudes, policies and laws of those times. Though vastly better than those of old, many policies continue to be underscored by similar blame on the individual.

Thirdly, this disconnect is related to the fact that – as I have argued in this dissertation – the more marginalised people are in their broad context, the more important their smaller social circles of belonging are. And, for numerous practical reasons, the less likely they are to cooperate with law enforcement agencies with regards to drugs and illicit activities. This is partly because, as Standing (2003) has illustrated in South Africa, people selling substances often also play necessary, or useful, social roles in conditions of social, political and economic exclusion. (This argument is well made with regards to gang structures in Brazil by Elizabeth Leeds (1996) and Luke Dowdney (2003). Leeds argues that gang violence is endured because gangs provide financial, governance and social support networks in contexts of exclusion from mainstream power structures. Dowdney emphasises the role gang structures play in maintaining “law and order” (2003:250) in the absence of an effective state.) Furthermore – as I have shown in Chapter Three – as it becomes harder to achieve positive personhood, more and more people escape through habitual substance use. People using (and selling) substances are sons and daughters, parents, friends and neighbours. Thus while they are not approved of, and they are excluded from social support to some degree, it would be a mistake to assume they are definitive social outcasts.

The percentage of people involved in illicit activities (or relying on others who are involved) increases as marginalisation increases, and as people struggle to attain positive personhood. In

Manenberg, where the wherewithal for meeting basic needs is scant, engagement in some level of illicit activity as a means of making ends meet is extremely widespread: Loose cigarettes are sold and bought; shebeens operated in back yards; stolen goods were sorted, shifted and bought; grants were fraudulently claimed; and drugs are sold. Everyone involved, or who benefits in any way from any type of illicit activity, requires, to a certain degree, that a local hush prevails. This means that as long as the basic prerequisite requirements for living up to social ideals are unattainable, and people therefore find themselves excluded from the local systems of support and reciprocity that being a valued and respected person grants them, many people in poverty stricken communities are likely to support (whether tacitly or overtly) substance sales because they simply can't afford not to.

Drawing it all together

In Chapter Two I illustrated that the means and the maps for women's construction of positive personhood of old have crumbled and faded. Consequently women today, particularly young women are struggling to establish themselves as valued adults. This is critical, because being a valued individual is critical for belonging to local networks of support and reciprocity that provide access to pools of resources and assistance, and cushion the harshest realities of living in conditions of marginality. In Chapter Three I illustrated that this is one of the important reasons for the feminization of drugs use. Ironically, habitual drug use further exacerbates the very conditions of exclusion women are trying to escape from. In Chapter Four through an examination of children's relational identities I further delved into the importance of belonging, showing that spheres of belonging define people, their actions and their outcomes.

In all of these chapters it is evident that small social spheres of belonging take precedence in people's lives when they are excluded from resources in the larger political economic contexts they inhabit. This explains why state calls for community assistance in routing out the local supply of drugs fundamentally, void of impetus. They rely on the problematic assumption that crafting a respectable life, in accordance with the law, is both desirable and achievable. They do not recognise that increased community involvement in the policing of illicit activity may be in conflict with individuals own efforts at getting by through belonging to local social spheres that provide the support and reciprocity for daily life.

A thoroughly contextualised view of people's choices, actions and activities in political economic and social structures demonstrates that behaviours, such as drug abuse, children's involvement in "antisocial" activity, and local silences around illicit activity are all, to some degree logical responses given the limited array of available options people in marginal situations have available to them. If this is recognised, it dislocates ascription of blame on poor people that is not only inherent in state narratives, but also in the culture of poverty school of thought (Lewis, 1962) and which implies that people develop cultural models that perpetuate their own poverty.

Final word

On a Saturday morning in December 2011, on one of my last days of formal fieldwork, Judy and I were in the car driving a group of children to a Christmas party. The children were happily in conversation, and Judy and I conversed quietly. "Sometimes I wonder what I am doing and if I have ever done any good" she said. "I get so tired, nothing seems to change, but then I realize I must have done something, because when people see me, you'll see them stand up straight, take their hands out their pants, hide what they're smoking, and they'll tell me the truth. In front of me they want to be seen as decent. They know what it is to be decent. I must have done something." After the event, as we were dropping the children back off in Manenberg, I was pulled aside by one of the mothers who told me, urgently, that Elizabeth and her grandmother had been physically fighting. (Elizabeth's mother was then in hospital following an overdose of prescription tablets and I suspected that she had been hiding her tik addiction, something she was once open about, from her children for the whole year.) Elizabeth's grandmother had called the police to lay charges. The tension in the home had boiled over. When my CEYA colleague had arrived at their house that morning to take Elizabeth and her brother to a capoeira event there had been threats and recriminations. Having heard this, Judy and I sat in the car in silence. She had been struck dumb; Elizabeth was one of the darlings of the Centre, a young woman from a troubled home, who was patently working hard to mould a future for herself different from her mother and grandmother. Judy was a needle, desperately trying to sew together the ripping fabric of local coping systems, but she felt they were coming apart faster than she – and others like her – could sew.

Yet people in Manenberg have always been marginal, and, over the years Judy had seen many children pass through the Centre, onto life paths that took them in directions she wouldn't have chosen. And Elizabeth was not, in fact thwarted from her determined continuation on the path she was forging of "becoming something" in order to support her brothers in the future. All the difficulties that came with post-apartheid changes also came with a dramatic extension of human rights, and however difficult to achieve, the opening up of new opportunities. These caused the lightness in the air on the day I chatted with four teenagers about their dreams for the future. During the conversation they playfully slapped each other, saying "you've stolen *my* dream", for they all expressed the wish and hope of finishing Matric, getting a bursary and going to university to become a teacher.

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