

Changing Contexts, Shifting Masculinities: A Study of Ex-combatants

Buhle Zuma
ZMXHAN001

A Minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Masters in Philosophy

Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town
2009

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.

Signature:

Signed by candidate

Signature Removed

Date: 22 May 2009

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
GRADUATE SCHOOL IN HUMANITIES**

**DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN THE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

I, Buhle Zuma of 4 Ingle Road, Claremont, 7800, do hereby declare that I empower the University of Cape Town to produce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation entitled **Changing Contexts, Shifting Masculinities: A Study of Ex-combatants** in any manner whatsoever.

Signature

Signed by candidate

Date: 22-05-2009

Signature removed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to extend my appreciation to the former liberation soldiers who volunteered to be part of this study and without whom the study would not have been possible. Although I cannot thank you by name for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity, let me thank you all for your time, honesty and trust before, during and after the research process. Secondly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory (DACPM), in Woodstock, Cape town for facilitating and supporting me in meeting with former liberation soldiers. Specifically I would like to thank Michael Abrams (DACPM), Lizo Ndzabela (DACPM), Yasir Henri (DACPM and University of Michigan) and Desmond van Niekerk (Hearts of Men). Thirdly, and also very importantly I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Zimitri Erasmus, for guiding me through the research process, from the beginning right to the end, with a gentle heart and a sharp mind. Thank you. I would like also to thank my mother and my sisters for their unconditional support even when they have never fully understood what it is that I've been doing for the past two years. Thank you very much. Thanks also go to Thierry Luescher for the questions he posed during our lunch breaks that forced me to think more critically about my work. Thank you Thierry. Lastly, this study was made possible by the generous funds from the National Research Foundation.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the contexts in which combatant masculinities were constructed: (a) in apartheid South Africa through mass mobilization and politicization; (b) in exile through military training; and (c) in post-apartheid South Africa through cultural concepts of manhood and non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) initiatives.

This qualitative study, based on six in-depth interviews, follows through the three different contexts, the narratives of the same group of ex-combatants of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). These men went into exile as part of the 1980 generation.

It concludes that the different contexts facilitated the construction of different masculinities. During resistance to apartheid, civilian struggle masculinities were made. Military training made militarised masculinities. Post 1994 marks the creation of masculinities in transition. Among the key factors shaping each of these masculinities are: political structures, ideological and political youth constructs; the totality of the military and a patriarchal and heterosexual discourse; and cultural concepts of manhood. This thesis outlines similarities and differences between the three types of masculinities as well as other broad themes that permeate the study.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
ABSTRACT	II
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW	2
1.1 MASCULINITIES	2
1.2 MASCULINITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA	4
1.3 AFRICAN MASCULINITIES	5
1.4 BLACK MASCULINITIES	6
1.5 MILITARY MASCULINITIES	9
CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	14
2.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	14
2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	14
2.2.1 <i>Research design</i>	18
2.2.2 <i>Central research question</i>	19
2.2.3 <i>Theory questions</i>	19
2.2.4 <i>Sampling</i>	19
2.2.5 <i>Data collection</i>	20
2.2.6 <i>Data analysis</i>	20
2.2.7 <i>Ethical considerations</i>	21
CHAPTER THREE: HISTO-POLITICAL CONTEXT: EDUCATION, POLITICS AND RESISTANCE	23
3.1 EDUCATION, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS	24
3.2 EDUCATION AND APARTHEID	25
3.3 EDUCATION AND SOCIALISATION	26
3.4 THE EDUCATION STRUGGLE	27
3.5 BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND YOUTH POLITICISATION	28
3.6 YOUTH MILITANCY	29
3.7 CONCLUSION	31
CHAPTER FOUR: YOUTH POLITICISATION	32
4.1 THE YOUTH	33
4.2 TWO STEREOTYPES OF THE YOUTH	33
4.3 'YOUTH AS APOCALYPSE'	34
4.4 'YOUTH AS YOUNG LIONS'	34
4.5 STATE VIOLENCE: A POINT OF DEPARTURE	35
4.6 POLITICISATION PROCESSES	36
4.6.1 <i>From Amabutho to the ANC underground</i>	37
4.6.2 <i>UmKhonto weSizwe recruitment</i>	38
4.6.3 <i>'Skipping' the country</i>	40
4.6.4 <i>Motivations for joining MK</i>	41
4.7 PULLING IT TOGETHER: RESISTANCE POLITICS AND MASCULINIST DISCOURSE	42
4.8 CONCLUSION	44
CHAPTER FIVE: MILITARY TRAINING	45
5.1 THE MILITARY INSTITUTION	45
5.2 THE TRANSIT CAMP	48
5.2.1 <i>Guns or books</i>	48
5.2.2 <i>Camp orientation</i>	50
5.3 TRAINING CAMP	51
5.3.1 <i>Welcome to the army</i>	51

5.3.2 <i>Cutting the civilian umbilical cord</i>	51
5.3.3 <i>'This is not your mother's house'</i>	52
5.4 PULLING IT TOGETHER: ADJUSTING TO MILITARY LIFE	53
5.5 BASIC MILITARY TRAINING	55
5.6 COMMANDER AND SOLDIER: POWER AND VIOLATION	57
5.7 THE FE-MALE CHALLENGE: THE SPRING SOURCE OF THE MASCULINE	59
5.8 THE SPEAR-AND-POT DICHOTOMY MYTH	61
5.9 CONCLUSION	63
CHAPTER SIX: THE RETURNED SOLDIER	65
6.1 FAILED DEMOBILISATION	65
6.2 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT	67
6.3 MILITARY, CULTURE AND MANHOOD	70
6.4 ANC BETRAYAL	73
6.5 CONCLUSION	76
CONCLUSION	78
REFERENCES	80
APPENDICES	87
APPENDIX A	88
APPENDIX B	89
APPENDIX C	91

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the contexts in which combatant masculinities were constructed: (a) in apartheid South Africa through mass mobilization and politicization; (b) in exile through military training; and (c) in post-apartheid South Africa through cultural concepts of manhood and non-governmental organisations' (NGOs) initiatives. This qualitative study, based on six in-depth interviews, follows through the three different contexts, the narratives of the same group of ex-combatants of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC). These men went into exile as part of the 1980 generation. It begins with a literature review of relevant masculinity research over the last three decades. Chapter two charts the research methodology that frames and guides the study. Chapter three sets the context for the study. It focuses on education as a social and ideological instrument that engineered the lives of school-going black South Africans during apartheid. Resistance to Bantu Education put youth at the forefront of the national liberation struggle.

Chapter four focuses on the politicisation of the research respondents as school students through their political activities both in communities and student political structures which culminated in their joining MK and leaving for exile. Chapter five examines how the military constructed a particular combatant masculine identity that served its ends. Here the interest is in how the military made new recruits' with cogs in its machine. Chapter six is primarily concerned with the life conditions of the respondents as returned soldiers who were not formally demobilized and reintegrated into their communities and society at large; and how they renegotiate and reconstruct their militarized masculine identities that have become redundant in post-liberation South Africa. The study concludes by asserting that the different contexts facilitated the construction of different masculinities (civilian struggle masculinity, militarised masculinity and masculinity in transition) respectively. Although context was salient, there were other processes at play that shaped these masculinities. Similarities and differences between the three types of masculinities are outlined as well as other broad themes that permeate the study.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Masculinities

Robert Morrell (1998) has noted that in the last 25 years researchers in the USA, UK and Europe had begun to invest themselves in the study of masculinity. Already by then there was growing literature on the subject and at some universities research on masculinity had claimed independence as Men's Studies. What has been called the first wave on men and masculinity research appeared in the mid 1970s as a result of feminist critiques of traditional explanations of gender differences (Kimmel and Messner, 1998). These early developments were for the most part debated in the context of American scholarship and politics (Morrell, 1998). Some work such as that by Feigen-Fasteau's *The Male Machine* (1974) and Warren Farrell's *The Liberated Man* (1975) was concerned with the costs of the traditional male sex role on men's health both physically and psychologically and their relationships with women, other men and children (Kimmel & Messner, 1998).

Several feminist inspired anthologies explored the meaning of masculinity in the USA such as the work of Joseph Pleck & Jack Sawyer (1974) *Men and Masculinity* and Deborah David & Robert Brannon (1976) *The Forty Nine Percent Majority* (Kimmel and Messner, 1998). Joseph Pleck's (1981) *The Myth of Masculinity* is posed as the single most salient work to have criticised the normative male sex role by deconstructing the constituents of the male sex role and showed that empirical literature did not support these normative features (Kimmel & Messner, 1998). Similar developments across the Atlantic were occurring that had strong left-wing connections. Morrell (1998) holds that Andrew Tolson's (1977) *The Limits of Masculinity*, is one of the earliest books that reflected a growing concern about the lack of discussion and research about men at a time when feminism was generating compelling intellectual interest.

At the beginning of the 1980s research on women once again led the way ahead of research on men and masculinity. The variations among men were seen as central to the understanding of men's lives. This challenged the unexamined assumption of earlier research that had portrayed one version of masculinity—white, middle-class, middle-aged, heterosexual, as the sex into which all men were struggle to fit in (Kimmel and Messner, 1998). The challenge to this normative definition of masculinity led to an understanding that we cannot speak of

masculinity but masculinities: “the ways in which different men construct different versions of masculinity” (Kimmel & Messner, 1998, p. xix). This perspective in the USA was reflected in the work of Harry Brod (1987) *The Making of Masculinity* and Michael Kimmel (1987) *Changing Men: new Directions in Research on men and Masculinity* (Kimmel & Messner, 1998). In the UK, Jeff Hearn (1987) *The Gender of oppression: Men, Masculinity and the Critique of Marxism* followed from Tolson’s work in which he grappled with ‘the men’s question’ by engaging with yet rejecting classical Marxist and feminist analyses (Morrell, 1998). The agenda of the study of men both in America and Britain according to Morrell (1998) was motivated by similar concerns and cannot be separated from each other. On the other hand McCarry (2007) maintains that historically the work from USA and the UK was stratified into ‘Men’s Studies’ and ‘Critical Men’s Studies’. Both groups posited that their work was objectively and critically analysing masculinity and shared a political commitment with feminism but Pringle (2001) in McCarry (2007) argues that there was significant incongruity in these two approaches with the Critical Studies of men theorists being openly supportive of feminism and the broader project of Women’s Studies and Gender Research.

That said McCarry (2007) is quick to warn that it is reductive to designate male masculinity theorists as religiously aligned with either ‘Men’s Studies’ or ‘Critical Studies of Men’. Over time both came to be called ‘pro-feminist’ approaches to the study of masculinity and distinguished from a rival body of work that emerged as a reaction to feminism and an advocate of men’s rights in the 1980s and 1990s such as Robert Bly (1992) *Iron John*, Sam Keen (1992) *Fire in the Belly: On being a Man* and Warren Farrell (1993) *The Myth of Male Power: What men are the Disposable Sex* (Morrell, 1998).

In Australia, Bob Connell, a historian writing in the sociology discipline, in the 1980s started engaging with the theoretical problem of gender. Taking a holistic approach, Connell placed at the centre of his analysis, the unequal relationship between men and women and developed theories that culminated in the publication of *Masculinities* in 1995 (Morrell, 1998). Connell’s work gave way to a dynamic understanding of masculinity and emphasised the salience of its historical development. Connell was part of a group of scholars that produced an approach known as the ‘New Sociology of Men’, the hallmark of which was the rejection of essentialist conceptions of men (Morrell, 1998). The issues raised by these scholars have been about the nature of men’s power over women such as: how is power exercised,

maintained and perpetuated? What were its forms and where and by whom was it exercised? (Morrell, 1998). Furthermore, the approach suggested that some men were victims of gender domination and also argued that men paid a price for their domination. Morrell (1998) points out that some of the literature to come from this group of scholars includes: R. Chapman and J. Rutherford (Eds.) (1988) *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, Lynn Segal (1990) *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, M. Messner & D. Sabo (Eds.), (1990) *Sport, Men and Gender: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, Victor Seidler (Ed.), (1992) *Recreating Sexual Relationships: Writings from Achilles' Heel*, Michael Kaufman (1994) *Cracking the Armour: Power, Pain and Men's Lives*, H. Brod & M. Kaufman (Eds.), (1994) *Theorizing Masculinities*, and M. Mac an Ghail (Ed.), (1996) *Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and Cultural Contexts*.

Masculinities are not created equal. This means that different masculinities are not equally valued in our society. On the one hand, for Brittan (1989) masculinity refers to “different styles of masculinity or self-presentation” (cited in Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). He maintains that “styles of masculinity change but that the substance of male power does not”¹(ibid.). On the other hand, Connell (1995) urges that we recognise the diversity in masculinities and the relations that obtain between them which he asserts are “relations of alliance, domination and subordination. These relations are constructed through practices that include and exclude, intimidate and exploit—gender politics” (p.37). To point out the relations that hold between masculinities Connell (1995) uses Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony to describe hegemonic masculinity. In explaining hegemony Donaldson (1993) holds that the concept, as understood by Gramsci, is concerned with the ways in which the “ruling class establishes and holds its dominance over other social in-groups. It involves the persuasion of people through the media and social institutions in ways that seem ordinary and the punishment of non-conformity” (p.645).

1.2 Masculinities in South Africa

The forms that masculinity takes is constituted, among other factors, by race and class such that in any given society there are various masculinities, each with its characteristic shape and

¹ Apologies to the reader and examiners. I was unable to trace the page references for these quotations before the submission deadline as I could not access the text.

features (Morrell, 1998). These “contours and features change over time as they are impacted by changes in society while they too affect change in society” (Morrell, 1998, p. 607). This does not however, lead to the conclusion that “all masculinities, as social forces, are equally powerful” (ibid.) because as Connell’s hegemonic framework shows, subordinate masculinities exist among marginalised masculinities and these may be oppositional to the dominant masculinity (ibid.). For purposes of this work it can, at the risk of over simplification, be conceived that the apartheid project that was spearheaded by white Afrikaner men laid claim to hegemonic masculinity in cultural, class, race, ideological and economic terms and through its use of violence and military power. On the other hand, men in the ANC and its allies constituted marginalised masculinities on the terms mentioned above. The Afrikaner hegemony was challenged by the ANC and its allies through the project of national liberation. In a discussion of South Africa masculinities Morrell identifies and distinguishes three types of masculinities: “white”, “African” and “black” masculinities (ibid., 616). Attention here is given to African and black masculinities “without precluding the existence of subordinate masculinities within these concepts” (ibid., p.622).

1.3 African masculinities

By African masculinity, Morrell (1998) is referring to those masculinities that were developed in rural localities and which he also refers to as ‘rural masculinity’ or ‘countryside masculinity’ (p. 622). He further notes that in the city, where they worked, these men strived to maintain their rural masculine identities using forms of organising that they were familiar with. For example, Morrell argues that in Durban, Zulu men “banded together and formed ethics and codes of masculine conduct that affirmed their rural roots” (p. 623). The “prohibition of permanent residence to most Africans allowed for the extension, into the city, of this rural African masculinity” (ibid) and although township life influenced the way masculinity was understood, “African masculinity appears to have remained somewhat hegemonic” (ibid.). This is partly because these men, although working in the cities still had ties with their chiefs and headmen whom they consulted, they owned homesteads and accumulated livestock and had wives and children which were all benchmarks against which masculinity was measured. Moreover, migrant men also understood their masculinity in terms of respect, given to them by younger men and particularly women (Morrell, 1998). “Here was an African masculinity removed from its material but not its cultural context

(Morrell, 1998, p. 625).

The 1950s marked a particularly salient period, the effective functioning of the rural homesteads as places of economic independence and production came to an end. World War II had brought about a significant increase in the urban African population and despite apartheid's attempts to stem the process of permanent migration it failed to arrest the development of a "new urban culture" (Morrell, 1998, p. 624). At this time, Morrell observes, "industry expanded and a growing African working class was absorbed into jobs" now as residents rather than migrants. In light of these changes, civil society developed to "initiate Africans to an urban life with trade unions and political parties taking a lead in this regard" (1998, p. 625). These changes also saw the gradual formation of urban gangs which although they were not completely devoid of rural influence, were characterised by new styles of dress, modes of behaviour and open ridicule of rural simplicity. He notes that these changes were part of a process in which "a new black urban masculinity emerged rival the old and rejected it as a masculinity of the 'moegoe'" (ibid).

1.4 Black masculinities

African urban life was fertile ground for the new black masculinity. This masculinity was defined by being oppositional to the state and like African masculinity maintained traditional views about women's place and held work as a central feature of its identity (Morrell, 1998). Work in many ways was a passport into the city without which African men would be imprisoned and deported back to the rural homesteads. Morrell observes that the use of the word 'boy', to address black men, in South African English (by white men, women, boys and girls) expressed the workplace reality where African men were subjected to menial work as servants (1998, p. 161). Used to refer to grown men, the word 'boy' was a diminutive that reflected the emasculation of black men. The word signalled a refusal to acknowledge growth and achievement of manhood amongst African men which when combined with servitude became a feature of black masculinity (ibid). The "new black masculinity was a working class masculinity" that had little chance of upward or geographical mobility and was minimally paid (ibid., p. 626). Matters were further complicated by the "racialisation of labour by the apartheid government that set off violent competition in the labour market" (ibid).

As the apartheid economy continued to expand and many urban African men held jobs, black masculinity expressed its opposition in politics. Despite this opposition being radical, its leaders and symbols of masculinity were that of professional men with higher education such as Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela (Morrell, 1998). In the 1970s the economy began to falter, repression rose and black men turned to violence as a coping strategy. Campbell (1992) holds the view that “apartheid and capitalism limited the power of working class men” (p. 618), undermined their masculinity thus, bringing about a crisis of African masculinity that among other ways was reasserted through violent means (ibid). The youth emerged as a “social force often becoming tsotsis, petty criminals and gangsters. It was in these groups, that an oppositional black masculinity first emerged and later in school and university students” Morrell, 1998, p. 627).

Political opposition created an important space for the reassertion of male dominance through the emphasis on violence as a means to resolve political differences (Campbell, 1992). Violence and masculinity intertwined in the macho culture of resistance to apartheid. Youth as ‘comrades’ characterised themselves as “hard, ruthless and disciplined with no time to rest and no time for pleasure, as living under the constant threat of death, and prepared to sacrifice their very lives for the struggle if need be. References to the political struggle were often articulated in highly militaristic terms” (Campbell, 1992, p. 624). Xaba (2001) has also spoken of a ‘struggle masculinity’ which he sees as having been a socially constructed gender identity and as the type of masculinity that became dominant among young, urban Africans during the struggle in the 1980s; whose main feature was opposition to the oppressive state’s (Bantu Education, worker exploitation, rents and rates) and political militancy (p. 108-109). Xaba’s ‘struggle masculinity’ is a better concept to work with than Morrell’s problematic distinction between ‘African’ and ‘Black’ masculinities. Morrell seems to be claiming that ‘African’ was rural but not ‘Black’ and that ‘Black’ was urban but not ‘African’. This study does not accept this distinction and holds that African and Black can be both rural and urban just as Morrell acknowledges the flux that happened between rural and urban spaces.

There is also growing literature on masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa that is concerned with how men in this country are grappling with the changes and challenges brought about by the transition from apartheid to democracy. An example is a book edited by Morrell (2001) that comprises a range of essays on masculinities. It is in the same text that Xaba (2001) for example, shown the clashes between what he has called ‘struggle

masculinity' of the 1980s and other forms of masculinities of post-apartheid South Africa. Xaba argues that the former has been deligitimised and is without political status in post-apartheid South Africa and in response has attempted to reassert itself by killing, robbing and raping.

Ratele (2001) working with a group of black professional men between the ages (24 and 30) used discourse analysis to analyse gender subjectivities and identities in language. He posed two questions: "What does it mean to be a black man in South Africa today? How does one become a black man?" (p. 241). To the former, answers included: being a black is what it has always been, very difficult; it is confusing; it means to be strong because being a *black person* is not easy; and it means being proud because now there's a chance "to show whites something" (ibid., p. 246). Responses to the latter question were not so clear and forthcoming. Ratele argues that this is because masculinities are difficult to grasp by those who do not theorise and research them (ibid., p. 247).

Morrell (2002) has studied the collective responses of men to gender transitions in South Africa. In this study he identifies three different categories of responses: those who "protect privilege" (p. 316-319), those "responding to a crisis of masculinity (p. 319-321)" and those who "fight for gender justice" (p. 317-319). There is also ongoing research in the Nkomazi district of Mpumalanga in which Sideris (2003) in Walker (2005) is working with a group of older men in a rural setting who reject violence, do 'women's work', engage with human and gender rights and have relinquished control over family income.

Research work in Kwa-Zulu Natal by Hunter (2003) on *isoka* masculinity (men who are successful with women) suggests that men are now more inclined to associate multiple sexual partners with irresponsibility than success. Hunter argues that this is partly due to the AIDS epidemic that has had an inhibiting effect on sexual practices. Lastly, Walker (2005) conducted in-depth interviews with young African working-class men in a study that explored new masculinities in contemporary South Africa. Walker argues that traditional versions and expressions of masculinity and male sexuality have been destabilised. There is a masculinity crisis in South Africa brought about by a transition to democracy and the adoption of the Constitution and a public discourse of human rights. Subsequently, being a man in South Africa is by necessity different yet "current models and practices of masculinity are historically embedded" (Walker, 2005, p.226).

Walker (2005) asserts that her research reflects the views of “a small group of men, who want and need to be different from their fathers, different from many of their peers—young men attempting to reclaim and remake their lives... Old masculinities have been exposed... Confusion and uncertainty around the nature of masculinity and male sexuality, and the expectations men have of themselves, each other and women are contested, and in crisis, giving rise to new notions of manhood” (p. 236). This study’s focus on ex-combatants expands the idea of ‘masculinities in crisis’ in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.5 Military masculinities

Considerable literature now exists that draws parallels between military activity and masculinity. Woodward (2000) highlights three issues that this literature raises. First, is the recognition that there are several models of military masculinity and that it is the relationship between these that is the basis for military organisation. Second, these models have been celebrated by different cultures at different times. Third, there are “connections between, on the one hand what Connell (1995) has called *hegemonic masculinity* and on the other hand, the dominant model of military masculinity, the warrior hero” (p.643).

Military organisations have been and continue to be salient sites for the construction of masculinities (Morgan, 1994; Mankayi, 2006). Military training is an attempt to reconstruct ‘boys’ into ‘men’ and ‘civilians’ into ‘soldiers’ and in that process it is men as soldiers who are constructed as ‘warrior heroes’ (Mankayi, 2006). Despite political, social and technological changes, the military still relies on the image of the ‘warrior’ for representations of masculinity (Morgan, 1994; Mankayi, 2006). Woodward writes:

“The warrior is physically fit and powerful. He is mentally strong and unemotional. He is capable of both solitary, individual pursuit of his goals and self denying contribution to toward the work of the team. He’s also a bit of a hero with a knack for picking up girls and is resolutely heterosexual. He is brave, adventurous, and prepared to take risks. Crucially, he possesses the abilities to conquer hostile environments, to cross unfamiliar terrain, and to lay claim to dangerous ground” (2000, p.643-44).

This image of the warrior hero, aside from being constructed in Western conventional armies

is “a cultural icon that informs military masculinity discourse and is not a tangible reality” (Woodward, 2000, p. 644). This however, is not to suggest that in MK the image of a warrior in the construction of soldiers and masculine identities may have not been invoked and mobilised as a model of heterosexual masculinity. The warrior hero is after all, “open to subversion, contradiction and reproduction” (ibid). Suttner (2008) has pointed out that in the ANC the importance placed on manhood appears to have been linked to a historical tradition that tied the struggle for freedom to heroic projects of previous generations that resisted conquest and oppression. In the conduct of armed struggle for example, cadres were “encouraged to see themselves ‘picking up the spear’ that had been dropped when Bambatha and others died in the last armed rebellion before Union, in 1906” (Suttner, 2008, p. 117).

The warrior image then, is the key symbol of masculinity depicted in popular films, heroic paintings, statues and comic books. Morgan notes that “facial expression, weaponry, and the stance all vividly embody aggression, courage and a capacity for violence. The uniform absorbs individual identity into a body of men, a timeless masculinity devoid of emotion and subordinate only to a high rationality” (1994, p. 166). The military and war provide an opportunity for men to detach from the feminine by leaving behind their mothers, wives, sisters, and children. War and soldiering have strong gendered connotations and sexual divisions of labour. For example, he notes that “men are expected to enlist into the military (in conventional armies), are expected to fight or be prepared to fight and undergo military training” while on the other hand “women are prohibited from these activities (Morgan, 1994, p. 166). These expectations and prohibitions define not only who does *what* but *who* is what” (ibid).

Masculinity is a powerful tool in the making of men into soldiers and the military an institutional sphere for its cultivation by requiring aggressiveness, competition and a censure of emotional expression while war provides the space for its validation (Cock, 1991). One of the links between the military and masculinity is the construction of the masculine body. Military training involves the disciplining and occasional mortification of the male body as it is shaped into a collective body of men (Morgan, 1994). In combat “the body is placed at risk, danger and damage, is subjected to unmediated physicality and deprived of food and sleep. The finality of physicality may be in the remains enclosed in a body bag” (Morgan, 1994, p. 167). The course of military training is further elaborated by a heterosexist culture that revolves around socially constructed bodily needs and functions that are linked to

hegemonic definitions of masculinity (Morgan, 1994). It is in this culture that heterosexuality is constructed in a way that directly links women's bodies with the bodily needs of men. Conversely, this culture generates the homophobia generally found in the military establishment (Morgan, 1994). As an intrinsic feature of the discourse of hegemonic masculinity, sexuality and the values attached to it, serve to establish a hierarchy within masculinity and acts as a policing mechanism for individual men (Conway, 2003). Men who display or are perceived to display 'effeminate' traits are positioned at the bottom of the masculinity hierarchy, are subordinated and marginalised (Conway, 2003). If in the military there is an ideological emphasis on homosociability and heterosexuality, it is often a complex ideological unity with several and sometimes contradictory strands.

Aside from this, there are contradictions within military life that point to complexities of the military institution. The individual warrior hero model exists in contrast to the heroism of "brothers in arms" (Morgan, 1994). The individual warrior hero is often portrayed in posters, brochures and recruitment literature as celebrating individualism and independent endeavour. The rural location provides a backdrop and challenge against which the infantry soldier as the warrior hero is pitted; a location in which emotions such as excitement, fear and a sense of a challenge can be stimulated and overcome (Woodward, 2000). Most of these images can be found in conventional armies but are however not exclusive to them as the book cover of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* by (Bopela and Luthuli, 2005) illustrate. See appendix 1 for this image.

The contradiction is that the long standing trend has favoured the heroism of "brothers in arms" and not the individualism of the warrior hero (Morgan, 1994). Writing as far back as 1945, Robert Nisbet observed that the military is primarily concerned with the attainment of its own ends. For this reason "nothing in military life is to be left to spontaneous adjudication by the individual, life is made a matter of precise regulation" (Nisbet, 1945, p. 264). Similarly Arkin & Dobrofsky (1978) assert that in actual fact the military's definitions and expectations become the individual's definitions and expectation. The image of the masculine warrior hero with its attendant individualism appears to be simply unattainable, at least for two reasons. First, as has been pointed out, the military makes no provisions for individualism. Second, the warrior image is a normative definition of masculinity that offers a standard of what men ought to be (Connell, 1995) in the military or at least for the infantry soldier. The problem is that very few men can match the standards of this masculinity. Military operations, despite the emphasis placed on the warrior hero, generally discourage individualism and instead

heroism may be identified within particular units or divisions than with any one individual. This makes contemporary armies an ideal site for the construction of abstract masculinities (Morgan, 1994).

In fact the “army does not help you to know yourself: it teaches you to subjugate yourself and your own personality to something much bigger, which is why it can’t cope with non-conformists. In a way it brainwashes you: you not only wear a uniform, but you are, and you have to be, mentally in uniform yourself” (Parker cited Cock, 1991, p. 94). Part of the mental uniform is submission to authority, aggression toward the enemy and dehumanisation not only of the enemy but also of the self is inculcated in the making of soldiers (Cock, 1991). Gear (2002b) makes the same point when citing Jochelson (1987) who maintains that “dehumanisation begins with the regulation crew-cut and issuing of uniform and continues with verbal and physical abuse as the individual’s self-image is reshaped. Men resign themselves to daily routinised activity over which they have no control, and accept the overall, unchangeable authority of the drill instructor and the military” (p. 81). This construction of the soldier identity is essentially gendered such that notions of masculinity are married with the process of training a soldier in which aggression against the enemy is fused with masculinity and sexual virility. In this process, women and femininity are regarded and despised as the enemy, the antithesis of the soldier (Gear, 2002b).

Not all soldier trainees respond the same way to military life and training. While some remain stubbornly insubordinate, some abscond; become bored and frustrated by what they take as a waste of time and still others commit suicide. In combat, the military’s ultimate manliness test, many experience it as chaotic, frightening and noisy. The acts of killing become nightmares that are repeated over and over again in sweats and flashbacks (Gear, 2002b). Finally, research on the making of gendered militarised identities in South Africa’s non-conventional liberation forces has been limited (Gear, 2002b) with the exception being Cock’s (1991) work that began to investigate the position of women in MK. In perhaps yet another limited manner, this study contributes in the exploration of the constructions of militarised masculine identities in MK.²

² There is a critical text on military masculinities, which I unfortunately was only able to access a day before this thesis was due for submission and was therefore unable to use in this study. See Higate, P. (2003). *Military masculinities: Identity and the state*. USA: Praeger Publishers

This chapter has attempted a review of literature on masculinity by first outlining what could be called its historical development that has its roots in Europe and the United States of America. The chapter also explores South African literature on the study of masculinities as well as the association between masculinities and the military. While this attempt is made the chapter comes short in incorporating recent literature that attends to the relationship between gender and militarisation. This shortcoming is as a result of a difficulty in accessing this literature as the footnote below indicates. On the other hand, the chapter fails to include wider literature on, for example, contemporary Turkey and Israel. The following chapter outlines the study's research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Purpose of the study

Many scholars have pointed to the relationship between the military and constructions of masculinity. That is, the military as a prominent site in which particular types of masculine identities are constructed. South African literature on masculinity and on the military has given little attention in exploring this relationship. Some work in this area has been done by Cock (1991), Conway (2003) and Mankayi (2006) but this has been in the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) respectively. None of the research has directly explored constructions of masculinity in the context of the ANC military wing Umkhonto weSizwe. This study attempts to make a contribution to the understanding of masculinity as a social construct that shifts and changes depending on the context of its construction.

2.2 Conceptual framework

Broadly the study is theoretically framed by social constructionism. This is to say that the study holds the view that one is not born a man; men participate in social life as gendered beings where their masculinities are constructed within a social and historical context (Kimmel & Messner, 1998). Goffman's (1971) dramaturgical model has merit in this study. In this frame persons are seen as 'doing' masculinity rather than it being done on them or happening to them. Masculinity is therefore, to be achieved or worked at and although it is still socially constructed, the work of construction is not of causal powers attributed to some structure. The construction of masculinities is contingent and occasioned by a structure, process, candidates or discourse but the construction is accomplished by individuals as agents within a particular structure, time and space (Coleman, 1990). The shortcoming of Goffman's model, notes Coleman, is that it makes people out to be actors who are continuously and self-consciously pursuing strategies of impression management.

To counter this shortcoming, Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' are useful. The concept of field requires recognition of the centrality of social relations to social

analysis. A field is “a structured system of social positions – occupied by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants.” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 85). A field is simultaneously a system of forces between occupied positions that are internally structured by power relations such that there are positions of domination, subordination and and/or equivalence (Jenkins, 1992). Lastly, fields are defined by the stakes that are at stake in the field such as housing, education, lifestyle, employment, politics, social class and so forth (Jenkins, 1992).

For the purposes of this work various fields can be delineated. First, there is the oppressive field of the apartheid state that can be taken to have been the dominant field of power in South African society. It is in relation to this field that the resistance field of the ANC and its allies existed which was, among other institutions, constituted by Congress of South African Students (COSAS), Amabutho, the ANC underground and MK. Central to this study, a field of gender relations (that includes relations among men) must be added in which power relations are at play that produce positions of domination and subordination.

Habitus, on the other hand, is a device that attempts to overcome the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism. Literally, the word is Latin and refers to a habitual/typical condition, state of appearance, particularly of the body (Jenkins, 1992). Habitus is “an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted.” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 74).

Bourdieu retains the relationship between habitus and the body inherent in the concept’s original meaning. Dispositions and generative classificatory schemes that are the essence of habitus are embodied in real human beings (Jenkins, 1992). Disposition is used by Bourdieu to include the spectrum of cognitive and affective factors such as thinking and feeling. There exists a relationship between habitus and the human body where habitus is embodied in human beings (Jenkins, 1992).

This embodiment can happen in the following ways: (a) the habitus exists insofar as it is inside the heads of actors; (b) the habitus exists in, through and because of the practices of actors and their interaction with each other and the rest of their environment: ways of talking, moving, and doing things etc. (Jenkins, 1992). In this way the habitus is not just manifest in behaviour, it is an integral part of it. Although habitus is embodied in actors it is a social

phenomenon. There must therefore, be a distinction between habitus as embodied in individuals and habitus as a collective, homogenous phenomenon adjusted for and by social groups or classes.

For this study habitus can, in the first instance, be understood to have been acquired by the respondents through experience and explicit socialisation (Jenkins, 1992); the lived experience under the apartheid regime; subsequent political involvement and politicisation. Following from this, the respondents' life and subsequent experience can be taken to have been a process of adjustment between subjectivity (the embodied habitus/socialised subjectivity) and objective reality (of oppression, military life and post-liberation South Africa).

Secondly, habitus is a shared body of dispositions and classificatory categories that is the outcome of collective history; it is a product of history that produces individual and collective practices in accordance with the schemes generated by history (Jenkins, 1992). For this work, this is to say that habitus was the collective and shared understanding, by oppressed people, of the world that was engineered by apartheid ideologies. Finally then, the embodiment of habitus by individuals and collectives is an embodiment of a history which they are part of and it is in the context of this history that human action is generated that produces a range of probabilities allowed and constrained by that very history (Jenkins, 1992). For Bourdieu and Wacquant the relation then between field and habitus is twofold. First, it is a "relation of conditioning where the field structures habitus" (1992, p. 127). Second, it is a "relation of knowledge in which habitus contributes to making the field a meaningful world worth investing in" (ibid.).

There are parallels between Bourdieu's concept of field and Connell's hegemonic masculinity framework that informs the way that this study conceptualises masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type that is everywhere and always the same. It is instead that masculinity that occupies a hegemonic position in a given arrangement of gender relations and is always contestable (Connell, 1995). This means that the relations that construct masculinity are dialectical and it is for this reason that acknowledgement of different types of masculinity ought not to be taken as fixed categories or alternative lifestyles. This relational approach provides a framework that shows the practices that construct and uphold patterns of masculinity, particularly in the current Western gender order

(Connell, 1995). The framework has two types of relationships—hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity on the one hand, marginalisation and authorisation on the other that hold between groups of men. Hegemony has been considered, subordination, complicity and marginalisation will be considered in turn.

In contemporary European and American society, the most important case of hegemony would be the dominance of heterosexual men and the subordination of homosexual men. This relationship is more than the stigmatisation of homosexual men but involves an array of material practices (Connell, 1995). Although the most conspicuous, gay masculinity is not the only subordinated masculinity as there are also cases of heterosexual men and boys who are excluded from parameters of legitimacy, the process of which is marked by verbal abuse (Connell, 1995).

Similar to normative definitions of masculinity, men who strictly uphold hegemonic masculinity practices may be quite small yet a majority of men benefit from the advantages of hegemonic masculinity and the overall subordination of women. Complicity is that relationship between those men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity but benefit from the hegemonic project without having to face the tensions of risks of spearheading the project (Connell, 1995).

Connell notes that hegemony, subordination and complicity are relations internal to the gender order and that when other factors such as “class and race interplay with gender further relations between masculinities are formed” (1995, p. 80). For example, he notes that in a “white supremacist context, black masculinities play a symbolic role in the construction of white gender” (ibid.). This is what seems to have been at play in apartheid South Africa as much as it was in right-wing politics in the USA Connell (1995), where the fantasy of a black rapist played a role in the sexual politics of whites. Conversely, white hegemonic masculinity upheld institutional oppression and physical terror that framed the making of black masculinities in communities (Connell, 1995). Marginalisation therefore, refers to the relations between dominant and subordinated classes and/or ethnic groups and is relative to the “*authorisation* of hegemonic masculinity” (ibid., p. 80). Connell’s hegemony framework for thinking about and theorising masculinities is adopted in this study for its relational approach that reveals the doings that construct patterns of masculinities.

Both Kimmel (1994) and Connell (1995) provide definitions of masculinity that are in line

with Connell's relational framework. For Connell masculinity is "simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (1995, p.71). Kimmel on the other hand sees masculinity as a "constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationship with ourselves, with others and, with the world. Manhood is neither static nor timeless, it is historical" (1994, p.120). As a working definition the study adopts and reworks both such that in this study:

Masculinity is a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our practices in gender relations. The effects of these practices manifest in bodily experience, personality and culture such that masculinity is neither static nor timeless, but is historical.

2.2.1 Research design

The study is designed as a qualitative in-depth interview study adopting a narrative inquiry approach. Chase (2005) describes narrative inquiry "as a particular type of –subtype – of qualitative inquiry. Contemporary narrative inquiry can be characterised as an amalgam of interdisciplinary approaches, and analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods- all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them" (p. 6510). Narrative is adopted here for two reasons. First, narrative inquiry is sensitive to and interested in how to treat the interviewee as narrator both during and after the interview for researchers that collect data through in-depth narrative interviews (Chase, 2005). This is a matter that is important when working with former soldiers whose narratives may be sensitive, emotional and highly political. This is particularly true in South Africa, as much as it may be in other neighbouring countries, where former liberation soldiers were once heroes from the 1960s to the 1990s and yet in post-liberation South Africa appear to be inconsequential civilians mostly living in poverty in a country governed by the political party that called them into soldiering. Secondly, narrative inquiry attends to five different analytical lenses which are all concerned with a thorough, sensitive and critical fashion of dealing with empirical material (Chase, 2005). The sociological approach is adopted in this study.

This approach is used by sociologists who are interested in "identity work" that individuals engage in as they construct themselves within specific organisational, institutional, discursive

and local cultural contexts. “A major conceptual touchstone in this sociological approach is the ‘deprivatisation’ of personal experience. This approach highlights the wide range of institutional and organisational settings—some more and some less coercive—that shape ‘the selves we live by’. A person’s movement across a variety of settings creates further constraints as well as a plethora of options for narrating the self in a post-modern world” (Chase, 2005, p. 659). This approach links particularly well with Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’ and the fact that the study explores masculinities in different contexts and times. Lastly, the sociological approach attends to narratives as lived experience and is therefore, interested in the *how* as much as in what of storytelling.

2.2.2 Central research question

How were MK ex-combatants masculine identities constructed and reconstructed within changing contexts from their politicisation, in MK in exile and again in post-liberation South Africa?

2.2.3 Theory questions

1. How did the respondents’ political lives begin?
2. What were the resources (practical and discursive) utilised to construct combatant masculinities in MK?
3. Were the respondents successfully demobilised and reintegrated into society on their return to South Africa?
4. How did their militarised masculinities adapt in post-liberation South Africa?

2.2.4 Sampling

Non-probability purposive sampling was used in this study, meaning that respondents were chosen due to their experience as soldiers and now former soldiers and their willingness to be part of the research. The respondents were between the ages of 33 and 41 at the time of the interviews. Three of the respondents were unemployed, one was temporarily employed and two were doing an internship at the ‘Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory’ which was

also their source of income. All respondents had dependents, the least being three dependents and most being five dependents. Only one respondent had completed matric and the rest were disrupted while they were either in standard 7 or standard 8. Lastly, the respondents were from Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Nyanga.

2.2.5 Data collection

Semi-structured one-to-one in-depth interviews were conducted using an interview schedule (a list of questions to *guide* the interviews) and recorded using a Dictaphone. The first set of interviews was conducted between 24 July 2007 and 31 August 2007. The interviews were mostly conducted in my apartment with the exception of two that were conducted at the University of Cape Town. Two interviews were conducted with each of the six respondents. Three of the respondents had been MK soldiers in exile, two had trained as MK soldiers but worked in the ANC underground in South Africa and the last had been an SDU member. Although ten interviews were conducted only six were used for the study. This is because after conducting the interviews I realized that due to the limitations of a Masters Research study it would not be possible to use and integrate all the data material with its varied experiences between the exiles, the underground cadre and the SDU cadre

2.2.6 Data analysis

The following analytical lenses follow from the narrative inquiry approach discussed above.

First, narrative researchers approach narrative (oral or written) as a distinct type of discourse that highlights the idiosyncrasy of human practice and events rather than common properties. Narrative is seen as retrospective meaning making; a way of understanding one's and other's actions; and of organising events into a meaningful whole (Chase, 2005). The merit of this lens is the attention it gives to individuals' unique behaviour and making of meaning. This idiosyncratic perspective was held during the interviews, the reading of transcripts and their interpretation as a way of acknowledging and retaining each respondent's lived experience.

Second, narrative inquiry views narratives as both enabled and constrained by a host of social structures and circumstances. This lens ties a thread with Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' as

a collective homogeneous phenomenon in that while recognising that every narrative is particular, it also attends to the similarities and differences across narratives (Chase, 2005). While the first lens concerns itself with the idiosyncrasies of each narrative this lens gives room to similarities and differences in respondents' experience that allowed me to take note of themes in individual narratives and across narratives.

Third, narratives are also taken as verbal action, that is, when a person tells a story they are in fact constructing, shaping and performing the self, experience and reality. Salient in this lens is the narrator's voice that draws attention to how and what is being communicated as well as to the subject positionalities or social locations from which the narrators speaks (Chase, 2005). This analytical lens required me to be constantly conscious that although the respondents spoke in the 'now' their narratives were drawn from a historical context. My questions were thus, designed in a way that immersed the respondents in that historical time frame memory mode, as it were.

Fourth, is a lens that speaks to the researcher's interpretation and presentation of the narratives under study. Here the four lenses outlined above apply to the researcher as much as they do to the 'researched'. This means that researchers when interpreting and presenting their work also assume the position of narrator. "As narrators, then, researchers develop meaning out of, and some sense of order in, the material they studied, they develop their own voice(s) as they construct other's voices and realities; they narrate "results" in ways that are both enabled and constrained by the social resources and circumstances embedded in their disciplines, cultures, and historical moments, and they write or perform their work for particular audiences" (Chase, p. 657). Finally, Tesch's (1990) approach of qualitative data analysis was adopted and is presented here.

2.2.7 Ethical considerations

De Vos (1998) maintains that participants can be harmed physical and/or emotionally in research and that it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect the respondent from harm of whatever nature. Taking cognizance of the sensitive nature of the stories of ex-combatants during their time as soldiers and that retelling these stories might lead to emotional instability funds were set aside for psychological intervention should any of the respondents had felt the

need for it. Moreover respondents were made aware that retelling their stories might evoke emotional and painful memories. Care was also taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents during and after the research by using pseudonyms and not revealing confidential information shared in interviews without the consent of the respondents.

This chapter has outlined the research methods employed in the study. Goffman and Coleman (1990) provide the theoretical framework that holds the construction of masculinities to be contingent and occasioned by a structure, process and discourse but where the construction itself is achieved by individuals as agents in a structure, time and space. Bourdieu (1992) adds to this theoretical frame by positing that persons exist within confines of power relations be they a political or social system, the military or a democratic dispensation. Bourdieu (1992) also locates individuals in a historical frame and in fact sees individuals as agents who embody a particular history and interact with each other and the environments thus, producing a range of probabilities allowed and constrained by that very history. Connell's relational understanding and approach to the construction of masculinities was a logical fit that complemented Bourdieu's (1992) concepts. Finally, the chapter outlined the narrative analysis used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE: HISTO-POLITICAL CONTEXT: EDUCATION, POLITICS AND RESISTANCE

We must strive to win the fight against the non-White in the classroom instead of losing it on the battlefield. Administrator of the Transvaal, 1961 in Johnson (1982).

There is a large body of literature documenting the histories of resistance in South Africa against the oppressive forces of apartheid that have their origin in colonialism and imperialism. These histories include those of the African National Congress and its military wing Umkhonto weSizwe (See for example: Karis & Gerhart, 1977; Meli, 1988; Ellis & Sechaba, 1992; Lienberg et.al, 1994; Lodge, 1994; Jarvis-Shean, 2001; McKinley, 1997), the United Democratic Front and its student alliance COSAS (See for example: Seekings, 1993; Cobbet & Cohen, 1988) and the general suffering and dehumanisation of black people under colonial and apartheid rule (See for example: Bundy, 1979; Hamilton, Huntley, Alexander, Guiaraes, & James, 2001; Terreblanche, 2002; MacDonald, 2006).

A review of these histories reveals the following: (a) that the colonial, imperial and apartheid ideologies were set to hold the majority of South Africans in perpetual servitude for their interests in economic, political, social, and religious institutions; (b) in the face of ever increasing injustices, dehumanisation, racial segregation, economic constraints, political repression, engineered poverty, over-crowding, poor education, health and a host of other denied human rights radical black opposition emerged after non-violent attempts failed dismally and (c) the radical opposition that emerged out of the ANC-UDF alliance of the 1980's had its foundations in community struggles that marked 'popular revolts' or what became known as 'a people's war' that mobilised and organised around political, economic, social and educational issues.

Focusing on education this chapter aims to set the histo-political context for the study. There are three reasons for this. First, the choice is informed by the fact that the respondents of this study began their political lives when they were school students in the 1980s. Second, although among many other political, economic and social issues for which the struggle for national liberation was waged, education from 1976 played a central role in the broader

struggle (Levin, 1991). Third, the education struggle, to a large extent, placed the youth (who may have been at school, university or not receiving education at the time) at the forefront of the struggle.

3.1 Education, politics and economics

From the outset the British education system was designed to be an instrument of social control. Through the policy of deliberate “anglicisation” (p. 216) for the Afrikaners, in 1812 an English system of free education was begun with English used as the language of instruction (Johnson, 1982). The result was a near extinction of Dutch as a medium of instruction in secondary schooling and consequently the Afrikaners viewed the English system to be working to their disadvantage and resisted it. For the Africans, the British, after 1853, implemented a policy of “civilising” (ibid., p. 217). The government of the day directed resources to some 175 mission societies for the furthering of education for the poorer classes (Johnson, 1982). As a result of the liberal ideals of the time, most schools were mixed serving Coloureds, Whites and Blacks with no colour bar (Johnson, 1982).

The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in 1867 and gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886 radically and permanently changed the political and economic configuration in the South African colonies (Johnson, 1982; Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989). Economically, the discovery rapidly transformed South Africa from a rural agricultural country to an urbanising and industrialising economy. Politically, these economic changes brought about ethnic tensions that resulted in the institutionalisation of ethnic stratification (Johnson, 1982).

Urbanisation and industrialisation of South Africa led not only to ruthless conflicts between the English and Afrikaners but also between Africans and whites. Job, wealth and economic opportunities were a source of struggle between whites and especially poor Afrikaners and Africans (Johnson, 1982). Soon a laborious opposition to the education of Africans ensued partly because of the view that “an uneducated man . . . can be exploited as an economic asset” and in part to protect poor whites (Wilson & Thompson (1975) in Johnson 1982, p. 216). Education was used to prepare white children for exclusive access to the rewards of a new and wealthy society, on the one hand, and to limit African’s ability to compete for these rewards, on the other. The Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education in 1936, after

finding a marked disparity between school standards of whites and Africans, concluded that “the education of the white child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the black child for a subordinate society” (Wilson & Thompson (1975) in Johnson, 1982, p. 217).

1948 marked the culmination of Afrikaner nationalism that saw the National Party (NP) take the seat of power in the political history of South Africa. Prior to this, the National Party had, for about nine to ten years, been conducting research on education. In February 1948, close to the General Elections, the study results were published as a manifesto for Christian National Education (CNE) (Johnson, 1982). According to Johnson (1982) while the focus of the document was Afrikaner education, it also considered the implications of CNE for the education of Africans (p. 218). He further notes that the English strongly objected to this “Afrikaner cultural imperialism” to no avail (ibid). After completing the centralisation of white education, CNE was rigorously pursued. African education in comparison was quicker to centralise given that Africans were relatively powerless. Shortly after the elections the NP appointed the Eiselen Commission to formulate a policy for African education (Johnson, 1982). The strong objections to this policy made by Africans before the commission were ignored by the report. Subsequently, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was passed.

3.2 Education and apartheid

Afrikaner rule was supported and guided by Afrikaner nationalist ideology (see Adam and Giliomee, 1979; Du Toit & Giliomee, 1983; Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989; Thompson, 1985; Moodie, 1975) that laid claim to land and Afrikaner sovereignty to that land, on the one hand. On the other, relations between white and black South Africans were determined by apartheid as an operative ideology in ways that advanced Afrikaner rule (Giliomee & Schlemmer, 1989). The structure and content of education reflected, supported and legitimated the apartheid stratification system and perpetuated the domination of the Afrikaners over Africans. In addition to being free, education for Afrikaans and English children was compulsory from age 7 to 16 or at receiving the school leaving certificate. Primary and secondary expenditure was shared by both provincial and central government in equal proportions (Johnson, 1982, p. 218).

In comparison, education for Africans was neither compulsory nor free. Overall, African education compared to white education was phenomenally poor, classes were overcrowded, teachers were inadequately trained and there was a chronic shortage of books and equipment (Johnson, 1982; Nkomo, 1990). Consequently, students who managed to progress through the system were inadequately prepared to break the cycle of their economic and social subordination (Johnson, 1982; Nkabinde 1997).

3.3 Education and socialisation

South African education by the nature of its content i.e. norms, values, myths, beliefs and ideology acted as an agent of social control that legitimated and entrenched segregation (Johnson, 1982). Johnson argues that at the heart of apartheid's ideology was the notion of a superior European civilisation. Although not always explicitly articulated, apartheid's cultural chauvinism presented Europe as the birthplace of mankind's most outstanding accomplishment. Furthermore, European descendents were taken to have special entitlement to the fruits of "their" civilisation. To the extent that both whites and Africans accepted the myths that supported apartheid they were integrated into its value system and became compliant with its aims (Johnson, 1982).

Textbooks for white children, for example, carried messages such as:

"It is actually not only the white South African's skin which is different from that of the non-white. The white stands at a higher level of civilisation and is more developed. The whites must so live, so learn, and so work that we do not sink to the level of civilisation of non-whites" (Robertson and Whitten, 1978 cited in Johnson, 1982, p. 223).

On the other hand teachers were urged to:

"Deliberately emphasise the necessity for the two white "races" to stand together in order to meet the rising Bantu nationalism. A white consciousness should be inculcated, and children should realise that they are the bearers of Christian Western civilisation. The fight for self-preservation and the right of self-determination of the

whites in South Africa is a special task of education” (Hunter, 1966 cited in Johnson, 1982, p. 223).

Finally, the apartheid education system had implications for self-image through its indoctrination of white students with the myth of European superiority while impressing a negative image on African students. Through this, was also promoted a psychological climate in which African resistance to domination was dulled (Johnson, 1982).

3.4 The education struggle

Christie (1985) notes that teachers were in fact the first to oppose Bantu Education whose immediate effect for them included working double sessions; an increase in classroom size; no improvement on salaries and that they would be government employees (p. 226). It was on this backdrop, Christie asserts, that the ANC, in 1954 launched a ‘Resist Apartheid Campaign’ in which Bantu Education was among but not central in the six issues: the Group Areas Act, pass laws, the Native Resettlement Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the anti-trade union measures covered by the campaign (p. 227). Unable to attend to all six matters the ANC delegated the Bantu Education issue to the Women’s League and the Congress Youth League and from which came a school boycott. The boycott went ahead and the government responded by saying that it would expel any student who were not at school by 25 April; the boycott came to an end (Christie, 1985).

In 1959 apartheid was extended to universities with the Extension of University Education Act being passed in that year. Christie notes that Fort Hare was to only register Xhosa students and two new ‘tribally-based’ university colleges were established—the University College of Zululand at Ngoye for Zulu speakers; the University College of the North at Turfloop for the Sotho, Tswana, and Venda people. The University College of the Western Cape was designated for Coloured people and Indians to the University College of Durban Westville (p. 231-232). These measures were mainly symbolically resisted by, for example, the University of the Witwatersrand and University of Cape Town declaring a commitment to be ‘open universities’ and holding ‘academic freedom’ lectures each year (Christie, 1985, p. 232).

Beyond the education struggle the 1960s saw the climax of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) rivalry that culminated in the Sharpsville massacre. For this history see (Meli, 1988; Jarvis-Shean, 2001; Karis and Gerhart, 1977; Lodge, 1994). After a series of boycotts and strikes that followed the Sharpsville massacre the government responded fiercely once again and by 8 April the National Party declared both the ANC and PAC to be unlawful organisations (Lodge, 1994).

3.5 Black Consciousness and youth politicisation

After the ban the 1960s became relatively quiet years in terms of general resistance to apartheid but there continued to be unrest in schools across the country. Strikes and boycotts continued and so did reports of students being punished or expelled from school for being insubordinate and for misconduct (Christie, 1985). The political tip-toeing of the 1960s ended with the establishment in 1969 of the university-based South African Students Organisation (SASO) and a new political force— Black Consciousness (BC). BC advocated for a rejection of white liberal supervision and support, the assertion of a black cultural identity, the psychological liberation from chains of inferiority and solidarity of all people of colour. BC, although organizationally weak, its ideological content appealed to “urban youth feeding in the frustration and deprivation they experienced and providing an alternative” (Hyslop, 1988, p.185). The BC slogan ‘Black man, you are on your own’ seems to have resonated with the student’s frustrations (Christie, 1985).

The ideological content of BC was important in providing a new political awareness that was heightened by other internal and external factors that gave the impression that the apartheid project was isolated and therefore, could be challenged (Hyslop, 1988). BC incorporated in its philosophy a range of views but chiefly stood for the rejection of white domination in all its political, economic, psychological and cultural forms (Christie, 1985; Ranuga, 1986). Hook (2004) maintains that, like Frantz Fanon (1968) Steve Biko (1978) too stressed the salience of a “healthy subjectivity, of a robust, proud and positive self-image as crucial both in creating of solidarity amongst the oppressed and in empowering one’s self to resist oppression (p. 104).

Political conscientisation was for Biko the key strategy for Black Consciousness.

Conscientisation included 'protest talk', the talk about the circumstances of oppression. Biko in his own words: 'We try to get the Black man in conscientisation to grapple realistically with their problems...to develop what one might call an awareness, a physical awareness of their situation...to be able to analyze it, and to provide answers for themselves.' (Hook, 2004, p. 105-106). BC called for solidarity among all black people irrespective of social, political and economic differences and was very influential in the resistance that continued on campuses and schools (Christie, 1982). By 1976 the political conjuncture, the structural reorganization of the education and changes within the political culture of urban black youth combined to give rise to a critical situation (Hyslop, 1988, p. 186). The spark and last straw was provided by the education department's insistence of the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction as a manoeuvre to reassert Afrikaner cultural priorities. The history of the Soweto uprising that resulted in a nationwide revolt is well recorded and will not be dealt with here. See for example (Brink et al., 2006; Hlongwane, Ndlovu and Mutloatse, 2006; Magubane, 1986).

3.6 Youth militancy

The beginning of 1980s saw a renewed series of boycotts when school students from Coloured and African schools together with black student from five campuses, a total of approximately one hundred thousand students boycotted classes from April 1980 to January 1981. The boycott was over what had been a continuous deterioration of education conditions but soon embodied wider political issues and this marked the beginning of the dominant role that students would play (Hyslop, 1988; Mufson, 1991). Hyslop (1988) holds the view that the signature of the 1984 students was that through COSAS they had a real national organisation that could call for action at a national level (p. 192). This made it possible for COSAS to have, by 1984, a well structured organisation with branches with approximately fifty centres mainly in the Eastern Cape and Southern Transvaal (Mufson, 1991).

The strategy of COSAS leadership was that they used 'short-term' demands on education as a basis for mobilizing students and then using the level of organisation as a platform for action on national political issues (Hyslop, 1988; Lodge, 1991). That said the degree of organisation in COSAS should not be given too much weight. COSAS was a mass movement insofar as scores of students responded to its calls rather than a leadership fraction organized

into structures with regular and disciplined activities (Hyslop, 1988).

In August of 1984 the state held elections for the Coloured and Indian tricameral parliament. Seeing these as dummy institutions and rejecting them on that basis, COSAS and the National Forum (NF) called for boycotts as a strategy of protesting the elections. COSAS subsequently began to gain momentum nationally as the number of schools participating in boycotts increased. (Hyslop, 1988).

This increase in momentum propelled community, trade unions and political leaders to express solidarity with the students. A successful stay-away was staged in the East Rand in support of school students 'demands' that provided the platform for the boycott (Hyslop, 1988). Another boycott, the Southern Transvaal stay-away was launched in support of student's demands on Students Representative Councils (SRCs), an end to age limits but also wider economic demands such as an end to rent and bus fare increases. The student worker solidarity that was consciously organized was an inroad for the student movement (Hyslop, 1988). The interplay between the education struggles with the broader political struggle brought school student, university students and youth who were out of school into more clashes with the police. Although they were mainly at the receiving end of state violence, the youth of the 1980s were also agents of collective violence.

Struggling against oppression and responding to repression the youth engaged in acts of violence as perceived means of bringing about social justice (Marks, 2001). Political violence of a particular kind McKendrick & Hoffman called 'revolutionary violence' suggested that violence was in most instances directed at the state, its property, personnel and allies (1990, p.470). This 'revolutionary violence' which often included killing was carried out heeding the ANC's call for ungovernability (Marks, 2001). Seekings (1993) is of the view that in fact the ANC at this time "encouraged almost any form of militancy as contributing to the intensification of a 'people's war' against the state where the youth were the heroic combatants" (p.97) Take as an example, Oliver Tambo's speech in 1985 at a Kwabwe Conference:

"...the battles are raging in our country. The war of liberation continues and it is intensifying with each passing day. The time has come for us to acquire weapons to pay the minority regime back with its own coin. We cannot die alone. We cannot bury alone...We must

respond to the reactionary violence of the enemy with our revolutionary violence” (Marks, 2001, p. 89).

In the first instance then, youth comrades saw themselves as ‘home defenders’ and thus conceived of their violence as being counter-violence in the face of obvious state violence (Sitas, 1992). Their role as warriors (Marks, 2001) was given more salience than that of school students because of warlike activities that unfolded in the streets. Sitas continues to say that the youth as comrades “obeyed codes of a ‘metaphor’: they are ‘soldiers of the liberation movement’ and a militarisation of their subculture is endemic to any of their gatherings- military and militant songs, gestures, artificial (but increasingly real) guns, rhythm, khaki attire: they see themselves as the movement’s combatants unto death” (1992, p.635). Their song compositions depicted the self as hero, liberator, and MK cadre crossing the border and back and shooting and fighting (ibid.).

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter has been concerned with outlining the histo-political context with a focus on education. In this way the chapter has shown that from the beginning of the colonial project right through to apartheid, education was used as instrument for white advancement and a weapon for black domination, the residue of which still has real effects for many South African today. In setting the context for the study, the chapter locates the issues explored in the following chapters in history as well as the respondents firstly as youth and school students, as MK recruits and liberation soldiers and finally as returned soldiers. The following chapter focuses on the respondents as youth and their politicisation.

CHAPTER FOUR: YOUTH POLITICISATION

In the 1980s when the respondents of this research were politically active school students the ANC was still banned therefore, making its political activities take the form of underground work. The respondents were involved in the ANC underground, and the Congress of South African (COSAS) and Amabutho which were not banned. The respondents political work can thus, be said to have been publicly undertaken and concealed; legal and illegal.

Suttner (2008) points out that underground political work by its nature and organization is very different from other forms of political practice. Given that operatives working underground often did so in very difficult circumstances their survival under these conditions required that they know very well the reasons for their sacrifice. In other words, Suttner maintains, underground work required a degree of political consciousness and political maturity. He further points out that those who were in command structures were expected to possess and demonstrate high level of discipline, in-depth political understanding and a willingness to sacrifice, a capacity to mobilize and conduct political activity, to train and deal with the unexpected. That said, within the underground units, professionalism varied depending on level, character and effectiveness of training and group cohesion with its command structures or 'handlers'. Nevertheless, advice of mature cadres often served as effectively as training courses for young and/or inexperienced operatives (Suttner, 2008, p. 92). Lastly, there existed hierarchical structures in the underground that were necessitated by the fact that the bulk of underground activities were military or quasi-military in nature (Suttner, 2008).

The main concern of this chapter is to explore how the respondents of this research came to political consciousness within the context of the liberation struggle. The chapter begins with a look at the concept of youth as it was understood in the 1980s, a time when the respondents were youth and school students.

The chapter then looks at the ways in which state violence both in the private and public sphere impacted on the respondents. It is these experiences that appear to have propelled the respondents toward political involvement. The chapter then follows the respondents through various interconnected political structures (COSAS, Amabutho and the ANC underground)

that set off particular processes of politicisation. Finally, an attempt is made to point out the interrelations between the respondents' politicisation and a masculinity discourse.

4.1 The youth

There is an accentuated importance of the 'youth' in most accounts of South African resistance politics of the 1980s and yet agreement as to who or what this category constituted is hard to find. Some of the reasons for this lack of agreement include: a limited number of studies on 'youth politics', youth organisations, action and attitudes, conceptual confusion and ambiguity (Seekings, 1993, p. xi). Furthermore, Seekings notes that in South Africa the youth category was not a sociological or demographic construct but a political one. Among other conditions, being young and politically active was seen as necessary for inclusion in the youth category. Moreover, the category of youth was almost exclusively used to refer to young African people with the occasional inclusion of Coloured and Indian people. The use of the term to refer to young white South Africans was a rare exception (Seekings, 1993). South Africa had white teenagers and black youth. "Teenager is a term devoid of political meaning; youth is laden with it" (Seekings, 1993, p. xii). Given that the category of youth was a political construct it makes no sense to speak of 'youth politics'. "There is no such thing as 'youth politics' in terms of a discrete, let alone homogeneous, sociological category of people which thinks, organizes and acts, politically, in specific and distinctive ways" (Seekings, 1993, p.xiv). Therefore, 'youth politics' is used in this study, as Seekings does in his, in a 'general descriptive sense' (ibid.) and the analysis of which should examine the basis of the construction of the category 'youth' and for the purposes of this work, the comrade identity which the respondents of this research strongly identified with.

4.2 Two stereotypes of the youth

In the 1980s the youth was widely depicted in two contrasting ways. On the one hand the youth were presented as politicized and militant therefore, viewing the youth in sympathetic terms. On the other hand the youth was portrayed as destructive and rebellious and thus, hostile (Sitas, 1992; Seekings, 1993). These stereotypes characterized the youth in relation to particular types of behaviour, motivations and effects (Seekings, 1993).

4.3 ‘Youth as apocalypse’

The stereotype of “youth as apocalypse” (Seekings, 1993) portrayed youth as “rebels against social and political order and associated with violence and destruction” (ibid., p.2-3). Sitas cited in Seekings (1993) writing about the same stereotype and its elements of militancy and violence that was feared to be over spilling into crime and gangsterism with respect to the ‘comrades’:

“The tyre, the petrol-bomb, the knife, the stone, the hacking: death. The words ‘comrade’ and ‘amaqabane’ conjure them up...the word [comrade] frames images of unemployed black youth with no future, no home, busy destroying everything in their way: homes, shops, schools, infrastructures and traditions...[T]he media picture is of young men, with hardened features and red eyes...” (1991, p. 3).

Here the youth were not only associated with violence, violence itself was broadly understood in terms of the youth. Furthermore, this presentation of youth in the media combined (a) racist imageries of African idleness and savagery that was so feared by white South Africans with (b) the western tradition of urban male criminality and fears of generational rebellion (Seekings, 1993).

4.4 ‘Youth as Young Lions’

In contrast the liberatory view focused on the “political commitment of the youth and their contribution in the struggle for justice and liberation” (Seekings, 1993, p. 2). In this view the youth were shown as altruistic and purposeful rebels that were spearheading the liberation struggle, they were politicised rather than inadequately socialised and were for, and within rather than against, the community (Seekings, 1993). In this view the youth were extolled as ‘young lions’ and accordingly urged to ‘roar’. The ANC for example, in 1987 called for the youth to “act as the yeast, to energise and dynamise the people as a whole” (Seekings, 1993, p. 6), in fact the role of the youth in township struggles was seen as being similar to that of Umkhonto weSizwe in the ANC.

In line with this view of the youth, young people saw themselves as ‘comrades’ who were

fighting for the liberation of South Africa. Most comrades were young (below 35), most were from embattled working-class households, most were unemployed and most of their cultural codes were developed outside their households and kinships. Notwithstanding, among the phenomenon called ‘comrades’ were university graduates, full wages-earners, political activist, school students, shop-stewards, petty criminals and lumpen proletarians(Sitas, 1992, p. 629-630).

4.5 State violence: A point of departure

The pervasiveness of state violence infiltrated both the public and private spheres of black people’s lives physically, emotionally and psychologically on a daily basis. For some respondents it was the experience of state violence in the private sphere that evoked an urge to partake in political activity.

“I too wanted to be part and parcel of the struggle and especially when a scene happened in front of me. When one of my parents, my father, he was in fact involved in struggle activities, you see...the Boers found out about that and there was a raid and they raided at night and they beat him in front of me. They beat him in front of me and I realized that this thing is now on my door step” (Vukani).

There is a sense of disbelief and helplessness in Vukani that the incident happened which is suggested by the repeated utterance of ‘in front of me’. This utterance also subtly creates an image of an oppressive government whose might and violent tactics were hard to escape as they permeated the everyday life experience of black communities. As a consequence of witnessing the ‘scene’ he expresses a deliberate and conscious wanting to get involved in the struggle now that ‘this thing’ which he will not name therefore, giving the incident a sense of vagueness was ‘now on his door step’. Unlike those times when he witnessed and heard of state violence in the public sphere this incident it seems was the ultimatum that decided his political involvement.

With continued political involvement some respondents experienced some form of victimisation at the hands of the security forces. Here a respondent describes an incident where he was man-handled by police during a community campaign to disregard counsellors

that were seen to be collaborating with the apartheid state:

“So they started hitting me and my friend escaped before they caught him... it left a mark on my body and I still have it even now, you see. When I went back home the police frequently came looking for me. I did not like that because if the police keep on coming to my house it was going to give another impression in the township and so I tried to run away from them” (Philani).

There are a few noteworthy points here. The first is a remark on the fashion in which Philani narrated this part of his story. When he spoke of the security police beating him he did so with a somewhat detached voice and feeling. Yet there was a sense of pride and deeper meaning attached to the experience he was recalling. Second, is the fact that he was assaulted. He spoke of this again, with a sense of pride as though the beating affirmed his involvement in the struggle. It was a record of his involvement, his commitment to the liberation of his community and South Africa and he could still point to bodily scars as a reminder of the reality of the past, the struggle and his part in it. Altogether the quote reveals that political involvement sometimes had dangerous and immediate consequences and still a sense of pride and dignity was derived from political involvement.

4.6 Politicisation processes

Respondents of this research were involved in politics and mainly student politics with COSAS membership being common among all respondents. Another avenue of political activity was what was known as Amabutho ‘Warriors’ (an underground para-military structure that according to the respondents preceded the well known self defence units) that were not necessarily affiliated with the ANC but were at various times used by the ANC underground structures in numerous operations. Consider the respondents remarks on their involvement in both COSAS and Amabutho.

“...take for instance COSAS, I was heavily involved in COSAS because I was a student then and secondly, politics did not end at school they also went into the community. In the community there were these structures called Amabutho and there were activities that happened and when we went to school the following day those activities continued” (Thabani).

“Even when our leadership of the underground structures came we would take them from one point...that is when I was a schoolboy and the Boers could not suspect me because I was a schoolboy and I would wear my school uniform and walk with this elderly man as if he was my father” (Vukani).

There is an impression that Thabani’s involvement in politics was by necessity and thus, less of a choice. It was his role and identity as a school student that necessitated his involvement together with the free flowing nature of politics between school and community. Both at school and in the community his political activities appear to occur within the organisational parameters of COSAS and Amabutho respectively. It is this continuity of political life and activity between school and community that made it possible for Vukani to escort underground leadership. This was an underground political activity that was undertaken in the public eye yet remained concealed. In the context of ‘commu-school politics’ Vukani seems to have been transformed into a ‘political soldier’ and his school uniform into an appropriate camouflage.

4.6.1 From Amabutho to the ANC underground

Here Vukani suggests a connection between Amabutho and the ANC.

“So I too became part and parcel and I joined the ANC first because you could not join MK without being an ANC member first. You had to be known before you joined MK and so I worked for the underground structures which were called Amabutho...and basically politically active at that time and that’s whereby I joined” (Vukani).

Vukani’s narrative is suggestive of an implicit method of recruitment that made ANC membership not an easily attainable badge. When Vukani says ‘You had to be known before you joined...’ the question must then be asked: known for what? It might be readily apparent that it was for his political activities that Vukani had to be known for and he therefore, worked for Amabutho. In these activities he was earning his ‘political credentials’.

When asked if they were influenced to join the ANC Vukani and Thabani reported that:

“...there was a person like that, he was my commando...but even then I had taken the decision to stand up and say today I am going to try and make contacts” (Vukani).

“Actually I did not join the ANC because I was born into the struggle, you understand. There was no one telling us to join because the ANC had opened its ranks to the youth of South Africa” (Thabani).

The commando that Vukani is referring to here would likely have been a member of the ANC underground. It is to him that Vukani had to demonstrate his political activities. There seems to have existed a relationship between the youth as ‘lions’ and ANC cadres who would have been older and politically more mature than the school students (in the case of this study). It was thus, under the gaze of these older men that Vukani had to be known and prove himself worthy of ANC membership. This makes it clear not only for what but also to whom that the respondents had to be known.

On the other hand, for Thabani ANC membership was not something that he had to seek because he was ‘born into the struggle’ and was by default a member of the ANC. It seems that from the time that respondents began political work and especially in their operations with the ANC underground there was pressure to demonstrate and prove themselves. These acts of proving and demonstrating loyalty and trust, and the pressure to be known and seen by older men seem to have increased on joining the ANC.

4.6.2 UmKhonto weSizwe recruitment

Once ANC membership had been achieved the next step was to maintain it. Loyalty to the ANC and commitment to the struggle appear to have continued to be salient determining factors for selecting MK recruits. Take for example:

“So you had to be active and be loyal and prove to the organization that you are working for it and that is whereby you would be given a channel. I was loyal to the organization and they decided that this comrade must move from here to there...” (Philani).

“Loyalty was important and trust, whether you were trustworthy and they also checked your operations, whether you do them on time...Those are the things that they check the most” (Vukani).

Suttner’s (2008) work and the respondents’ narratives give strong indications that the ANC underground was predominantly constituted of male cadres. Political activities, loyalty and trustworthiness in effect had to be demonstrated not to an abstract organisation but to an organisation of men. Perhaps not in its entirety but the ANC underground appears to have set itself up intentionally or not as a homosocial enactment of some sort. Joining the ANC then seems to have been not that different to undergoing a rite of passage and a political initiation into manhood.

It might be necessary to animate what seems to have been going on in underground political practice: On being agitated by various incidents the respondents undertook political work and consequently travelled what might have been both a political and deeply personal journey through their activities in COSAS and Amabutho. By coming to the ANC they now stood at the gates of an organisation that was predominantly male and were now under a very particular masculine gaze. Using that male preserve currency of political work they had to demonstrate loyalty, trustworthiness, commitment and determination to be allowed entry into the ANC and in turn MK.

The respondents however, were not passively acted upon by others. They too appear to have been active in their own politicisation and had no illusions about the salience of political understanding as Vukani and Philani show:

“You first have to know politics before you do anything, before you join the army and know why you are joining the army, what are the things that have led you to join the army” (Vukani)

“I am not going to say they were looking for something specific but it was your political understanding that made you enthusiastic to become an MK cadre” (Philani).

What these narratives suggest is that political understanding was deemed paramount if one was intending to join the armed struggle. In turn political understanding also seems to have

been an energizing agent and motivating factor to join MK therefore, suggesting a link between politics and the military. In fact Kasrils put it clearly when he said “our combatants and organizers – must be imbued with political theories and ideas, must understand that politics guides the gun and gives the motivation and courage for a successful struggle” (1988, p. 1).

4.6.3 ‘Skipping’ the country

“So you see this thing of skipping... people are skipping, where are they skipping to? So okay, I heard that there was such and such a place and then the soccer club secretary, I am sure he was in the ANC underground structures because it was he who told me what to do” (Philani).

Leaving for exile was a phenomenon better known as ‘skipping’ the country. Philani suggests that there were no individuals who held exclusive rights in a particular office and authorised the ‘skipping’ out of the country of MK recruits. This among other things might have been as a result of the secrecy of underground political work and the threat of infiltration from state agents:

“In operations you found that there were enemies who pretended to be comrades...they worked with us and they worked with the enemy and you found that sometimes information leaked” (Vukani).

Instead what seems to have happened is that:

“...there were people around the community who could check on you and recommend you to a contact and after that you go join MK” (Thabani).

“Although you did not know that but there were people, commanders who were responsible for taking you from point A to point B” (Vukani).

It appears then that the recommendation, recruitment and affirmation of possible MK recruits involved other community members who perhaps would have been members of the ANC

underground but not necessarily commanders in the underground structures. This is important to note particularly in light of an earlier claim that it was older men who affirmed younger men and gave them access into the ANC and in turn MK. Things may not have necessarily happened in the neat fashion that has been portrayed. It is highly probable that women might have played a role in recruiting for MK because they too would have been comrades in the ANC underground.

4.6.4 Motivations for joining MK

Not all who were politicised joined MK in exile and so the question of motivation for joining MK in exile was worth asking.

“I joined the liberation struggle to free my country and my people and my family in order to be recognized and to bring back our dignity because in the past we had no dignity as all so those are the things that made me join the armed forces” (Thabani).

“Most of us joined Umkhonto because we wanted to liberate the country” (Philani).

“...the reason we left is because of the operations we were doing and no one wanted to be caught and when an opportunity to run away into exile presented itself you left...” (Vukani).

It is clear that the joining of MK was motivated in the first instance by a strong urge for the liberation of South Africa. Thabani is clear that for him joining the armed struggle was to fight the oppressors and liberate the nation and restore the dignity that had been lost. For Vukani going into exile was a logical alternative than the risk of being captured by the security forces for his political operations. When asked if they wanted to be soldiers, respondents reported that:

“No, I did not want to be a soldier” (Philani).

“Being a soldier is something that happened on its own with time because as a young child of ten, eleven and you see Boers shooting at us with tear gas and rubber bullets

and we fight back with stones” (Thabani).

“No, not because I wanted to be a soldier. After liberation we thought that we were going to be asked the question whether there were those who wanted to go back to school and those who wanted to continue serving the army” (Vukani).

There appears to be an inconsistency in logic here between wanting to fight for liberation and not wanting to be soldiers. Alternatively, the problem could be the question. That is, because the question was asked in hindsight it could be that the respondents answered it on the basis of their soldiering experience that leads them to conclude that they did not want to be soldiers. This is different from saying that at the time of being recruited into MK that they were categorically against the idea of being soldiers. Still it might be that they did not want to be soldiers but nevertheless joined MK for the liberation cause. What Vukani suggests is that soldiering was for him and perhaps others a temporary inconvenience as a means to liberation which post 1994 he thought was going to be addressed by being offered an opportunity for education.

4.7 Pulling it together: resistance politics and masculinist discourse

Suttner (2008) observes that “too often liberation struggles are defined by masculinist discourse and as an essentially male terrain where women enter periodically” (p. 105). How might we then understand the tendency that men have assumed political work to be their preserve such that (as in the case of this study) in the process of politicization they would also graduate as a ‘men’? Morrell (1998) and Suttner (2008) point out that in a colonial/apartheid context there was an actual attack on African manhood that was expressed, for example, when men were called boys irrespective of their age.

African assertions of manhood (Suttner, 2008) should then be “understood not only as a challenge to a putative childlike status but as symbolising a wider rejection of overlordship”... such that “the assertion of manhood is in this context a claim for freedom” (p. 108). Seen from this position the struggle for liberation had more to it than masculinist imagery; it was in essence a struggle for dignity and the reclaiming of the rights to be treated as an adult human

being (ibid., p. 112). What remains unexplained is why men undertook the duty to reject overlordship and lay claim to freedom in such a way that their sense of manhood took exclusive priority in this project?

The importance placed on manhood appears to be linked to a historical tradition that ties the struggle for freedom to heroic projects of previous generations that resisted conquest and oppression. In addition to Bambatha, Makhanda is another figure that was invoked and posed as a model for activists and MK fighters. Makhanda is a legendary figure in the early resistance to British conquest who in 1819 led an unsuccessful attack on the Grahamstown garrison and was imprisoned in Robben Island. He in fact surrendered to save his people from further loss of life and died while trying to escape from Robben Island (Suttner, 2007). This discourse seems to have established the male as a warrior and hero in ANC self-identity located in a particular place and time in the continuing tradition of martial heroism and resistance. It is not surprising then that joining the ANC and/or MK was at times associated with the attainment of manhood or undertaking rites of passage (Suttner, 2008).

Notwithstanding the varied nature of masculinities in the struggle it is clear that the hero was held to be essentially male. Given that some aspects of the liberation struggle involved dangerous activities that called for acts of heroism; these activities were taken to be primarily men's work. Unterhalter (2000) in her analysis of autobiographies of people who undertook heroic projects shows that these people saw their activities in the struggle as 'real work' which was different from conventional work to earn money. This concept of work was however, not "applied to work in the home; all work, including heroic work which was the prerogative of the male" (Suttner, 2008, p. 116).

In light of this, the importance to be known and seen doing political activities had its place beyond initiation into the ANC. Being politically active placed the respondents in what was a continuation of a long history of resistance from conquest and oppression. This was a historic tradition that had been championed by heroic male warriors and the continuation of which had to be spearheaded by men who emulated similar qualities as their predecessors.

At first glance it appears that the marriage between politics and manhood gave way to an assertion of manhood that served as a means through which claims to dignity, liberation from trusteeship and right to be treated as adult human beings could be made. However, another

way that we could see this is to say that a nation of assaulted and wounded manhood sought to redeem itself through political work. This manhood drew its strength and imagery from histories such as that of Makhanda and Bambatha that were “expressed in a language of manhood, confirming a linkage between heroism and masculinity” (ibid., p. 117). In other words, by pursuing national liberation men in the ANC were also pursuing their own manhood agenda, their own liberation, dignity, and recognition that were being denied by other men who were spearheading the apartheid regime.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the first context in which the respondents’ masculine identities were constructed, namely, apartheid South Africa. Apartheid’s racial project denied black men their adulthood. It emasculated and infantilised them politically, racially, socially, and economically. In response the national liberation struggle married politics with masculinist imagery such that political involvement was laden with meanings of manhood. The institutions in which these meanings were made include COSAS, Amabutho and the ANC. Furthermore, the ideological and political constructs that portrayed the youth in 1980s as ‘young lions’, warriors, protectors of communities and freedom fighters were central in shaping the norms for being a man. And, the power relations between the respondents as youth, and ANC cadres who played the role of political mentors were central to the process of older men ‘making’ younger men. These men were not only gatekeepers to the ANC and MK but also to manhood. These power relations existed within the confines of liberation ideology and discourse that characterised the struggle against apartheid.

The complex working of the processes and practices in this context constructed young masculinities that were politically conscious and active as well as militant. These men saw themselves as the young lions of the liberation struggle. Although they were loyal to the ANC they were not bound by an explicit code of conduct nor were they regimented or institutionalised. This politicised civilian struggle masculinity could in fact be seen as a masculinity of ‘ungovernability’ in the sense that the ANC called for ‘ungovernability’ and ‘people’s power’ in its 1985 conference.

CHAPTER FIVE: MILITARY TRAINING

I wrote in my journal: "Perhaps the worst thing that can be said is that I am becoming a soldier. To be a soldier! That is at best to be something less than a man. To say nothing of being a philosopher." Since then I have frequently wondered what it meant to be a "soldier" and why I regarded myself then, insofar as I was a soldier, as less than a man. Glenn Gray (1967).

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first explores respondents' experiences in transit and training camps prior to basic training. It reveals relations between respondents and the military as a foundation upon which the rest of their military life was based. The second section pays attention to and interrogates the training of the respondents as MK soldiers.

In reading this chapter, it is important to keep in mind that some of the literature used is based on experiences and findings from conventional armies. The use of this literature, despite MK having been a guerrilla army, is based on the conviction that this literature is useful insofar as we presuppose a "more or less universal" military life experience. Furthermore, this literature provides useful insights where literature on MK is minimal or simply non-existent. Lastly, the terms 'respondent(s)' and 'recruits(s)' are used interchangeably in the first section and 'respondent(s)' and 'trainee(s)' in the second section.

5.1 The military institution

Although the military is a part of society it in many ways still remains separate from it such that becoming a part of the military requires by necessity a separation of the individual physically and psychologically from his/her former social context (Spindler, 1948). Many young men are "lured, drafted and recruited into the military with the promise to turn them into men: 'Join the army, be a man'; 'The army will make a man of you'. These messages are in general coded with the belief that youth will return as 'men' " (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978, p. 154). Furthermore, Arkin and Dobrofsky note that the evidence for this belief is provided through recognition, jobs, education, medals and honours for those who have served, and so the message is reinforced that the military through its influence and discipline will

undoubtedly produce men (1978, p. 154). Acknowledgements such as these probably applied to conventional armies like the South African Defence Force whereas in MK no record of them exists.

Joining the military is socially and personally viewed not only as an opportunity for boys to become men but also as the appropriate time for the military to make men of boys. Military secondary socialisation and “indoctrination happens at a time when society expects and requires the formation of adult sex-role identity” (ibid., p. 155). The military therefore, occupies a unique position in the spectrum of adult socialisation and more so when we consider that “many young men and women enter the military between the ages of 17 and 20—a period of transition from adolescence to adulthood” (ibid., p. 151). If we accept the assertions made by Spindler (1948) and Arkin & Dobrofsky, (1978), we in turn might be interested in the nature of the military as an institution and Goffman’s (1961) writing on asylums as institutions is useful in this regard.

All institutions have encompassing tendencies; total institutions however, are symbolized by their barrier to the outside social world (Goffman, 1961). What total institutions do is to rearrange the basic social arrangement of modern society in which the individual sleeps, plays and works in different places; with different co-participants and under different authorities and sometimes without an overall rational plan.

The following central features of total institutions spelt out by Goffman strongly suggest that MK in exile could with some confidence be considered as a total institution. First, in a total institution life in its entirety is conducted in the same space and under the same single authority. Second, daily life and its activities are carried out in the immediate company of a larger group that the individual is part and with whom he does the same activities and receive a uniform treatment. Third, all daily activities are tightly scheduled such that one activity logically leads to another at a prearranged time, and with the whole sequence of activities being imposed through a hierarchical system of officials and formal rules. Fourth, all the various enforced activities are held together as “a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the aims of the institution” (Goffman, 1961, p. 17). Finally, the handling of large groups of people and their human needs in a bureaucratic organization, irrespective of whether this is an effective or necessary means of social organization, is the key fact of total institutions. Consequently this allows for large bodies of people to be supervised by personnel whose

main task is not guidance or periodic inspection but surveillance. Whether it is the small supervisory personnel or the large group, who takes priority, is of little salience in a total institution more than that each is made for the other (ibid. p.18). The concept of total institution is insightful in thinking about the military but it is used here with caution bearing in mind that Goffman was mainly writing about asylums and where he draws military experience it is from conventional armies. Therefore the concept of total institution cannot be wholly applied to MK.

SECTION 1

5.2 The transit camp

Once the respondents had left the country their first stop was at what were known as ‘transit camps’ (usually Lesotho in the experience of the respondents). In the transit camp recruits would spend weeks to months before proceeding to a ‘training camp’ (Angola, Uganda, and Tanzania). It was during this time in the transit camp that recruits experienced the formal beginning of the ‘passage to soldiering’ and by formal is meant that what the respondents encountered here were their initial experiences of military life that were different from their experiences in South Africa and in their involvement for example in Amabutho.

5.2.1 Guns or books

“Lesotho is a transit camp. It’s whereby you have to be prepared, you are prepared there. There are two things that happen, it’s either you go and carry a gun or you go to school but you are fortunate when you get there knowing these things at the transit camp” (Vukani).

The transit camp served as a preparatory zone for the respondents as new MK recruits. Although Vukani is not explicit on what this preparation entailed he is nevertheless, suggestive when referring to the “two things that happen”. The imagery he conjures is that as an MK recruit the paths seemingly available to him then could be symbolised by, on the one hand, a gun and on the other, a book. This could have very well been a routing of the ‘youth as recruit’ at the military gates, if we are to think of the transit camp as such. This lack of a full disclosure of information between the “gun” or the “book” could be explained by the fact that in underground work in which the respondents were involved, people operated on a “need-to-know basis” (Suttner, 2008, p. 87) such that what the respondents knew depended in part on whom their ‘contact person(s)’ that facilitated their escape to exile and what that person knew. In addition, Bernstein (1994) asserts that the future direction of those who went to exile was often determined by their reasons for leaving South Africa. This suggests that there may have been people who, prior to leaving South Africa, knew of the gun or book path and decided which they were going to take. On the other hand there were those, like the

respondents, who learnt of these paths when they were already in MK.

For those who ended up on the education path and were under the care of the ANC (some young people that were under the United Nations and other organisations were placed in schools in Nigeria and Zambia) were placed in Tanzania in SOMFCO (Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College) that operated from 1978 to 1992 (Morrow, Maaba & Pulumani, 2004). These authors, give a detailed account of SOMAFCO and hold that the school was intended to nurture, as much as possible the educational aspirations of a free South Africa; where academic studies and vocational training were equally valued thus, positioning itself as a counter to Bantu Education. Life in the school, more or less, resembled life in any British-style boarding school where apart from attending classes students had to report for compulsory evening classes. The curriculum included: mathematics, biology, general science, geography, agriculture, literature, languages (African, English, French and Portuguese), arts and crafts, performing arts, public health, food and nutrition, first aid and journalism (Morrow, Maaba & Pulumani, 2004).

Bernstein (1994) maintains that those who primarily went to exile to seek education generally fulfilled their expectations and often exceeded those expectations. According to Morrow, Maaba & Pulumani (2004) many former SOMAFCO students report that mathematics and science, which were compulsory subjects, subsequently opened up numerous opportunities; that their education allowed them to develop a strong sense of individuality (something which the military in various way discouraged in the respondents) and personal confidence; that it fast tracked their maturity and saved them from teenage preoccupations and that in the context of the time, their education showed significant intellectual openness and tolerance. In many ways the paths of the “book” and the “gun” are starkly different and thus, mark as intimately different those who were in the military and those who pursued education. The reports of former SAMAFCO recorded by Morrow, Maaba & Pulumani (2004) above and the respondents’ military experiences in this study make a case for the differences in these two groups. Post 1994, the differences between those who obtained education while in exile and those who were in the military and particularly the infantry are common knowledge. It remains an issue for enquiry in light of the respondents’ politicisation and that many students in exile wanted to join the army and many had to be dissuaded (Bernstein, 1994) whether the respondents would have chosen the “book” over the “gun”. The military path nevertheless, had political education:

“This is when political classes are introduced to reunite us and it brings to an end this mentality that I am Xhosa or a Zulu, no, we are all comrades here” (Vukani).

“...being an MK soldier you must automatically be a political soldier because you are being taught politics so that you know who you are fighting and what you are fighting for. So we were taught politics so that we could be guided by politics in everything we do... Umkhonto weSizwe was 20% fighting and 80 percent politics” (Philani).

“...the ANC had this mentality that before you give a soldier a gun you first have to give him political education” (Thabani).

For Vukani political education challenged apartheid’ ethnicisation and built camaraderie among a diverse group of MK soldiers. Philani on the other hand perceived political education to have been instructional as a guiding philosophy for MK soldiers who had to know the enemy and the reasons for fighting that is also echoed by Thabani. It is this emphasis on political awareness which leads Philani to assert that being an MK soldier meant that he was a political soldier. Cock (1991) has noted that the SADF and MK were not only different in terms of skill, technology and resources but social organisation and ideology. This political education can be seen as continuation of the processes of politicisation from civilian life; political education was the ideological guide for change that MK was contributing toward.

5.2.2 Camp orientation

“...in orientation you are orientated in the wilderness that you are in. The reason they are orientating us is so that they do not find us in a danger zone...they orientate us about the camp and its surroundings” (Thabani).

No longer in his familiar civilian surroundings Thabani was being protected from dangers that were alien to him. Moreover, the military was swiftly yet subtly taking over Thabani’s life: firstly, by geographically and spatially demarcating his place. Secondly, implicit in this was also the establishment of power relations between the military and Thabani, a positioning of the dominant and the subordinate respectively.

5.3 Training camp

From the transit camps the recruits were moved to different training camps. In the respondents experiences these were Angola, Uganda or Tanzania.

5.3.1 Welcome to the army

“My brother it was not easy. You know when you get to a place and the people who have been there treat you as though you have come to the wrong place” (Thabani).

“...we also had that civilian mentality thinking that we had come to the wrong place... they were making us do things that we did not like they were still removing civilian life in us and introducing us to military life” (Vukani).

“...their program was such they were going to make us do exercises to welcome us to the bush for those two weeks because we were from civilian life and were not exposed to military life” (Philani).

Common to all three quotes is a sense of having come to the wrong place. Interestingly all three respondents are quick to explain the disorientation on their arrival to have been the result of their civilian orientation. Although at this point it is not clear what exactly it is that the respondents experienced it is nevertheless clear that it was unpleasant. The aim it seems was to distinctly separate, in the psyche of the respondents, the military from civilian life. At the point of departure from South Africa, the respondents left their families, friends and girlfriends thus, physically leaving behind their civilian lives with all its familiarities. Psychologically the respondents still had to be purged from their civilian mentality and being disoriented might have started to disrupt their civilian point of reference.

5.3.2 Cutting the civilian umbilical cord

“You are told go to sleep, eat, you understand. That is bad because you are no longer controlling yourself, no you can't make a decision. All decisions are made for you.

Just imagine that kind of life where you are told when to eat, bath and things like that. That stressed me a lot” (Vukani).

The setting of a daily routine and a discipline of the body was, for the new recruit the beginning of a “taking over” of his person. Freedoms that Vukani had taken for granted in his civilian life partly because bathing, eating and sleeping appear basic and trivial, were suddenly lost. These decisions and rights were removed from the personal to a higher order, consequently entrenching the power relations between him as the protected and the military as the protector and additionally positioning the military as the “thinker” and him the “regulated doer”.

When probed about what exactly happened at this point Vukani continued saying that:

“I have experienced many things... that a person can go for five days without food just training only...you wear military clothes...We did not sleep at night singing...for three days no sleep, you are being prepared” (Vukani).

Through these institutionalised deprivations, disciplines and markings the military made it clear to Vukani that he was now part of a different institutional order; his civilian clothes were substituted for military uniform thus, signifying his new identity and making him one amongst many in a group mainly constituted by men. The deprivation of basic needs rendered him hopeless and dependent on the military for survival and sufficiently vulnerable for remoulding from civilian man to military man.

5.3.3 ‘This is not your mother’s house’

“...The thing is in soldiering, they tell you and you too will understand that this is not your mother’s house... they are removing you from civilian life and introducing you to soldiering and you might think that it’s abuse” (Vukani).

Vukani’s experiences hitherto in the military had culminated to the point in fact that “this is not his mother’s house” through which the military was declaring itself neither a feminine nor childhood space of love and care. It was a space for cutting the umbilical cord to civilian life. Intensified politicisation in the 1980s marked civilian life as a space in which the respondents

as part of the youth were at the forefront of the revolutionary struggle; perceiving themselves as “key agents of social and political change and as defenders of their communities against repressive security forces” (Marks & McKenzie, 1995, p. 3).

In his assessment of youth politics at the time Bundy (1987) sees “an essential dualism in youth politics: on the one hand, it is characteristically militant and dynamic; on the other hand, by its nature is short on theoretical sophistication and experience. Youth/student politics in a time of crisis is a hybrid of precocity and immaturity.” (Seekings, 1993, p. 11). The military then, as total institution was working to cut the umbilical cord to civilian political life that encouraged ‘ungovernability’, ‘immediacy’, and ‘triumphalism’. It was cutting the civilian struggle masculinity of ‘ungovernability’ that had no place in the military space. This is because total institutions, like the military, “do not substitute their own unique culture for something that is already formed” (Goffman, 1961, p. 23) and it is for this reason that the military treats individualism as a “myth that rules civilian society” (Nisbet, 1945, p. 264) and that in turn leaves the door of spontaneous adjudication open for the individual.

5.4 Pulling it together: adjusting to military life

In camp orientation the military, as we see in Thabani’s case, worked to assign the new recruit to his position by geo-spatially demarcating his boundaries, his section of the field. Thabani was allocated his rightful place at the bottom of the hierarchical structure and consequently was positioned to be dependent on the military institution for protection.

On arriving at the training camps the respondents were overwhelmed by a sense of having ‘come to the wrong place’. Their explanations do not give an account of *why* their civilian mentality would lead them to think that they had come to the wrong place. What it does suggest, is that there was a misfit between the civilian world that they were embedded in and the military world that they were now becoming members of. What ‘coming to the wrong place’ represented was a moment of ontological rupture between respondents’ civilian life dispositions and the military. It is this moment of rupture that signified to the respondents that they were now ‘on the inside’ (Goffman, 1961).

Taken together the deprivation of sleep and food and the simultaneous issuing of military

uniform sent a double message to the respondents. In the first instance, it served to deface the respondents, marking them as identical bodies that were part of a larger body of predominately men. Military equipment (uniform) is what gave them identity and by extension they too were military equipment. Secondly, the deprivation of food and sleep was a 'language of warning' to precisely encourage conformity that was symbolised by the uniform and its attendant implications for obedience, and discipline. As Colonel Frederick Weiner, U.S. put it: "Harsh, yes, but the underlying concept of any army is obedience. How else can this regimented obedience be attained unless such obedience is made attractive by comparison with the fate in store for those who prefer individualism." (Spindler, 1949, p. 86). The elimination of unpredictable behaviours and discouragement of individualism served to make the recruits infants in a new military space in which they would need to be socialised.

What the respondents experienced up to this point did not, in the least, speak to assertions of manhood, adulthood, dignity or freedom, a project that MK was meant to be taking forward. To the contrary, freedom of choice was eliminated thus, arresting the development of maturity and adulthood; dignity was assaulted through various debasements and deprivations; personal identity was substituted for institutional identity and given a 'copyright' stamp by making individualism undesirable. Tactically then, a sort of straightjacket trusteeship and overlordship was imposed upon the respondents, if you like, by their comrades.

What all this appears to have been was the moment-by-moment beginning of the construction of the MK soldier as 'masculine warrior-hero' not in the sense of a structure constructing and imposing it upon a subject; or an agent whimsically undertaking the "original project" of self creation as the "uncreated creator" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 132) but as the "doing of masculinity" (Coleman, 1990, p. 191) in the relation between the respondents and commanders. This relation deemed necessary the "civilian death" (Goffman, 1961, p. 25) and the end of individualism that would give way to the doing of masculinity in MK. This 'civilian death' as we have seen it was something of an "admission fee" Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 107) that legitimised the respondents as ready for basic training. With this preparatory work done what now remained was the making of the MK soldier.

SECTION 2

5.5 Basic military training

When Philani was asked to give an overview of what basic training entailed he reported that:

“It was political training, there was fire arm training, there was engineering training like...whereby you have to know how to use explosives and you must know how to assemble and disassemble a firearm within a short space of time because you are preparing yourself for when you are in a battle field and your firearm jams and you have to be able to disassemble and assemble it back so that you can retaliate back at the enemy. Then there was first aid training, then topography whereby you have to know your surroundings in case you get lost and you must know how to use the compass during the day and at night. Then we had physical training and tactics...that is military tactics, how to lay an ambush, how to counter an ambush and launch attacks...how to manoeuvre, how to overcome the mine fields” (Philani).

Cock’s (1991) account concurs with Philani’s report in which she maintains that basic training included firearms instruction, explosives and engineering, battle tactics, topography, military strategy and revolutionary politics. Talking specifically about physical training Vukani reported that:

“...nobody has time for you in training and they bend you, you are bent...Sometimes you even get physically beaten if you do not comply with the orders because if you refuse to do this thing what kind of a soldier are you going to be that hesitates when you see a gun? You will be busy hesitating and somebody kills you. You say you want to liberate South Africa but you are still hesitating...” (Vukani).

In that “nobody has time for you” what Vukani is pointing out is the impersonal nature of his relations with the training instructor. Emotionally closed off from his own feelings the commander could with ease act on a recruit’s body as an object to ‘bend’ and mould from its civilian clumsiness into a military disciplined body. Should the body under military construction resist as when Vukani fails to comply with an order, it is immediately punished

into obedience. Nisbet (1945) points out that the military's ultimate goal is the "quick and efficient destruction of the enemy and all other goals must be subordinate to this; all situations and relationships which hinder its attainment must be prevented" (p. 264). This begins to shed light on the institutional reasoning behind the abolishment of activities such as (decision-making, autonomy, individual identity, fear etc.) that would otherwise interfere with the respondent's efficient training. After being purged of his civilian reference and discouraged from thinking and taking self responsibility by having all matters of food, clothing and shelter settled by the military, Vukani was expected to take orders made upon his body with no hesitation. Hesitation translated to unpredictability, incalculability and death that in turn would abort national liberation.

"Not to mention food, you can stay for two weeks without eating and without being hungry just drinking water that's all, just water because they are squeezing you and shaping you" (Vukani).

If physical bodily boundaries were being bent the body from within was equally disciplined by squeezing and shaping its interior; the unseen and the fluidity that flows without control to match the topography of his body. It was this attempt to control the body's interior that Thabani saw as "stomach discipline":

"...the difficult thing is stomach exercise because I remember one day we were in a parade and our lunch time was one o'clock and ended at half past one. So it happened that I was the tenth person from the back of the line and by twenty eight minutes past I was only getting my food and by half past the combat bell went off signalling "dish down"... This was after six hours of topography exercise and I had to do it because it was an order and go back to another six hours of running...you must have stomach discipline and stomach discipline is not any easy thing to do" (Thabani).

The recruits lives being reduced to orders allowed for: control of what they ate and drank, when they ate and drank, how much they ate and drank and also how much time they were allocated to eat thus, controlling the pace and emotions attached to the act of replenishing the body. The military seems to have had total control on the recruits bodies, emotions and psychology.

“...you walk ten kilometres to fetch wood and its big logs not just anything small because you want to prove to the other company that you are not weak but you are fit dogs” (Vukani).

Training appears to have been intimately linked with competition. Competition seems to have provided the recruits with a medium to prove that they were something other than weak. If weakness was the antithesis, physical toughness and durability were celebrated and aspired to. The recruits had not only to prove themselves by walking long distances and carrying logs but through these acts, had to show without doubt that they were “fit dogs”, creatures of instincts. After being animalised it seems that it was easy for the respondents to also refer and think of themselves as animals. Equating training as a soldier with being a dog is particularly interesting in light of the fact that in conventional armies soldiers are issued with “dog tags”.

“...we did not believe that training can kill a person until this one experience we had where a comrade died while we were training...the commanders said “ja the course is going well” and so we wanted to understand what that means and they said “no, it is a sign that the training is going well once a comrade gives up his testicles”...no one wanted to give up their testicles.” (Thabani)

Thabani shows us the extremity to which basic training was taken to the point that lives were lost. The casual manner in which the commandos read the death of a trainee as a sign that training was at its optimal is suggestive of the depth of dehumanisation. The death of a recruit was instead read as a ‘giving up of his testicles’; an organ that is among the keys symbols of his heterosexual masculinity. Therefore, his dying in training was being read as an act of cowardice. The commanders response can be understood as an acknowledgement that through training he had been able to “weed-out” the fraudulent and impotent testicles and phallus and by default selecting those who remain standing in that celebrated proud stance of virility. Physical training had the potential of exposing those men who had low tolerance for bodily strain in that transformation of the civilian body into a military body.

5.6 Commander and soldier: power and violation

“When I was a soldier I was a different person because at that time you lived by

command. They tell you that here you do what you are told and not what you think. So of course you were like a sheep as I said before” (Vukani).

The life of a soldier is different among other things and perhaps more importantly because, as Vukani points, that a soldier lives by command. The whole of his life had been stripped of the complexities, drudgeries and nuances of civilian life and the only thing that stood before and higher than him was the ‘god of commands’ which he was to be unconditionally devoted to. The highest law of the land in the military was ‘do and don’t think’ which Vukani sees as a particular program of mind control that made him and every other soldier in his position into a herd of sheep.

“I would see an old man who probably had a son my age putting bread in his pocket because of the ‘dish down’ order...and when we are inspected you find that father taking bread out of his pocket...and I saw that an old man can turn into a baby” (Thabani).

The ‘ordered life’ as a ‘life lived by orders’ served not only to mind control but also to infantilise without discrimination and thereby insulting dignity, manhood and adulthood. That a man that Thabani regarded as a father was forced to hide food in his pocket speaks to the degree of profanation suffered by the soldier, and to show that he could not escape the totality of surveillance upon him, he was inspected and exposed as a fraud and delinquent.

“Sometimes we would be ordered to go and defuse landmines and landmines were human solid waste buried in the ground. The whole unit would be ordered to defuse landmines and you can’t say that it was not you who did that and that was not easy” (Thabani).

This strongly suggests itself to be pure unmasked dehumanisation and abuse of power which may lead to an interest in the extent to which those giving such orders must have dehumanised themselves first to make it possible for them to dehumanise others in turn.

Striking in these narratives is what appears to have been MK’s relentless goal to infantilise and strip its trainees of any sense of individuality during basic military training. A similar observation is made by Cock (1991) in the South African Defence Force and remarks that in making soldiers, “military training involves stripping young men of their individuality...”(p. 56). As the narratives show, older men in MK were not exempt from this depersonalisation as

it appears that all who entered MK were subject to infantilisation, animalisation and dehumanisation at the hands of their commanders. The narratives above reveal the relations between men in MK. They reveal the relations between the respondents as “infantry” and their commanders as a relation of power.

As striking as these relations are, it should be recognised that both the respondents and commanders operated within the dictates of the totality of the military and its hierarchical structure that positioned and socialised them to produce the power relations and practices that obtained between them. Moreover, both the dominant and the dominated were bound by the revolutionary thinking of the ANC that was influenced by Marxist text that could be traced back to the Soviet Union. Among the premises of this revolutionary thought was that “revolutionaries were suppose to realise themselves as individuals within the context of the collective” (Suttner, 2008, p. 133). The idea was that the revolutionary as individual was to expect nothing at the personal but had to be “prepared to sacrifice all personal needs in order to ensure the success of the struggle. Consequently, no sacrifice is too great and there is no situation where the personal needs can supplant those of the organisation” (ibid., p. 139). For the respondents the sacrifice of the personal included suffering defacements, being infantilised and animalised, denied their dignity and living a life guided by military overlords and trusteeship. As a collective, publicly and socially the respondents were MK revolutionary soldiers and ideological warrior-heroes. However, personally, psychologically and privately they were infantile men. These were the men and soldiers who were constructed not only by MK but the whole field of resistance ideologies in their relations with the oppressive apartheid state. Finally, in Connell’s hegemony relational framework and Bourdieu’s concept of field the commanders can be conceived to have held a dominant masculine position. The respondents, initially as trainees and later as soldiers, occupied a position of subordinate masculinity.

5.7 The Fe-male Challenge: the spring source of the masculine

“...it is even worse when there is a woman and she does things better than you and they ask you, how come is it that a woman is out performing you? How come you can’t do what she is doing?” (Thabani).

Such a situation throws into question the male recruit's manliness which he is already required to prove by the dictates of basic training and military life. The very presence of women calls for him to double his efforts at proving his manliness through mastery of exercises. The question ultimately arises about his inability to do what a woman can do. At once he finds himself judged against a woman and found wanting in a place that is supposedly a man's world. The fact that a woman accomplishes the task implies that the issue is not with the task at hand but rather with him, his inabilities, his impotence and hence his masculinity. The question 'How come you can't do what she is doing?' becomes a permanent label of embarrassment and a reason to demote him from the ladder of manhood. Henceforth his manhood will perpetually be wanting until he redeems himself from his fatal mistake.

"I had women even in my company and you found that they were more powerful than men...They are very powerful with guns, they are good, serious because they have breasts and they put the gun between their breasts and it sat comfortably and they are accurate" (Vukani).

The acknowledgement of women's competency is explained in a manner that objectifies her; she is seen through fragmented eyes that refuse to see her as a full human being and consequently the entire repertoire of her emotions, bodily skills and intellect that allow her to do what she has become good at is reduced to her breasts. This achieves two different things at the same time. On the one hand, by finding a 'comfortable fit' between the gun and the breast where the gun sits comfortably between the breasts Vukani eroticizes the gun and in turn eroticizes the phallus after which the gun is modelled. On the other hand the same breasts are 'masculinised' by implicating that she is able to shoot accurately *because* of her breasts. In other words, that she is on par and might even surpass males in the shooting range can only be explained by the advantage given to her by her breasts which also have adopted a manly stance hence their usefulness in handling a rifle. There is some evidence that women were competent shooters but breasts are not mentioned as having had any direct bearing on this, if at all. For example, Cock (1991) interviewed a woman who was in MK who reported that "We are more disciplined than men. We make better drivers. Also women are good sharpshooters—in training we really excelled" (p. 163).

"Women in the camp turned to men because they had adopted that male mentality because they were always dominated by men. So you see that a woman was a woman

but her lifestyle had changed, she had that male mentality because of the influence” (Thabani).

Perhaps as a way of coming to terms and rationalising the competency displayed by women as reported by Vukani, Thabani sees women as having turned into men, suggesting that their ‘civilian death’ was insufficient and in addition a ‘death of femininity’ was necessary. The only way that women could be recognised and acknowledged is if they were projected as having assumed a “masculine femininity”. Thabo also gives insight into the place of women in MK as being “always dominated by men”—where the totality of ‘always’ might have extended to sexual domination and abuse of women.

To fully understand what it meant for a male recruit to be cast away for re-training let us consider the concept of abject. For Julia Kristeva the abject is the “suppressed elements that is indispensable to the generation and maintenance of identity which, implies that they cannot be entirely eliminated” (cited in Pietrzak-Franger, 2006, p. 64-65). In other words, the summoning of faltering male soldiers to retraining was an attempt to deny and reject that males could be taken to task by physical strain given that physical prowess has generally, and specifically in the military, been made a male monopoly. As an act of abjection, retraining was a suppression of physical weakness that has been associated with femininity. This abjection was an attempt to uphold all that has been associated with being a soldier and a man in the military.

5.8 The spear-and-pot dichotomy myth

If women in the military can, as we have seen, be equally competent as men and at times surpass them, the relationship between men and the military that has often been taken as ‘natural’ must finally be questioned. Respondents were asked how they would explain the attraction of men in large numbers to the military, they report that:

“Men always tell themselves that they are powerful and that is why the military is full of them. They tell themselves that in any event they are supposed to do this. You can go to any country you won’t hear of military women but you hear of military men because they tell themselves that the military is their place. This goes back to our

forefathers where protection was the duty of men and women's business was the pot, they have to attend to the pots...you didn't see a women carrying a spear, no you didn't, dating back to our forefathers" (Vukani).

What Vukani is suggesting is that what has become a historic tradition of men assuming the role of protectors might be easily explained by the fact that men have "told themselves that they are powerful" and that this practice "goes back to our forefathers". Based on this 'self-appointment' and 'self proclamation' as protectors men made MK their place and a place in which they could in the company of and in partnership with other men play the role of protectors and freedom fighters. From this, statements such as "the military will make a man of you" easily follow and are quickly and uncritically consumed. By joining the military men were purporting to be taking their place as protectors and in that also defining the place of women. From this came the protector and the protected; the spear and the pot, the battle ground and the plantation fields and from which follows: "I'll bring the bacon, you cook it" discourse.

"...I will say we men in the olden days were in the army and it appeared as though the army was a place for men. It appeared as a place for men but when women were allowed to join they showed that they too can do what the men were doing" (Philani).

When women are given access to the military some prove themselves to be competent and hence become the 'female challenge' as we have seen. The challenge posed by women is not only a challenge to the practical doings of men such as handling a gun. At a fundamental level the competence demonstrated by women challenges the male patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that erected the military as a haven for men, it challenges their role as the only protectors and it challenges the way in which the claim "men are powerful" was launched in a way that portrayed women as powerless. Put differently, it challenges the "spear" and "pot" dichotomy discourse which crudely enforces traditional heterosexual roles—the spear pierces and penetrates and the pot receives and contains. Furthermore, it exposes the posing of men as protectors and warrior heroes as having been dependent on the maintenance of the spear- and-pot dichotomy such that the debunking of this dichotomy immediately reveals the historic tradition of the warrior hero as perhaps nothing more than the "traditionalist historic warrior myth". This is not to suggest that there have been no warriors and heroes in the history of resistance against conquest and oppression; rather it is to

point out that their emergence and ideological existence has been possible in large part on the background of women being denied the opportunity to play the same role; and when they did, they were made invisible. Coulter, Persson & Utas (2008) make a similar observation and remark that young women have been combatants in contemporary African wars and yet “have, by and large, remained invisible” (p. 5). This rendering of women as invisible when they take up roles as fighters alongside men mirrors the social dichotomy that relegates women to the “pot” (the private, household and family sphere) and men to the “spear” (the political, public and military sphere) (Lyons, 2004, Mankayi, 2006). This shows the way that women as soldiers were marginalised in gender relations by men even by those men, such as the respondents, who were themselves subordinated.

5.9 Conclusion

The exile context was distinctly different from the apartheid context. The power relations in exile between the respondents as soldier trainees and their commanders were characterised by a strong sense of domination and control of trainees. This was not evident in South Africa in the relations between the respondents and politically mature ANC cadres. A strong feature of this domination was the infantilisation reported by respondents. Similar to the infantilisation of the apartheid context, though not racialised, here too, respondents were denied their adulthood and in turn overlordship was imposed upon them. The difference though is that in exile it was not the apartheid system that infantilised them but their comrades and commanders in the struggle. Important to note however, is that, unlike apartheid South Africa, the power relations and infantilisation in exile were rooted within military discourse and not in apartheid ideology.

In addition to this, military discourse played a central role in the socialisation of respondents into military life and combatant masculinities in at least two ways. First, through the negation of femininity that was posed as an antithesis of what it meant to be a heterosexual masculine soldier. This simultaneously rendered the construction of masculinity as an opposition to anything attributed to femininity. This practice was clearly revealed in the relations between the respondents and women in training that positioned women as unequal to men. Secondly, the negation of civilian life, although often intertwined with femininity, was different from it. While femininity may have included attributes such as physical weakness and showing emotions, negation of civilian life was characterised by a systematic stripping of autonomy

and spontaneous behaviour that was replaced with obedience to authority and confinement in space and time. The combination of these factors worked to deconstruct and reconfigure the respondents' militant civilian masculinities of apartheid South Africa.

The construction of a new military identity was outwardly visible through depersonalised military uniform that correlated with the psychological uniform of obedience and conformity that reduced persons to military cogs. To this process, military training added dehumanisation and animalisation; bodily surveillance and punishment in the transformation of civilian bodies into synchronised military bodies and a collective military machine. Lastly, deeply interwoven into the respondents experiences of military life were two contradicting themes. On the one hand, the respondents were constructed as fighters, protectors and providers and women as weak and the protected thus reproducing traditional patriarchal and heterosexual discourse. On the other hand, the same men were subjected to defacements and practices that undermined their personal freedoms, undermined their adulthood and sense of manhood and made them subordinate to other men.

In contrast to the civilian struggle masculinity of 'ungovernability' South Africa, exile constructed a militarised masculinity that was highly regimented and institutionalised, infantilised and animalised. This masculinity was subordinate to commanders, lived by commands, and at the same time complicit with hegemonic masculinity in subjugating women and negating femininity. These military men subscribed to the patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that portrayed them as providers and protectors.

CHAPTER SIX: THE RETURNED SOLDIER

...in Xhosa culture they say that 'the father died with a bandanna on his head' which means that the father was not responsible enough... (Thabani)

Yes, we are called the heads of households but women are 'key'. A woman can survive without a job and still raise five children on her own and have children who are successful in life. (Vukani)

This chapter explores (a) some of the challenges confronting respondents as returned soldiers attempting to reintegrate into society and (b) respondents' struggles with different meanings of masculinity as they attempt to renegotiate and reconstruct their masculinities in a democratic dispensation.

6.1 Failed Demobilisation

Consideration had not been made for those ex-combatants who did not meet integration requirements into the then new South African Defence Force (SANDF) and for those that simply had no interest in a military career. The Transitional Executive Council Act of 1993 and the Interim Constitution of 1993 made no provisions for these categories of ex-combatants (Mashike, 2004). Demobilisation seems to have been an afterthought and the planning of which only began in the face of "a crisis over what to do with elderly and infirm soldiers" and those not interested in military life (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 197). The Defence Minister defined demobilisation as "the voluntary release of former non-statutory force (MK and APLA) members, who are constitutionally part of the SANDF, but who did not wish to serve in the full-time force or who were unable to do so" (ibid., p. 194).

Demobilisation had three components. The first, a once-off gratuity depending on the soldiers period of service, second, a limited two week counselling on personal and career matters, social services and finances. Third, was an opportunity to join the Service Corps for a maximum of 18 month period (Mashike, 2000). The breakdown of the gratuities in

accordance with years of service in MK was as follows: 22-23 years (R 42 657), 18-21 years (R 32 276), 12-17 years (R 28 721), 5-11 years (20 201) and 0-4 years (R 12 734) (Mashike, 2004, p. 93). In this study, Mashike reports that over a third of respondents reported that they did not receive a gratuity. Reasons for this included: “not being part of the official integration and demobilisation process; joining the SANDF and then resigning or being dismissed; administrative problems; being informed that they did not qualify for the demobilisation package (2004, p. 92). However, Mashike points out that there is evidence to suggest that ex-combatants squandered their gratuities within days after receiving a lump-sum payment. This squandering of money is partly an expression of a “lack of financial management skills” (ibid., p. 94). It is possible that some ex-combatants might have felt themselves rich and as a result bought “presents and hosted parties to please friends and family” (ibid.). These acts might have helped ex-combatants to “gain a false sense of social reintegration as they are often surrounded by people who treat them as heroes...The depletion of gratuities was soon replaced by rejection” (ibid.).

The poor planning, if at all, of the demobilisation process is what seems to have been the source of other problems that have undermined the process of demobilisation. The “inadequacy and unsystematic” nature of demobilisation was “reflected in the absence of any attempt to win support for it”. Instead the planning and implementation took a top-down approach without the involvement of ex-combatants and civil society as experience from other countries like Uganda suggest is the best way to go about it (Motumi & McKenzie, 1998, p. 197). Motumi and Hudson maintain that some of the areas in which information was lacking in planning for demobilisation included; “the families of those to be demobilised, circumstances in the areas where former combatants would reside after demobilisation, the attitude of people in these areas, criteria according to which successful reintegration into civil society could be judged, mechanisms whereby a demobilised soldier could obtain ongoing assistance and advice, the social effects of demobilisation on the demobilised soldier and on society at large, employment opportunities, training needs of, and training opportunities for, those to be demobilised etc.” (1996, p. 122).

Other shortcomings of the demobilisation process that are linked to poor planning include the once-off gratuity packages. Besides that the gratuities were not sufficient to meet the needs of ex-combatants they are also a short-term solution to a problem that could not be solved by a once-off payment that is not channelled to long-term productive activity. A World Bank study

of seven countries' demobilisation programmes cited by Motumi and Mckenzie (1998) reported that payments needs to be supplemented by other reintegration or ways to encourage the use of cash payment to be used for education or productive investments. Furthermore, these authors maintain that the demobilisation legislation was passed much later such that those eligible for demobilisation could not claim their benefits until the Demobilisation Bill was passed. It has become difficult to escape the conclusion that the demobilisation process has be "a complete mess" and therefore even more difficult to accept the claim of some senior ANC politicians that "as far as demobilisation and assistance for ex-combatants goes, 'the book is closed' " (Everatt and Jennings, 2006, p. 21-22).

6.2 Education and employment

In a survey study of 180 MK returned soldiers Cock (1993) reports that all had suffered some disruption in their education although more than half had at least completed what is now grade nine. In the same sample, 42 had a diploma of some kind, 64 were studying mainly by correspondence for security related qualification and 11 had university courses and only 5 had completed degrees (ibid., p. 2). In a study of a national sample of 410 returned MK and APLA soldiers Mashike (2004) showed that "close to 60 percent of respondents do not have a matric certificate..., 26 percent have standard 10, while 5 percent have standard 10 and a diploma and 2 percent have a postgraduate degree or diploma" (p. 98). In the same study 33 percent of respondents reported to have received some form of education or skills training while in MK or APLA. The nature of education between respondents differed such that some hold degrees and diplomas, other completed the secondary schooling while many received training in "electronics, bricklaying, carpentry, motor mechanics, welding, computer courses, dressmaking, office practice, business skills and security (ibid.). In another study Mashike (2000) maintains that there is "conflicting evidence on the opportunities to study offered to MK soldiers in exile." MK soldiers, according to most respondents, were given the opportunity to study which some misused for example, by "squandering funds instead of paying their tuition." The misuse of funds seems to have been motivated by the belief, widely held by some soldiers that "they would return to South Africa with everything arranged for them" (ibid., p. 67-68). MK soldiers were apparently given a choice to pursue formal education, military education or both that was offered in countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nigeria. Many chose not to study and instead chose military education with the view that they wanted to

fight the apartheid regime (Mashike, 2004, p.98). The argument is that opportunities to study depended on ties with commanding officers (Mashike, 2000) while respondents of this reported that knowledge of study opportunities depended on contact persons from South Africa.

Not holding a matric certificate has meant that many returned soldiers have been unable to enter the formal job market which generally discriminates against those who have not finished their secondary schooling (Mashike, 2004). In Cock (1993) a majority of respondents were unemployed with only 35 of the 180 holding full-time employment in “ANC, MK and South African Communist Party (SACP) structures” and only “9 employed in mainstream organisation” (p. 3). Unemployment was reported by 66 percent of respondents in Mashike’s (2004) study, 9 percent were directly dependent on some pension or government grant, 3 percent were supported by family or friends and 16 percent were involved in income generating projects or were entrepreneurs (p. 99). Both Mashike and Cock maintained that this was part of a broader problem where four million of a ten million potentially economically active population was currently unemployed. What made MK and APLA cadres particularly vulnerable were their lack of both marketable skills and work experience (Cock, 1993; Mashike, 2004). In addition to this, not having “personal contacts with influential individuals who can facilitate access to employment...and privatisation” (Mashike, 2004, p. 99) were provided as reasons for not being employed. Some respondents could not give an explanation for being unemployed. Lastly, Mashike points out that despite the disagreement on unemployment rates given by Statistic South Africa (2001) estimated at 29,4 percent; South African Institute for Race Relations (2001) estimate of 39 percent and the Global Insight Research Company (2001) estimate of 48,9 percent it is “evident that it would be difficult for the South African labour market to absorb demobilised ex-combatants” (Mashike, 2004, p. 98-99).

Respondents of this study also report the lack of education to be a barrier in their attempts to get employment and play the role of providers for their families.

“You know, sometimes there is nothing more painful than having a family and yet you are not responsible enough...some of us want to take that responsibility of being a provider for your family because you know that you wasted a lot of time in exile and you did not work for them but now is the time to prove your manhood and be a

provider in the home”(Thabani).

Central to Thabani is his ability to be a provider for his family the failure of which brings him pain. Thabani’s comment that exile was a waste of time is significant and should be read in relation to the salience he places in being able to provide for his family (his mother, his son which he had after returning from exile and his partner). What Thabani is suggesting is that he could have used the time he spent in exile to work for his family instead he returns unable to responsibility for his family. The sense of wasted time may also be understood in light of Mashike and Mokalobe (2003) observation that “most former MK and APLA combatants had expected to gain employment or adequate support to secure employment or a profession in either the public or private sectors after the 1994 elections” (p.20). Thabo also links his ability to play the role of a provider to his sense of manhood and as a benchmark for his manhood.

“At home I have a partner and I have children but in all of that I don’t have education. I still want education...in order that I can be alright and have a good job and take care of my family. The thing that hit us hard while we were in exile is that we did not acquire any skills besides military skills. So those are the challenges, that now you are faced with life and it does not need military skills, no it does not need military skills” (Vukani).

Vukani’s obstacle to providing for his family (which he also started on his return from exile) is that he does not have education which he perceives would give him opportunities that would allow him to better take care of his family. Matters are made more challenging by the fact that his military skills seem to amount to nothing in his post liberation life. Unarmed with skills and education Vukani finds himself out of sync in the new dispensation that military life did not prepare him for.

Notwithstanding these challenges and the feeling that time he spent in exile was a waste, Thabani is determined to get education. This phenomenon was also observed by Cock (1993, p. 3) where 116 returned soldiers showed an interest in continuing their formal education.

“So in the challenges that you face you resolve to engage or arm yourself with education because although time has gone by but education has no time and you can

still get education in order that you get a job and work” (Thabani).

Vukani on the other hand did not express the same interest but instead maintained that he is part of those ex-combatants who think that they have reached a cul-de-sac.

“If you come across opportunities for comrades to education themselves, to arm themselves make those opportunities available to them and the stories that you write, tell them with pride and say that you are who you are today because of these people. This will help those people like me who are still telling themselves that this is the end of the world, I mean if they hear about ex-combatants and the role that they played in South Africa” (Vukani).

In various ways the challenges reported by the respondents seem to make a case for what may be called the “plight of the ex-combatant” that in part has been the consequence of not being properly demobilised and reintegrated into society. That is to say that there is a compelling sense in these narratives that the respondents are left to their own devices with little if any support to address the personal problems that confront them on their return from exile. There is evidently a link between a lack of education and unemployment in this study as has been shown by Cock (1993) and Mashike (2000, 2004).

6.3 Military, culture and manhood

Significant as these challenges are they were however, not the only ones facing returned soldiers.

“Point number one, I had told myself that I had to go for initiation...I’m still a ‘inkwenkwe’ (a boy) and friends that I grew up were men by then...so that is one of the things that frustrated me in my life that I had to still go for initiation...If you’re a ‘boy’ you are limited in the scope of things that you can do generally and among other men, just like as a troop you have very little to say but the commando is accountable for you” (Thabani).

Being uninitiated is equivalent to being arrested in boyhood that results in low status and a

general restriction of what one can do and say in relations with other men. Moreover, being 'inkwenkwe' was similar to being a foot soldier, a position he occupied in MK, whereas Thabani seems to think that initiation would elevate him to a position of command and accountability—he would be a man.

I asked Thabani whether he thought going to the military had made him a man:

<Laughs> “No, my brother...in the Xhosa culture it does not mean that you are a man. You can go to the military but if you are 'a boy' (inkwenkwe) you will always be 'a boy' until you go to the bush (Xhosa manhood initiation). So yes...the military does have a role that it plays, putting manhood aside, although you are 'a boy' you find that in the military you can do things that men cannot do and then the commander says you are a man while you are not really a man. The military has its influence. Even the bush (initiation ceremony) I had that confidence that I am man and that these boys here should not make the mistake of undermining me. So other initiates knew that they depended on me for safety and that perhaps I had a gun with me. So other people respect you if you were a soldier” (Thabani).

That Thabani thinks going to the military did not mean that he was a man is significant yet not surprising given what he said above. What is surprising is that in his account of why soldiering did not make him a man he does not include neither infantilisation nor animalisation that featured strongly in his military experience. Instead Thabani draws on Xhosa culture according to which going to the military does not amount to being a man if one has not undergone the cultural passage of manhood. The military, through the commanders' affirmations, creates a 'superficial military manhood' that makes 'boys' feel like 'men'. Implied in this is the existence of a 'military masculinity' and a 'cultural manhood' where the attainment of the former does not lead to the latter. Ironically though, Thabani saw himself as a man for having been in the military in comparison to his peers in the manhood initiation ceremony who had not been soldiers. In fact he refers to them as 'boys' who depended on him for safety and respected him because he had been a soldier.

What appears to be at play here is that Thabani draws on the socially accepted view that those who go to the military acquire a particular manhood. It is this that affords Thabani a status of being a man in comparison to those who had not soldiered. That said, it could be argued that

there is some truth in the claim that Thabani was a man, at least developmentally, on his return from exile, if we consider that he and other respondents joined MK between the ages of 14 and 16 only to return in their mid-twenties—they grew up in the military.

“... when I found myself an MK soldier and getting to know the politics of the ANC I felt proud of myself because what I was doing I was not doing it for myself, I was doing it for the nation, you see. I told myself that yes, I am young but I am a man, I am a man” (Philani).

Soldiering for MK and comprehending ANC politics, aroused in Philani, a sense of pride when he understood that he was soldiering for something larger than himself—he was working for the nation. This irrespective of age made him feel that he was a man. Suttner (2008) has observed that in the ANC manhood was subtly intertwined with the concept of the nation, as when the original ANC restricted its membership to African men. In other words, playing a role in national liberation awarded one a sense of manhood and more so for those who were in the military wing of the ANC given the salience that has been accorded the military as a site of masculinity construction. The manhood-military link was also not without support:

“I remember when I came back, there was a sort of a welcome party, one of the elderly men said, ‘you became a man, even before you were a man’. Manhood in our culture (Xhosa) you have to go through that stage of initiation. So the way he was praising me for the decision that I took to leave my parents and relatives and everything and went to exile showed my manhood, you understand. The decision I took was a decision taken by men and not a boy like me” (Philani)

The acknowledgement of manhood given to Philani confirmed his own feelings. It was also an acknowledgement of Philani as a fighter and protector of the nation and consequently of manhood. ‘Becoming a man before you’re a man’ once again points to the recognition of two masculinities—military and cultural. Moreover, it points to the fact that these two masculinities are not equally valued with cultural masculinity taking first place.

In the first interview Thabani mentioned that “a man is not a man but a man is the challenges that he faces in life”. In the second interview I asked him to elaborate on this:

“It is to say that a man is not a man by going to the bush, a man is the challenges that he faces in life. You see, in Xhosa culture they say that ‘the father died with a bandanna on his head’ which means that the father was not responsible enough. So for me yes...I am a man, my responsibility as a man is that I have to see to it that my son completes his matric...that my mother has to eat before going to bed... in the Xhosa culture when you come back from the bush you are advised that you are now a man and you have to be a provider and build a family. So when you come back from the bush you know that you have to find a job and work for the family so that one day I can marry a woman and build my own family” (Thabani).

Initiation into manhood does not appear to result in a permanent achievement of manhood. Instead it seems to be an exit from ‘boyhood’ and an ‘entry into ‘manhood’. Upon entry certain measures of manhood must be satisfied, namely, being a provider and protector. For Thabani this means that he protects and economical provides for his son and mother and ultimately he has to marry a *woman* and build his own family. The problem is that the role of protector and provider seems to be tied to an ability for men to earn an income. Unemployment, as we have seen, is a great challenge for the respondents which they have reported to be an obstacle in their attempts to provide for their families. What this translates to is that being unemployed challenges the respondents’ status as breadwinners, heads of households and their manhood as expressed through the traditional patriarchal and heterosexual discourse. A discourse that in post-liberation South Africa appears to have found no material support for these men. The lack of material support places the respondents’ manhood—heterosexually defined—at stake and risks making them men with bandannas on their heads—culturally they stand to be labelled as women.

6.4 ANC betrayal

This traditional patriarchal and heterosexual discourse unsupported by a material base—is read by the respondents as a betrayal by the ANC government:

“...comrades are wearing worn out shoes and when you look at him he looks like a ‘bergie’ and if you sit him down you discover that this is the comrade who liberated this country but now he cannot face his challenges in life. Sometimes you find that a

comrade escapes from stress by drinking alcohol because he cannot cope and when you look at his parents' home it is falling apart... he does not know what to do because he has no job...he played his role and it ended and his life ended there too...he had high hopes that the ANC would do this and that because of his contribution in the struggle so other comrades end up being mentally disturbed..." (Thabani).

"I have strong feelings more especially when it comes to the delivery from the government towards ex-combatants...I feel sometimes...I feel betrayed...I feel betrayed, not only myself, when I see things that are happening to other comrades and myself I see that no, we are betrayed and neglected, yes" (Philani).

Matters have also been aggravated by the fact that on returning to South Africa liberation fighters were received with excitement, were loved and felt important—they were heroes only for a moment:

Firstly, you found that people were very excited and they loved you and you were important. As you walked around the community you heard people saying 'these are the people who went to fight in exile'. I mean, I lived a good life and things were okay. People would approach me and ask my opinion on the South African situation then, they asked 'why did you not fight?' and I would engage with them. In meetings you are called to explain and give your opinion on the negotiation process. So we were very important at that time... (Vukani).

Somewhat cast away and left to their own devices there is some indication that respondents may be searching for different ways to be men other than the culturally normative ways of being a man. This however should not be interpreted to mean that cultural concepts of manhood have been completely abandoned.

"...in the community I play a role especially in the youth... There is a project that we are involved in although it does not pay but we do get tenders. I teach young boys traditional dance and that crime does not pay. At school we are invited if there is a problem if young boys...you know how young boys are? They start these gangs and so we are there to guide and steer them away from that and to focus them on education which is very important and it's their future because we did not get that

opportunity to get education but we fought for a better life for all so they must take these opportunities instead of doing crimes...so those are the things that I am doing” (Vukani).

There is something of a parenting role in Vukani’s involvement in the community. He teaches dance, steers youth away from crime and encourages them to pursue education. There is also here a resemblance of the ‘politicisation process’ in which Vukani now plays the role of the political mature cadre of the struggle in which he conscientises the youth. Having experienced apartheid and its fierce opposition in the 1980s, Vukani is well aware of the impact of crime and violence in communities, families and individual lives and thus, his influence might be considerable in persuading youth from crime and violence. The sacrifices he made on his education haunt him today and perhaps his testimony on the importance of education may be well received by youth. Ex-combatants like Vukani may therefore, be well placed to make a positive contribution in their communities.

“Yes, we are called the heads of households but women are ‘key’. A woman can survive without a job and still raise five children on her own and have children who are successful in life. So we have to praise women and appreciate them instead of raping them and abusing them” (Vukani).

The recognition of women’s roles in the family (a Xhosa cultural marker of manhood) is significant. This recognition is important because women can play the role of provider and parent even if they are unemployed something which the respondents have found difficult to do. Furthermore, recognising that women are ‘key’ in the family holds possibilities for gender equality and a renegotiation of what it means to be a man when women are not held as an anti-thesis of masculinity. A masculinity that praises and appreciates women in South Africa would mark a new era of what it means to be a man.

The attempts at identity renegotiation appear, at least in part, to have been facilitated by the course attended by the respondents that was a collaboration between three non-governmental organisations (NGOs). See appendix 4 for an outline of this course.

Notwithstanding the essentialism and mythic basis of some elements of the course it seems to have provided a means for men to end their isolation and fears by affording the respondents

(and other participants) opportunities to “express a range of feelings among themselves and to talk about their fears, loves and challenges” (Kimmel & Kaufman, 1994, p.283). In this way men might begin to make inroads toward “disassociating manhood and domination” (ibid.) and grounding it on more egalitarian, respectful, non-violent human connections with those around them. Thabani and Philani narratives support this:

“There is a difference if you attend courses than if you’re sitting at home. If you’re at home you think about a lot of things but in the course you get a lot of ideas from people around. Take for instance a comrade might have had a similar problem than yours and you get to know how he solved it...there are a lot of advice that you get from people that you are engaged with” (Thabani).

“...it opened my mind after a number of sessions and I saw things that I did not. The way that I was acting, thinking that it was the right way was not the right way. For example, when you talk to another person without considering whether the way I speak might hurt that person. Even the way, the way you look at a women, you don’t look at her as a sex object, you see, that course helped me a lot in things like that.” (Philani)

It should be noted that NGO initiatives in this study did not provide models of masculinity when the respondents returned from exile. As the study has shown, the respondents have primarily drawn their sense of manhood from a traditional cultural model characterised by a patriarchal and heterosexual discourse. What NGO initiatives seems to have provided is a supportive healing space for the respondents, giving them a sense that they are not alone in their challenges; a space to reflect on their manhood practices and expression leading to possibilities for different and new versions of masculinity that embrace respect for women as Philani indicates. Walker (2005) has made the same observation with her respondents who were affiliated to the ‘Men for Change’ (MFC) organisation in Alexandra, Johannesburg.

6.5 Conclusion

Aside from the economic policies adopted by the ANC post 1994 that have been argued to have greatly disfavoured the poorly educated and unemployed, the respondents’ lives and

sense of manhood as returned freedom fighters have been shaped by South Africa's poorly planned military demobilisation process, social and economic reintegration and key cultural concepts of manhood. What is striking is that while apartheid South Africa and exile appear to have had some degree of systematic processes (politicisation and military training) that facilitated the construction of masculinities, post-liberation South Africa, in contrast, seems to have been a haphazard affair with half measures that lacked political will from the ANC. Consequently, what seems to have happened is that the respondents' lives as returned freedom fighters have been defined more by what they lack in the new dispensation than the contribution they made in the struggle for liberation.

This post-liberation masculinity is a masculinity in transition. This masculinity emerged from exile imbued in a patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that posed it as fighter and protector. In a civilian space the returned soldier balanced himself between his military masculinity and his cultural masculinity which are both held by the same patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that posits the former as 'fighter and protector' and the latter as 'provider and protector'. In the main though, the returned soldiers have drawn meanings of masculinity from their cultural concepts of manhood. This masculinity is, in the first instance, signified by a rite of passage into manhood. Secondly, it is tied to an ability to earn an income that is 'key' to one of the principal markers of manhood in Xhosa culture—being a responsible head of the household. Initially the returned soldiers appear to have been well received and respected, reinforcing feelings of heroism attendant in the patriarchal and heterosexual discourse.

Beyond these fleeting moments of heroism, there has however, been no material support from the ANC government for this cultural masculinity thus, leading to feelings of betrayal. In essence this is a lack of support for the patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that has obtained between the militarised MK masculinity (notwithstanding its subordination) and the post-liberation cultural masculinity. Furthermore, it is also a betrayal of both the youth masculinity of 'ungovernability' and the MK militarised masculinity that sacrificed greatly for the struggle in the hope of a better life post-liberation. It is this hope that for many ex-combatants, since 1994, has been on a decline taking with it their sense of dignity, adulthood, freedom and manhood—precisely what they sacrificed and struggled for. Lastly, there is some indication that these men may be seeking new and different ways of being men that are characterised by appreciation of women and making positive contributions in the community

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the constructions of masculinities in changing contexts. Three different contexts and three different masculinities have been delineated. Apartheid South Africa produced a 'youth struggle masculinity' or a masculinity of 'ungovernability'. Exile produced a militarised masculinity and context. Post-liberation South Africa produced a masculinity that although culturally inclined is a masculinity in transition. It is important to note that although the contexts of these masculinities are different the masculinities are fluid, bearing similarities and differences, some of which have already been noted. For example, both the 'youth struggle masculinity' and 'militarised masculinity' were imbued with revolutionary meanings of furthering the ends of national liberation. In varying degrees both were subordinate to other masculinities. And both were held by a hope for a different life post the liberation war.

'Post-liberation cultural masculinity' and 'militarised masculinity' are similar in that both are imbued in a patriarchal and heterosexual discourse that positions the latter as 'fighters and protector' and the former as 'economic provider and homestead protector'. Youth struggle masculinity was political, economically and racially marginalised by the apartheid system and subordinate to politically mature ANC cadres. Militarised masculinity was subordinate to its commanders and complicit with the subjugation of women. 'Post-liberation masculinity' is currently economically marginalised by a democratic capitalistic dispensation.

Two other themes have permeated this study. First, is the theme of violation in the respondents' lives that started with state violence. It is from these violated and subsequently volatile lives that the comrade identities emerged as militant and violent identities that have been studied by Sitas (1992), Campbell (1992) and Marks (2001). In a different way and context this violation continued in the respondents' lives in their military training in MK in the form of defacements, dehumanisation, infantilisation and animalisation. What is striking here is that in both contexts violation was linked to the formation of masculine identities. This link calls for research on how some masculinity practices are not only violent but may also constitute a violation of men (Edwards, 2006, p. 62).

Second, is the theme of education. At the time that the respondents joined MK and left for exile it was, among other things, at the cost of their education that had to be disrupted. The

importance and role of education in the socialisation of young people has been pointed out by Johnson (1982). This disruption is important to note as Talik (1988) argues that although the relationship between education and income distribution is complex, education has been argued to improve economic equality. Even if for these reason alone, the sacrifice made by the respondents on their education is significant. This fact is made clear through the challenges that confront the respondents on their return to South Africa post-liberation. The enormity of these challenges has implications for the reconstruction and renegotiation of masculinities in post-apartheid South Africa.

REFERENCES

- Adam, H & Giliomee, H. (1979). *Ethnic power mobilised: can South Africa change*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Arkin, W & Dobrofsky, L. (1978). Military socialisation and masculinity. *Journal of Social Issues*, 34, 151-168.
- Bernstein, H. (1994). *The rift: The exile experience of South Africans*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Biko, S. (1978) *I Write What I Like*. Edited by Aelred Stubbs. London: The Bowerdean Press.
- Bly, R. (1990). *Iron John: A book about men*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Bopela, T & Luthuli, D. (2005). *Umkhonto we Sizwe: Fighting for a divided people*. South Africa: Galago Books.
- Bourdieu, P and Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brink, E .et al. (2006). *Soweto, 16 June 1976: personal accounts of the uprising*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.
- Bundy, C. (1979). *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*. Berkeley: University of California press.
- Campbell, C. (1992). Learning to kill? Masculinity, the family and violence in Natal. *Journal of South African Studies*, 18, 3: 614-628.
- Chase, E. Susan (2005). Narrative Inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publishers Ltd.
- Christie, P. (1982). *The right to learn: the struggle for education in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Cobbet, W & Cohen, R. (1988). (Eds.), *Popular struggles in South Africa*. London: James Currey.
- Cock, J. (1991). Colonels and cadres: War and gender in South Africa. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Cock, J. (1993). The social integration of demobilised soldiers in contemporary South Africa. *South African Defence Review, A working paper series*, 12, 1-17
- Coleman, W. (1990). Doing theory/doing masculinity. In Hearn, J & Morgan, D. (Eds.), *Men, masculinities and social theory* (pp.186-197). Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Connell, R.W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Allen & Unwin: Sydney.

- Conway, D. (2003). *Masculinity, citizenship and political objection to compulsory military service in the South African Defence Force: The case of Ivan Toms*. Paper presented at the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society. Fourth Biennial Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa, 22-25 June 2003. Retrieved 18 December, 2008 from UCT African Studies Library.
- Coulter, C., Persson, M., & Utas, M. (2008). *Young female fighters in African wars*. Policy dialogue no. 3. The Nordic African Institute. Stockholm: Sweden Elanders Sverige.
- De Vos, A.S. (1998). *Research at grass roots*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory. (2007). *Warriors for Peace: Psycho-social reintegration course for Former Guerrilla's in our Liberation armies*. [Report]. Cape Town: Author.
- Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory (n.d). Retrieved January 1, 2009, from <http://www.dacpm.org>
- Donaldson, M. (1993). What is hegemony? *Theory and Society*, 22, 643-657.
- du Toit, A & Giliomee, H. (1983). *Afrikaner political thought: analysis and documents*. Cape Town: David Philip.
- Edwards, T. (2006) *Cultures of masculinity*. New York: Routledge.
- Ellis, S and Sechaba, T. (1992). *Comrades against apartheid. The ANC and South African Communist Party in exile*. James Curry: London.
- Everatt, D & Jennings, R. (2006). Only useful until democracy? A survey of ex-combatants in South Africa. In D. Everatt (Ed.), *Only useful until democracy? Reintegrating ex-combatants in post-apartheid South Africa with lessons from Kosovo and Zimbabwe* (pp. 3-56). The Atlantic Philanthropies: South Africa.
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin.
- Foster, D. (1991). Ideology. In D. Foster., & J. Louw-Potgieter (Eds.), *Social psychology in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Lexicon, pp. 345-391.
- Gear, S. (2002a). Wishing us away: Challenges facing ex-combatants in the 'new' South Africa. *Violence & Transition Series*, 8, South Africa: CSVr. Retrieved 25 May, 2007 from http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=275.
- Gear, S. (2002b). Now that the war is over. Ex-combatants transition and the question of violence: A literature review. *Violence & Transition Series*, 8, South Africa: CSVr. Retrieved 25 May, 2007 from http://www.csvr.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=276.
- Giliomee, H & Schlemmer, L. (1989). *From apartheid to nation-building*. Cape Town:

Oxford University Press.

Greenbaum, B. (2006). Evaluation of the 2005 Ex-Combatants' Dialogues. External Assessment of Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) Ex-Combatants Reintegration and Restorative Justice Project, February. Retrieved May 25, 2007 from <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/correctional/evaluation2005.pdf>

Goffman, E. (1971). *The presentation of the self in everyday life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile bodies: toward a corporeal feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hamilton, C., Huntley, L., Alexander, N., Guiaraes, A & James, W. (Eds.), *Beyond racism*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Haywood, C and Mac an Ghail (2003). *Men and masculinities: Theory, research and social practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hearts of Men Retrieved 1 January, 2009 from http://www.myggsa.co.za/connect/receivers/hearts_of_men

Hlongwane, K., Ndlovu, S, and Mutloatse, M. (2006). *Soweto '76: reflections on the liberation struggles: commemorating the 30th anniversary of June 16th*. South Africa: Mutloatse Arts Heritage Trust

Hook, D. (2004). Franz Fanon, Steve Biko, 'psychopolitics' and critical psychology. In D. Hook (Ed.), *Critical Psychology* (pp.84-114). Lansdowne: UCT Press.

Hunter, M. (2003). *Masculinities and multiple-sexual partners in KwaZulu-Natal: The making and unmaking of Isoka*. Paper presented at the Sex and Secrecy Conference, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Hyslop, J. (1988). School students movements and state education policy: 1972-87. In W. Cobbett., & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Popular struggles in South Africa* (pp. 183-209). London: James Currey.

Jarvis-Shean, E. (2001). "Submit or fight": Motivations behind the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Paper presented at the Centre for African Studies Gallery, University of Cape Town.

Jenkins, R. (1992). Pierre Bourdieu. London: Routledge.

Johnson, W. (1982). Keystone of apartheid. *Anthropology and Education*, 13, 214-237

Karis, T & Gerhart, G. (1977). *From protest to challenge. A documentary history of African politics in South Africa. Vol. 3 Challenge and violence*. Hoover Institution Press: Stanford University.

Kasrils, R. (1988). *Politics and the armed struggle: the revolutionary army*. Lusaka.

Retrieved from Mabuye Centre, University of the Western Cape.

Kimmel, M. (1994). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In H. Brod & M. Kaufman (Eds.), *Theorizing masculinities* (119-141). Sage: Thousand Oaks.

Kimmel, M & Messner, M. (1998). *Men's lives* (4th Ed.). Allayn and Bacon.

Levin, R. (1991). People's education and the struggle for democracy in South Africa. In Unterhalter, I., Wolpe, H., Botha, T., Badat, S., Dlamini, T., Khotseng, B., et al. (Eds.), *Apartheid education and popular struggles* (pp.117-130). Johannesburg: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd.

Leinbenberg, I., Nel, B., Lortan, F., & van der Westhuizen, G. (1994). (Eds.), *The long march. The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa*. Haum: South Africa.

Lodge, T. (1991). Other political forces. In Lodge, T., Nasson, B., Mufson, S., Shubane, K., & Sithole, N. (Eds.), *All, Here, And Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (pp. 142-203). South Africa: David Philips Publishers.

Lodge, T. (1994). The Pan Africanist Congress. Leinbenberg, I., Nel, B., Lortan, F., & van der Westhuizen, G. (Eds.), *The long march. The story of the struggle for liberation in South Africa*. (pp. 42-51). Haum: South Africa.

Loubser, J. (1968). Calvinism, equality and inclusion: the case of South Afrikaner Calvinism. In S. Eisenstadt (Ed.), *The protestant ethic and modernisation*. New York: Basic Books.

Lyons, T (2004). *Guns and guerilla girls: Women in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle*. Africa World Press, Inc.

MacDonald, M. (2006). *Why Race Matters in South Africa*. USA: Harvard University Press.

Magubane, P. (1986). *Soweto: the fruit of fear*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Mankayi, N. (2006). Male constructions and resistance to women in the military. *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies*, 34, 44-64.

Marks, M., & McKenzie, P. (1995). *Political pawns or social agents? A look at militarized youth in South Africa*. Paper presented at the 1995 *Confronting Crime* conference, Cape Town. Retrieved December 9, 2008 from UCT African Studies Library.

Marks, M. (2001). *Young Warriors: Youth Identity and Violence in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Mashike, L. (2007). 'Some of know nothing except military skills': South Africa's former guerrilla combatants. In S. Buhlungu., J. Daniel., R. Southall., & J. Lutchman (Eds.), *State of the Nation South Africa 2007* (pp. 351-378). Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Mashike, L. (2004). "You are a time bomb..." Ex-combatants in post-conflict South Africa.

Society in Transition, 35, 87-104.

Mashike, L & Mokalobe, M. (2003). Reintegration into civilian life: The case of former MK and APLA combatants. *Track Two*, 12, 1-35.

Mashike, L. (2000). Standing down or standing out? Demobilisation and reintegrating former soldiers. *African Security Review*, 9, 1-11.

McCarry, M. (2007). Masculinity studies and male violence: Critique or collusion? *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30, 404-415.

McKendrick, B. & Hoffmann, W. (Eds.), *People and Violence in South Africa*. Oxford University Press: Cape Town.

McKinley, D. (1997). *The ANC and the Liberation Struggle: A Critical Political Biography*. London: Pluto Press.

Meli, F. (1988). *A history of the ANC. South Africa belongs to us*. Zimbabwe Publishing House: Harare.

Motumi, T & Hudson, A. (1996). Rightsizing: The challenges of demobilisation and social reintegration in South Africa. In Jakkie Cilliers (Ed.), *Dismissed. Demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants in Africa* (pp. 112-129). Halfway House: South Africa. Institute for Defence Policy.

Motumi, T & Mckenzie, P. (1998). After the war. Demobilisation in South Africa. In J. Cock & P. Mckenzie (Eds.), *From defence to development. Redirecting military resources in South Africa* (pp. 181-207). South Africa: Group for Environmental Monitoring.

Morgan, D. (1994). Theatre of war: combat, the military, and masculinities. In H. Brod & M. Kaufman (Eds.), *Theorizing masculinities* (pp. 165-182). Sage: Thousand Oaks.

Morrell, R. (1998). Of boys and men: Masculinity and gender in Southern African Studies. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 605-630.

Morrell, R. (2002). Men, movement and gender transformation in South Africa. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 10, 309-321.

Morrow, S., Maaba B., & Pulumani, L. (2004). *Education in exile: SOMAFSCO, the ANC School in Tanzania, 19778 to 1992*. HSRC Press: Cape Town.

Mufson (1991). Introduction: The roots of insurrection. In T. Lodge & B. Nasson (Eds.), *All, Here, And Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (pp. 3-17). South Africa: David Philips Publishers.

Nisbet, R. (1945). The coming problem of assimilation. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 261-270.

Nkabinde, Z. (1997). *An analysis of educational challenges in the new South Africa*.

University Press of America: Maryland.

Nkomo, M. (1990). Post-apartheid education: Preliminary reflections. In M. Nkomo (Ed.), *Pedagogy of domination: Toward a democratic education in South Africa* (pp. 291-323). Africa World Press, Inc: New Jersey.

Pietrzak-Franger, M. (2006). *The male body and masculinity: representation of men in British visual culture of the 1990s*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher.

Purvis, T & Hunt, A. (1993). Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology.... *The British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 473-499.

Ranuga, T. (1986). Frantz Fanon and Black Consciousness in Azania (South Africa). *Phylon*, 47, 182-191.

Ratele, K. (2001). Between ouens: Everyday making of black masculinity. In Robert Morrell (Ed.), *Changing men in Southern Africa* (pp. 239-253). South Africa: University of Natal Press.

Seekings, J. (1993). *Heroes or villains? Youth politics in the 1980s*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Sitas, A. (1992). The making of the 'comrade' movement in Natal, 1985-91. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18 (3): 629-641.

Splindler, G. (1949). The military-a systematic analysis. *Social Forces*, 27, 83-88.

Suttner, R. (2008). *The ANC underground in South Africa*. South Africa: Jacanda Media.

Terreblanche, S. (2002). *A History of Inequality in South Africa 1965-2002*. South Africa: University of Natal Press.

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research. Analysis types and software tools*. Hampshire: The Falmer Pres.

Unterhalter, E. (2000). The work of the nation: heroic masculinity in South African autobiographical writing of the anti-apartheid struggle. Retrieved 12, May 2008, from <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mk>.

The Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture (n.d). Retrieved January 1, 2009, from <http://www.trauma.org.za>

Tilak, J. (1989). *The Political Economy of Poverty, Equity and Growth. Education and its Relation to Economic Growth, Poverty, and Income Distribution: Past Evidence and Further Analysis*. World Bank Discussion Papers, Research Paper Number 3: Washington D, C.

Thompson, J.H. (2006). *An unpopular war: From afkak to bosbefok*. Zebra Press: Cape Town

Walker, L. (2005). Men behaving differently: South African men since 1994. *Culture, Healthy and Sexuality*, 7, 225-238.

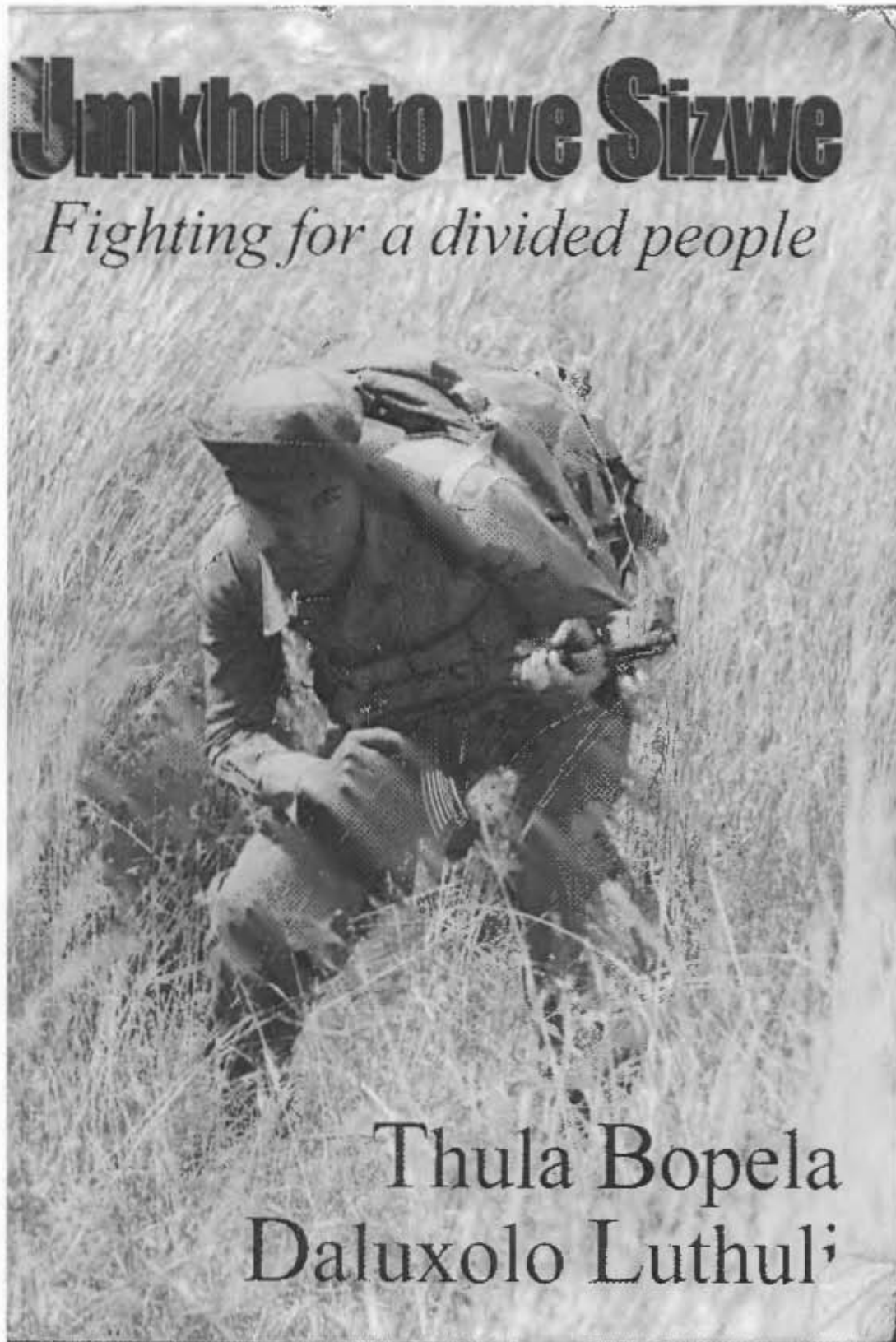
Wolpe, H. (1975). 'The theory of internal colonialism: The South African case.' In I. Oxaal., T. Barnett., & D. Booth (Eds.), *Beyond the sociology of development* (pp. 229-252). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Woodward, R. (2000). Warrior heroes, and little green men: soldiers, military training, and the construction of rural masculinities. *Rural Sociology*, 65, 640-657.

Xaba, T. (2001). Masculinity and its malcontents. The confrontation between 'struggle masculinity' and 'post-struggle masculinity' (1990-1997). In R. Morrell (Ed.), *Changing men in South Africa* (105-124). South Africa: University of Natal Press.

Zipes, J. (1992). Spreading myths about fairytales: A critical commentary on Robert Bly's Iron John. *New German Critique*, 55, 3-19

APPENDICES



Appendix B

Stimulus for the Study

In 2006 I was part of a facilitation team that was assisting in a conference called *Memory, Narrative and Forgiveness: Reflecting on ten years of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* that was held at the University of Cape Town between 22-27 November. One of the discussion sessions was attended by a group of former SDU members from Gugulethu and in which Adrian Vlok (apartheid's minister of Law and Order) was also present. Adrian Vlok is reported to have not been invited by the organisers of the conference. The discussion took a turn when the former SDU members demanded answers from Adrian Vlok about events and deaths that had not been accounted for in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and when the latter was not forthcoming a verbal battle ensued. The heated discussion ended in an open podium attracting many people and the media and was contained by one of the organisers who took the discussion back into the venue. A plea was made for a constructive dialogue and Adrian Vlok promised that he would return to Cape Town to have a public dialogue with the Former SDU members. After this incident some people who were interested in what the Former (Self Defence Units) (SDU) members had been saying gathered around to ask them questions. For the first time I heard primary source accounts of township struggles, of sacrifices, loss of lives and a sense of betrayal by the ANC the government. This event led to an interest in the liberation struggle that developed to what this study is now concerned about.

Gaining access to former liberation soldiers

In retrospect, the relative ease with which I gained access to former liberation soldiers could at best be described as a miracle. In March 2007 I attempted to identify organization and individuals that had previously worked or were working with MK and APLA ex-combatants. At this time I was more concerned about collecting academic literature on ex-combatants and personal accounts from those who would have had some experience in working with ex-combatants. On the suggestion of my supervisor I visited the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Wynberg where I had a conversation with Cecil Esau (a student and political activist who was imprisoned for 12 years in Robben Island during apartheid). In our conversation Cecil suggested that I made contact with an organization called Direct Action Centre for peace and Memory (DACPM) that was. In the same day

I telephoned the DACPM and spoke to Mike Adams (a facilitator working at the Centre) and we set an appointment later the same day. In our meeting we discussed my intended research after which Mr. Adams mentioned that the Centre works with MK and APLA ex-combatants and that a two month course was due to start soon for ex-combatants. Mr. Adams invited me as a challenge to register as a participant in the course after which I could then ask the former soldiers if they would be willing to be part of the study. I immediately accepted the invitation and registered for the course. The course was held at the Saartjie Bartman Centre in Athlone twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday between 08h: 00 and 16h: 00) although I only attended the Thursday sessions due to university academic obligations. Tuesday sessions focused on two issues: (1) understanding trauma and its impacts and (2) drawing action plans to facilitate the participants' reintegration process. Thursday sessions were focused on understanding masculinity and its impact on attempts at reintegration into society (DACPM, 2007). In the first meeting we were asked to introduce ourselves and to state how we came to be participants in the course. After introducing myself many ex-combatants directed questions at me that focused on the research I was intending to do and my educational background, age and where I come from. Overall some seemed to be skeptical and somewhat irked by my presence which I attributed to the fact that I am not an ex-combatant. From the outset I consciously decided to have conversations with the former soldiers during tea breaks and soon I had close relations with most of the fourteen former soldiers and shared meals during lunch breaks. At the end of the course (the course had started on 1 March and ended on 3 April) five former soldiers agreed to be interviewed for the study.

Appendix C

A Psycho-social reintegration course for ex-combatants:

Three collaborating Non-government organisations

An organization established and run by former combatants, *Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory* (DACPM) envisions a world in which the historical, structural, and systematic injustices of post-conflict communities are adequately commemorated, addressed, and transformed, thus ensuring greater peace and human security for all (DACPM, n.d). DACPM's specific purpose is to reduce the violence against men, women and children by improving the capacity of black men, particularly those who have been directly affected by political violence in South Africa, to address the manifold challenges facing them, their families and their communities (DACPM, n.d).

The Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture grew out of a partnership of progressive mental health organisations. *The Trauma Centre* caters for the mental health needs of ex-political prisoners, returned exiles and other victims of political violence and repression. Since 1993, the Trauma Centre has grown and evolved, in response to the changing needs of the population. Today the organisation comprises nearly 30 staff members involved in rendering the following programmes: Trauma Response (Crisis & Continuous trauma), Political Violence (Torture and Refugee Projects), Children and Violence and Training (Trauma Centre, n.d).

Hearts of Men strives to provide mentoring, educational and social guidance to young people at risk in order for them to become community builders contributing to sustainable peace and crime prevention. *Hearts of Men* aims to: Provide social guidance and support to young men within a community setting, to assist them through the passage to manhood, to develop the leadership skills of young people in the community and facilitate youth leadership training workshops focusing on Youth Development Basic Counselling Skills, HIV/ Aids training, Drug and Alcohol- Abuse Awareness Mentor Training, Wilderness Support and Environmental Training, First- aid training and Panel beating (Hearts of Men, n.d).

Context of the course

From 1976 to the late 1980s thousands of young men and women between 14 and 18 years

left school to join MK or APLA in exile, other were imprisoned, tortured and killed. This intensified in the 1980s which has been officially recognised to have been the most violent period in the three decades of the struggle against apartheid (DACPM, 2007). There was ceasefire in 1990 and in 1994 South Africa had its first democratic election, and yet the scores of young people were left with the legacy and consequences of their participation in the armed liberation struggle as they were unsuccessfully reintegrated into the new democratic dispensation (DACPM, 2007). Although many have since reintegrated, have gone through self development programs, reconciliation, healing process and are employed (see Gear, 2002 and Greenbaum, 2006) many have not moved beyond their militarised identities (DACPM, 2007). It is with this group of ex-combatants that the Centre works to assist with the process of reintegration and healing.

Many returned to their families and communities and became an added burden as these communities were characterized by high levels of crime and violence, extreme poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and limited educational opportunities (DACPM, 2007). Government interventions have been crippled by:

- The scarcity of human and financial resources, management abilities and leadership qualities to intervene successfully.
- The lack of coordination between local, provincial and national government and non-profit organizations and other service providers.
- Governmental demobilization and military integration processes have been and continue to be poorly managed mostly with very little consultation with the combatants themselves and this has left demobilized combatants isolated, frustrated and demoralized (DACPM, 2007).

On this backdrop the challenges facing ex-combatants are complex and varied. In 2006 the DACPM decided to strengthen and deepen the support it offered to ex-combatants through regularizing self development courses to support them in their reintegration attempts (DACPM, 2007). The course was called "*Warriors for Peace: Psycho-social reintegration course for Former Guerrilla's in our Liberation armies*". My involvement in this course was outlined in the chapter two.

The course had eight modules of which we are concerned with the module entitled

'Reclaiming your Heart'. The interest on this module is that it was considered by DACPM to be a "key methodological component of the course..." (DACPM, 2007, p. 9) and was aimed at addressing issues of masculinity and reintegration into society. Some of the themes in the module include: competition among men, loneliness and fear, relationships between men, women and children, support and communications as key pillars to successful relationships, absent fathers and time management. Moreover the module had a three day wilderness camp called 'Wild at Heart' that was intended to give "participants a chance to travel deep inside themselves. This is achieved through a combination of solo time, storytelling... The three days spent out in the mountains gives participants a chance to... travel inwards into the source of their pain, trauma and other difficulties." (DACPM, 2007, p. 9).

In personal communication (06/01/09) with Desmond van Niekerk a leader and facilitator in the 'Reclaiming your Heart' module he stated that the module was primarily targeted at the participants as men and only secondarily as former soldiers. Mr. van Niekerk maintained that the focus on returned soldiers as men was informed by the thinking that there is a difference between the military in exile and the family in civilian life and the challenge for former soldiers is to learn not to run their families like the military. It was striking that although Mr. van Niekerk recognized the difference between the military and the family he nevertheless viewed both to be terrains of battle stating that "war in exile is different from war at home and former soldiers must face challenges at home and the marketplace as men and not as soldiers. The problem facing former soldiers is that "because in the military they lived on command they want to live their civilian lives in the same way except that now they want to be the commanders ordering people and situations."

Important to note here is that although the respondents are recognized as men instead of soldiers they are still referred to and encouraged to see themselves as men who are still at war. The challenges and changes they face constitute the war they are now engaged in which although they share with other former soldiers remain a deeply personal war requiring them to travel inwards into the source of their pain, trauma and other difficulties (DACPM, 2007). The Marxist thinking that posited revolutionaries as individuals who were to expect nothing at the personal but had to be prepared and willing to sacrifice all personal needs in service of the struggle (Suttner, 2008), seems to be no longer upheld by the ANC thus, the war they are engaged in, is not one for national

liberation but perhaps personal liberation from the “plight of the ex-combatants”. This is partly why the module facilitated by the ‘Trauma Centre’ attempted to help the respondents draw action plans for addressing their challenges.

Moreover, Mr. van Niekerk states that “the module drew on the mythopoetic men’s movement and specifically on Robert Bly’s *Iron John* story” that informed the view of the returned soldiers as wounded men whose masculinity was lost in the war and military life. *Iron John* (a seminal text of the mythopoetic movement) is a replica of *Iron Hans*, a German fairytale published by Wilhelm Grimm in 1850 (Zipes, 1992). The Brothers Grimm in 1815, published a tale entitled *The Wild Man* that was based on a dialect that they had obtained from the aristocratic family von Haxthausen (Zipes, 1992).

The *Iron John* story according to Mr. van Niekerk was interpreted by ‘Heart of Men’ as depicting a young man who was impressed by the power and stature of Iron John and who on escaping with Iron John comes to discover who he is away from home and the familiar. For ‘Hearts of Men’, as Mr. van Niekerk explained “the young man represents the respondents as young men who left their homes and went into the military and there were under the domination of commanders as particular kinds of fathers who somehow facilitated a loss of manhood in the soldiers.” In other words, it was in this commander-soldier relation within military discourse that military men were made who ironically also lost their sense of manhood. Mr. van Niekerk does not explain how he or Heart of Men conceives masculinity or what is meant by a ‘loss of manhood’ but rather there seems to be a subscription to mythopoetic concepts of manhood. This thinking is standard in the mythopoetic men’s movement where manhood is seen to be a deeply seated essence waiting to be activated in the social world; it is intrinsic to every man, transhistorical and culturally universal (Kimmel and Kaufman, 1994). As Bly envisions it “the structure at the bottom of the male psyche is still as firm as it was twenty thousand years ago” (Bly, 1990 cited in Kimmel and Kaufman, 1994). This study challenges this view as false. Chapter four showed that the respondents’ masculine identities were constructed within a particular historical period of apartheid and struggle. To speak in Bourdieu’s language: who the respondents were as youth was as a result of the habitus they embodied as individuals through their lived experience of apartheid and subsequent politicisation. Beyond the personal their masculinities were formed within a collective, historical and social context that was far from universal. This means that the respondents

masculinities were from the time of their politicisation, in the military and now in post-liberation South Africa were bound and continue to be bound in particular historical context that have never been static.

Although the 'Hearts of Men' interpretation of Iron John did not urge the respondents to retrieve the transhistorical Wild Man within them as Robert Bly does in his book the respondents were nonetheless conceived as 'warriors' as the title of the course indicates. Bly argues for a distinction between a soldier, who for him is a murderer, and a true warrior, who is a defender of his integrity and soul (Zipes, 1992). The problem though is that Bly also sees the Wild Man as a true warrior imbued in Zeus energy, resolve, courage and purity who is distinct from the savage man who is equated to greed, rapacity, destruction and dishonesty (Zipes, 1992). Although the 'Wild Man' was not directly referred to he [Wild Man] was invoked by referring to the respondents as 'warriors' within the mythopoetic discourse embedded in the course. Another link with the Wild Man is suggested by the 'Wild at Heart' retreat where the journey "deep inside" suggests itself to have been a journey to recuperate the Wild Man's heart. The portrayal of civilian life for the returned soldiers as a 'war' is in keeping with their portrayal as 'warriors' that are distinct from soldiers. We can understand who this warrior is when Mr. van Niekerk asserts that "the lost sense of manhood is the value for community and family and the connection with women, children and other men and nature." What remains unexplained is what is meant by connection for surely exile and the totality of military life provided some form of connection between men.

Aside from what remains unexplained, the first obvious problem here is that this way of being a man, of being a warrior is said to have been lost yet this study did not find it to have been present to begin within the respondents' lives whose initial sense of manhood were formed in a society in political and violent conflict. This then is a nostalgic longing for a past that did not really exist (Kimmel and Kaufman, 1994). Secondly, the association and invocation of the Wild Man or at least his heart is problematic: What Bly seems to forget and consequently to mention is that the Wild Man, aside from being demonic, in both the Grimm's version and his own, is that the Wild Man also is a killer. At the beginning of both *Iron Hans* and *The Wild Man*, the wild man kills all the hunters who enter the forest (Zipes, 1992). Lastly, there is nothing universal about the Wild Man or what has been attributed to him. He also "does not owe a great debt to some mythical pre-Greek or pre-Christian tale, but it can very clearly be traced to an aristocratic literary

tradition that contained pagan and Christian elements and to European folklore of the Middle Ages. In many respects, the tale bears similarity to an initiation process that a young aristocrat was expected to undergo in European Middle Ages to become a warrior and king” (Zipes, 1992, p. 11). Like Zeus the Wild Man is a fairytale and a mythic warrior hero whose masculine virtue is the brain child of Robert Bly.