

The Era of the Jackrollers: Contextualising the rise of the youth gangs in Soweto

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Introduction

At 2:10am on Christmas Day 1990, a gang of approximately twenty to twenty-five boys broke into the Salvation Army Girls Home in Killarney, Soweto. After attacking the night-watchman they broke the doors of the home and proceeded to make their way to the girls' dormitories. Brandishing an assortment of dangerous weapons, the boys threatened to kill the matron who they then stabbed with a sharp instrument. Amidst the turmoil and the panic, the boys selected their victims, who were then taken to various venues where they were raped.

For the first time the "*Zebra Force*"¹ became known beyond the confines of its immediate neighbourhood. Until then the gang was but a group of delinquent boys operating in the Meadowlands/Killarney area. This was one of the more conspicuously horrific forms of youth violence which aroused fear and revulsion in the people of the township. This was adolescent bravado run riot, but still it was one incident amongst many equally horrendous acts of violence committed in the township streets.²

There has been a rapid increase in the levels of violence in black communities like Soweto. It is arguable that the black "youth"³ have been depicted as central protagonists in this tragic social drama.⁴ A more popular tendency has been to speak of a "youth crisis" or "problem", and sometimes even a "lost generation". This approach fails to locate the structural and historical problems rooted in apartheid. On the other hand the political role of the youth has been covered extensively by academic writers⁵ and it is no wonder that the youth have been identified as having been in the forefront in the making of South Africa's political history. These works, amongst others, have raised some major questions which have been placed on the

agenda of the scholarly and social debates in recent years. Bundy, following Manheim,⁶ attempts to provide an explanation for the role played by this generation of youth in the South African context. Like Hyslop,⁷ he points out that the crisis of capitalism has led to disaffection and has spawned a fervent youth movement of the 1980s. The arguments go on to point out that the social conditions afflicting the youth were indeed the fuel behind the radicalism of the youth-based political movement. Hyslop in his study of the development of education policy and its political consequences, touches directly on the crisis of capitalism and its implications for the developing student movement.

Although these works help us to understand the dynamics of youth culture as it relates to political mobilisation, broadly speaking these scholars fail to relate the crisis of capitalism to the resurgence of an equally robust yet less organised social movement, which manifests itself in the form of youth gangs and wanton criminal violence in the townships. Furthermore, they do not go on to explain what happens when organised political mobilisation goes awry. Due to the sheer growth in the rate of youth violence in the form of crimes committed both within and outside of gangs, it is necessary to confront the question of explaining criminally-oriented youth subcultures in black communities.

The paucity of empirical research and theoretical work on gangs is glaring. With the notable exception of Scharf⁸ and Pinnock,⁹ contemporary South African research remains inadequate. The most incisive attempt to provide some theoretical explanation has been by Glaser.¹⁰ Although this work is useful and does make inroads into the area of violent youth subcultures, its focus remains limited to the period of the 1950s.

Methodology

It is important to periodise the rise of gangs in Soweto. To understand the present wave of youth gangs it is important to locate them within a specific historical period. Gangs first emerged on the Rand with the discovery of gold.¹¹ These were an index of marginalisation and impoverishment experienced by workers working in Johannesburg at the turn of the century. Gangs also emerged in the 1950s following the establishment of the urban townships. These were part of the *tstotsi* subculture which claimed the vast majority of township youths as its adherents. Following the rapid economic growth of the 1960s and the establishment of Bantu education, the problem of gangsterism was contained to a large extent. Another wave of gangsterism was in the mid to late 1970s with gangs like the "Big Fives" and the "Haizels" and the "Vardos". The gangs continued to exist in the post-1976 period. These gangs coincided with the rise of the city slicker streetwise Mapantsula subculture of the 1970s. The gangs examined in this study emerged after the period of continued political resistance in the mid-1980s. These were marked specifically by gangs such as the "Jackrollers", "Amajapan", "Amaninja". These gangs were also accompanied by the rise of notorious gangsters, like "Makhusa", "Jeff Brown" and recently "Morambula".

The major problem facing studies on gangs like this one, is one of access. The nature of the phenomenon is such that the levels of secrecy and isolation are very high. It is also underpinned by suspicion and a strong resentment of scrutiny. Thus the stock of

knowledge upon which this paper is constructed is, unfortunately, largely from outside rather than inside the gangs.

The study is based largely on interviews with people who have had an experience of gangs in their neighbourhood, some of whom have family members who are involved in gangs. It also drew on unemployed youth who live on the fringes of some gangs. Some of the valuable material is from people who were in gangs at some stage in their lives and who are now relating their experience from outside. In an attempt to let youngsters speak of their world, group interviews were conducted with township youths, some of whom had been in gangs and had actually "jackrolled" at some stage in their life. The paper also drew on court records of gang related cases. Speaking to lawyers representing some members of the Zebra Force was also useful. The paper also made extensive use of newspaper material. It is also based on interviews with political activists and Civic Association leaders in the affected areas. It also makes use of material generated through workshops conducted, by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, with youth in the black townships.

This paper will hopefully trigger off some of the questions about the nature of ganging in black communities. It can only hope to be a starting point from which further research can be launched as people continuously seek innovative and creative ways of accessing the world of the protagonist. The paper draws on the experiences of the youth and allows them to paint the picture wherever possible, but it can only serve as an introductory, contextual piece on the immensely complex yet exciting world of gangs.

The purpose of this paper is to contextualise the emerging of a violent gang culture (jackroll) in the period following the township unrest of the mid-80s. This paper argues that the rise of youth gangs and wanton youth violence is equally intricately connected to the crisis of *capitalism*. In South Africa during this period, this crisis has manifested itself in the growing impoverishment of black communities, both urban and rural. In particular, it has been punctuated by the *marginalisation* of a significant proportion of the black youth, manifest in growing youth unemployment, the education crisis and social breakdown, with the consequent collapse of a civic culture.¹²

This paper will consider the rise of violent youth gangs as a consequence of these developments. It will discuss the emergence of a criminally oriented youth subculture and its relationship to various patterns of association amongst township youth as well as the different levels of criminal organisation. In particular, it will attempt to analyse "jackroll" sexual violence directed towards young women.

Marginalisation and the Rise of Street Gangs in Soweto

The deepening crisis of marginalisation and the resultant material impoverishment of black communities is feeding directly into the growth of a violent and criminal youth culture, manifested particularly in the escalation of youth gang formation in the African townships.

The bellicose youth gangs which have multiplied over the past few years are a concrete index of marginalisation as they are a response to the economic and social constraints facing young blacks.

The social sources of gangsterism can be divided into two main analytical categories. The first category consists of causative factors of a structural nature such as the change within the family, the school, employment, and the dis-organisation of the community, with the consequent destruction of a civic culture.¹³ The second category is made up of intervening factors such as the existence of a culture of violence and its interaction with the youth culture. The latter category is concerned primarily with the lived experiences of township youths.¹⁴

Family instability

There is much sociological and psychological writing on the effects of familial disintegration in South Africa. Pinnock in particular, focuses on this as central to the process of gang formation amongst so-called "coloured" youth removed from District Six to the Cape Flats.¹⁵ This appears to be central in explaining the process of ganging. Many youngsters, in an attempt to escape their overcrowded and often poor homes, have opted for a life in the street gangs.

X, 17 years old, started playing truant and fraternising with other boys from Killarney who later became the Zebra Force. It seems he started playing truant for some time and spent a lot of time at the house in "pozie" in Ngiba Street. It seems his mother was unaware and unable to control him since she was away at work, and he had no one to make sure he went to school regularly.¹⁶

What is clear from the literature¹⁷ is that because of constraints imposed by apartheid, many black families have been unable to minister to the needs of children. The employment demands made on black parents have often meant that they are unable to look after children and spend time overseeing their growth and nourishment.¹⁸

In recent years the development of a youth-based political culture has also had further serious consequences for family life. In the process of violent struggle, many youths have developed a noticeable arrogance which resulted in intense generational conflict between them and elders in the community and the family. The generational conflict has not always manifested in stark political terms, but has also taken more subtle and ongoing forms within the privacy of the home.

The specific contours of politics in the 80s therefore greatly accelerated the degeneration of family life. Political unrest shook the society at its very foundation, and authority in the home, in the street, and in the school, began to change as the youth in the vanguard of the "people's war" challenged the traditional authority of their parents.

For most of the 80s, the political movement throughout the country provided an alternative learning environment. In the context where the family is relatively weak and the school is virtually inoperative, the political culture, which was so pervasive in this period, acted as a powerful alternative socialising agency. This, in turn, further eroded the efficacy of the family as a stabilising force.

The failure and inability of families to minister to the material and emotional needs of youths explains the ease with which youth easily slide into a life on the streets. It is here that many receive their orientation into a life of violent crime.

Education crisis

The South African education system has been unable to provide clear connections between schooling and the job world, and has remained ineffective in enhancing the social advancement of black youth. The education system has also been the main site of struggle for many black youths. The virtual paralysis of the education system has pushed many youngsters into the streets where they acquaint themselves with the alternative norms and values, and the required survival skills.

Surveys compiled by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) confirm that whilst the number of people who enrol for matric examinations is increasing every year, the number of those who manage to get matriculation exemptions is steadily declining.¹⁹

Year	Candidates	% Pass
1986	96,000	50.2
1988	169,412	57.9
1989	177,076	41.4
1990	251,411	36.0

Whilst more students enter the system every year, only a tiny proportion is able to succeed and qualify to either go into tertiary education or seek employment. The overwhelming majority are relegated to join the ranks of a growing disempowered youth population.

Economic deprivation

Throughout the 1980s the number of people churned out onto the labour market has grown substantially. This has coincided with the stagnation of employment opportunities. The present unemployment rate hovers around four to five million people, with the youth constituting over 30%.²⁰ Recent statistics show that at the present economic growth rate, 50% of the present workforce could be unemployed by the turn of the century. Only 20% of new jobseekers are able to get employment, compared to 72% in the 1970s. The youth, who constitute an overwhelming majority of the new jobseekers, are the main victims of unemployment.²¹

Although the correlation of unemployment of youth and their engagement in crime is treated almost as commonsense, it is important to trace this through the individual experiences of some of those directly involved. Two cases demonstrate this point:

Gavin Sello, 25 years old, was a matric student in 1986. He did not write his exams in 1986. The following year he went to school and failed his matric because of the sporadic disruption of classes. He made a third attempt in 1988 but he gave up. He has been without work since the day he left school. He hopes that one day he will meet someone who will offer him a job, if not, he confesses the only remaining option is crime.

Joseph Dlamini, 25 years old, left school in Standard 9 at the age of 21. He now makes a living from selling car parts he steals. He makes enough to afford a fairly comfortable lifestyle. He is quick to point out that no employer will ever pay him the money he is making at the moment. He feels he will remain in the business for another ten years, at which point he might have made enough to operate a legal business of his own. He says, "Things may be changing (politically), but if you were nowhere in the past, so will you be nowhere in the future. If I am not educated where will I fit in?"²²

Under-educated black schoolleavers experience their marginalisation most acutely in their economic powerlessness when confronted by contracting job markets and virtual denial of any legitimate wealth creating capacity. In this context the creation of alternative criminal youth gangs, not surprisingly, provides an obvious and welcome substitute.

Political turmoil and the destruction of a civic culture

The political crisis of the mid-80s, followed by the successive states of emergency, have fundamentally disturbed the social cohesion of black township communities.²³ It is important to point out that the prolonged political turmoil, combined with the historical underdevelopment of black communities, has had dire consequences for black communities. Political conflict has paralysed the structure of government established under apartheid. It has also reinforced community resentment of the police and local government. At the same time, the state actively undermined alternative structures which sought to replace these illegitimate formations²⁴ and this was coupled with the detention and elimination of experienced local-level leadership. As a result, the burden of resistance and community leadership was thrown onto the youth, whose strategies were characterised by "immediatism" and often opted for a

form of populist militarism.²⁵ To the extent that organic and locally rooted civic culture had previously checked the social disintegration of black township communities, the dislocation and repression of the mid-80s undermined and eroded this civic culture, paving the way for the consolidation of an increasingly violent criminal ethos. This process was exacerbated by the absence of a credible law enforcement agency which both stimulated the resort to retaliative forms of "legal self-help" and also reduced the prospect of immediate and effective punishment.

The causative structural factors discussed above go some way in explaining the factors which gave rise to gang formation amongst black youth of the PWV townships in the late 1980s. Although this is important in explaining the phenomenon, it does not portray the complete picture, in that it does not explain the different ways in which young people perceive their world. To fully explain the social landscape within which street gangs arise, the lives of black youth cannot simply be reduced to structural influences or causes. By briefly exploring some defining cultural characteristics of the social world within which gangs arise, this paper also attempts to give individuals some scope of inhabiting and constructing their social reality.²⁶

Survivalistic Youth Culture: Gang formation and violence

Youth culture refers to the distinct patterns of life which give expressive form to the social and material life experience of youth.²⁷ The youth culture as it is lived by youngsters in the streets of Soweto has three main defining features. First, it is survivalistic,²⁸ in that it is geared towards the material exploitation of an environment which has limited resources. Secondly, violence²⁹ is an integral feature of this life. Thirdly, it is a machismo culture based on espousing the attainment of masculinity and male dominance.

To understand the activities of criminal youth gangs and their anti-establishment orientation, it is important to locate them within the broader youth subculture of the township. This is crucial because, as mentioned above, for many youths who opt for a life in street gangs, the family and the school have ceased to operate as primary socialising agents. The street culture then substitutes as the main socialising agents. As Pinnock argues, the gang and other friendship support networks become the "pseudo kin".³⁰ This paper cannot offer an exhaustive account of the youth subculture of violence in the township. It does nonetheless note the necessity to do empirical research in this area. Ethnographic research around issues of youth crime and violence can then throw up a range of possible explanations about the cultural context and the feelings, aspirations and worldview of the participants. What follows is an attempt to separate essentially inseparable aspects of the worldview of township youths. It attempts to explore "commonsense" issues relating to the question of survival, violence and crime. Commonsense here refers to what Gramsci calls the uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person or people perceive their world. It is through commonsense that working-class youth try to live their lives under capitalism.³¹ Black youth living in the townships have constructed a complex web of meanings in an attempt to make their social reality intelligible. A multifarious web of meanings is mirrored in an elaborate vocabulary used by the youngsters in the township.

The first issue is directly related to the theme of survival techniques adopted by youngsters in the township.³² In the foregoing discussion it was pointed out that urban youngsters have to contend with huge material problems. This has led to the

emergence of a practice of "ukutabalaza" or "uguphanda" or "ugucribula".³³ All these words are used to describe the daily experience of "getting by". They describe an intricate repertoire of practices which are connected to the daily quest for survival. One youth simply described this as follows:

Q: What is "ukutabalaza"?

A: It is when you do all that is in your power to get money. You see, the world is a bad place because it is built on money ... when you don't have money you are just a dog.³⁴

Another 17-year old added the following:

A: A man must make a plans in order to live. Tony Montana³⁵ said it, when you have money you have power.³⁶

This phenomenon involves a variety of practices which may or may not be criminally inclined. In other words, when a person tries to get money from a relative, a friend or even tries to sell something, he or she may be said to be making means, "ukutabalaza". In the case of the above, the activities are often harmless and they depend on whether or not the resources are available or if the person is skilled enough to enthruse generosity. The perpetual manoeuvre of getting money is thus a dominant mode of existence.

However, the term is also used to describe the activities of people who are involved in criminal activities. In this instance the word is used interchangeably with the terms like "ukuspina", meaning to spin; or "ukuya eroundindi", doing the rounds. These two words are often used to describe the actions of people who are engaged in crimes of theft and robbery, often involving the extensive use of violence.

Q: What is "to spin"?

A: When you spin is when you go into town to steal. This is when you have gone to the rounds, "uya eroundini". You may steal from shops, or steal wheel caps, or do "gryp and naak" (handbag snatching), or even "housa" (house-breaking and theft).³⁷

This is also inclusive of more serious crimes like car-theft and bank robbery. It is important to note that the crimes described above are also rife inside the township, as one informant admits:

Q: Can you spin in the township?

A: Yes, when you see a beautiful "fila" (designer t-shirt) on the washing-line you can take it, or "diadora" (leather sneakers) you go and take them. Sometimes you can see a toaster or a TV or a video, you can take your chances. But

you see, when you take the "dulas" (loot) from the township, you must have a buyer because "iya shisa" (it is hot).³⁸

The practice of "ukutabalaza" also involves more sophisticated forms of organised crimes which are often committed by older and more established criminals. Crimes committed in this category often involve much more ambitious activities such as bank robberies and major car hijacking, or even syndicates involving complicated fraudulent business deals. There is much evidence that these bigger schemes would involve younger inexperienced boys in running errands.

Youngsters speak openly of noted individuals who seem to have made their lives comfortable by engaging in criminal activities. It is these people who they often regard as their heroes or role models.

Q: What is a "clever"?

A: There are a lot of "clevers" in the township, like there are older "bras" (brothers) who wear smart clothes, they drive nice cars. These people spin fulltime. The thing with them is that they don't cause trouble with anyone in the location. Bra D (a local hero) is a clever ... I can't tell you what he does, but I know he is a clever.³⁹

This category of persons seem to be known as professional or fulltime thieves; "ba ya gintsa" (they rob and steal). This has led to the widespread belief that it is possible for youngsters to become rich without having found full-time employment. It is popularly believed that one can get "umhlalaphantsi" (a big break), which can allow one to begin to operate a normal business and stay without going to work.⁴⁰ For many youngsters, crime-based wealth-generation may be seen as a means of ultimately escaping the ghetto; whether this is the conscious basis for originally engaging in criminal activity or not, is difficult to establish. What does seem clear, is that the trend towards establishing a career on the wrong side of the law, and the capacity to escape from this underworld, once engaged in it, seems to be highly restricted. "Umhlalaphantsi" can therefore generally be categorised as part of a mythical, ideological construct of the criminal subculture, part of a system of popular belief which does not necessarily reflect any objective reality.

The objective result of such popular beliefs, however, is a lack of respect for the law, and an unwillingness to cooperate with the organs of law and order, as well as a general acceptance of crime as a way of life. This is clear from the conversation quoted below:

Q: What will you do when you see someone robbing a bank or a shop?

A: (T) What can you do, you must just mind your own business.

(M) You have to leave people alone, they are trying to make a living like everyone else.

Q: You mean you won't tell the police or try and stop the person from committing the crime?

A: It would be very foolish to tell the police about something like that, I mean the person is trying to make a living ... a lot of people have made themselves rich in that way, by stealing from the white man, hai! I won't tell the police, I might also get my chance one day.⁴¹

It is important to note that the phenomenon of "ukutabalaza" described above, depends largely on the tacit support of the entire community. The community provides a ready market for stolen goods or "backdoor goods". Groups or individuals who depend on stealing as a way of life rely on an already existing well-established, informal structure, which makes it easy to dispose of stolen goods. Secondly, it is plausible to assert that there is a general disregard for the law which manifests itself not only in the willingness of the people to buy stolen goods, but also the general unwillingness of the community to tell the police about people who sell stolen goods.⁴² In this respect, it is important to recognise that despite the generational conflict discussed earlier, even older township residents, who share the material exploitation and the racial oppression (particularly at the hands of the police) of the youth, are often complicit in this.

Whilst this is so, it is in the street life and the world of the youth gangs that many of the features described above find realisation. The experiences of poverty and economic obsolescence, nurture a subculture which easily transforms township youth into urban hunters who prowl the streets in search of a means to stay alive.⁴³ Gangs such as the Zebra Force are the primary custodians of this survivalistic yet hedonistic youth culture. It is such that should be seen as part of a complex repertoire of working-class responses to the vagaries of racial capitalism. The evolution of the Zebra Force is illustrative of many of the trends discussed above and for this reason is worthy of some description.

The Zebra Force first caught the public's eye on 25 December 1990 after the incident described at the beginning of this paper. According to the available information, they operated as a loose group of boys from a house in Ngiba Street. The gang was apparently formed around Lawrence, Mphikeleli and Tapepe, all of whom lived in the house in Ngiba Street which was their "blom plek" (headquarters) or "pozie" (place). This is where the boys would spend time smoking "dagga" (marijuana) and hang out. The house was owned by the grandmother of the boys, Elizabeth Ngubane. It seems the gang evolved from a group of friends who had always hung around together.⁴⁴ Many of the boys had dropped out of school and some of them lived permanently at the "pozie". This loose group of boys would occasionally engage in various petty crimes in the area. According to information given to the Soweto Civic Association, Killarney branch, and confirmed by a brother of a gang member, the gang first started by stealing bicycles from Lenasia, and doing odd jobs like caddying at the golf course.⁴⁵ Over the months the gang developed into a more criminally oriented gang as the operations became more ambitious. Many of the crimes involved "housa housa" (house breaking and theft), "spinning" and mugging in the township. The gang is also said to have vandalised schools in the neighbourhood. At the time of the Salvation Army affair, the boys had a large collection of stolen goods which were stored in the main home. The gang subsisted on "spinning" as a means of survival

and wealth generation. Many of them came from poor homes and had no chance of getting a job in the formal sector. Some of the gang members were involved in street vending. As a matter of fact, one of the leading members of the Christmas Day rape was easily known to the victims because he sold fruit next to the Salvation Army house.⁴⁶

At its origin, the Zebra Force was a social network of adolescents who lived in the Meadowlands/Killarney area. The evolution of the Zebra Force seems to confirm that young people gravitate towards gangs simply in an attempt to deal with their daily circumstances. The formation of these criminal youth gangs therefore should be seen primarily as a survival technique, in a society which has condemned many young blacks to a life of poverty and desperation.

Significantly, the evolution of the Zebra Force suggests that such gangs also arise out of a need to create entertainment and excitement. There is a chronic lack of recreational facilities in South Africa's black townships. In an attempt to deal with boredom, youth such as the members of the Zebra Force look to the streets for entertainment, and often create their own forms of entertainment which invariably involve acts of adolescent bravado. This is also the place where youth are tutored into a life of violent crime and gangsterism. The Zebra Force also demonstrates that such gangs provide an alternative home for marginalised youngsters. They are a source of emotional and material support. They are also an attempt by the powerless and the alienated to generate a sense of alternative power, status and belonging. As pointed out above, these gangs become an embodiment of a vicious, macho, violent street culture shared by many youngsters in the township.

The arrest of the Zebra Force

The case of the Zebra Force is in some sense exemplary of commendable community action. Ironically, it embodies some principles of sound police-community relations. The community, via the Civic Association, was clearly alarmed by the events of Christmas Day, and under the leadership of the Civic Association, they formed a taskforce led by Mendi Messina, and set out in search of the boys. The boys were caught and were handed over to the police. Eighteen of the boys were arrested and brought to court. Fourteen of them have since been convicted and sentenced, the rest are currently fighting an appeal case.⁴⁷

The concerted effort by the whole community ensured the speedy arrest of the culprits. Under the leadership of the Civic Association, some of the excesses of community retribution (like "necklacing") were avoided. This is clear from Mr Shabangu's input:

We got the boys and then we called the police, we made sure that they respond to our request because they are bloody useless ... unlike other parts of Soweto we don't burn people, some people were saying that we should burn them, but we said no! We followed the case and made sure that those boys were sentenced ...⁴⁸

The collective strength of the community also served to pressurise police into dealing with the issue more conveniently. According to the matron of the Salvation Army Girls Home, the police had originally failed to respond to her calls:

When the boys were banging and breaking the doors, I phoned the Meadowlands police. They said that the van was out on patrol, I asked them whether it was the only one, they asked me to be patient. Because the police failed to come quickly, the boys had enough time to select their victims and then disappear into the night.⁴⁹

The active involvement of the Civic Association in hunting down and capturing the culprits placed pressure on the shoulders of the police to act with equal urgency. Whilst the arrest of the boys will remove them from the streets (temporarily), it will not however, begin to deal with the root causes of the violence.

Studies of marginalisation tend to concentrate on the materially acquisitive nature of crimes committed by marginalised youth. These would often involve crimes like stealing and robbing committed by gangs and other social formations of the marginalised. In other words, they recognise and emphasise the need to "spin" in order to live.⁵⁰ By definition, the experience of marginalisation is one that encompasses the totality of the person's identity. The sense of powerlessness and alienation often encroaches on other spheres of life. Thus, it is important to also understand and address other forms of criminal behaviour which are carried out within the subcultural alternative devised by the youth. Often this form of behaviour is attached to the symbolic reassertion of power and it is acquisitive only as far as it yields psychological rewards.⁵¹

Jackroll, Male Violence and Young Women in Soweto

The increase in township-based youth violence has most notably been accompanied by a dramatic increase in violence that is specifically directed against young women.⁵² Whilst it is true that rape, like all forms of male violence against women, is connected to the broad socio-cultural milieu which is suffused with beliefs of male dominance, supremacy and aggression,⁵³ this generalisation does not explain the emergence of the distinct youth subculture of violence known popularly as "jackroll".

The word was coined to refer to the forceful abduction of women in the township by a specific gang called the Jackrollers which operated in the years 1987-1988 in the Diepkloof area under the leadership of Jeffrey Brown. The original Jackroller gang was made up of a tight network of less than ten associates. The gang was led by Jeff Brown who within months of his arrival in Soweto, earned the "status" of the most feared man in the township. The most notable practices of the Jackrollers were rape and abduction, car theft and bank robbery. But as the abduction of women became fashionable, anyone who did it could be called a jackroller, and jackroll became a commonly used verb in the township vocabulary.

Although rape is not the only form of violence against women, it is nonetheless the most conspicuous. Young women have to contend with many other forms of sexual harassment on a daily basis. According to Motsei, this violence is indicative of a "war culture" which dominates our society today.

When you leave your child alone in the home she is not safe. And in the street, she is not safe. And in the school she is not safe. There is nowhere that she can walk and be safe. Girls are afraid somebody in a car will stop them and say, "get in". When they walk in the street they are raped by men with guns. Sexual abuse happens so much that some students stop going to school.⁵⁴

Violence against young women occurs, in part, within the framework of a male dominated society. Men have been taught to define their power in terms of their capacity to effect their will, without the consent of those involved, especially women. This often manifests itself in the attitudes of young males towards sex and sexuality, as demonstrated by the following conversation with some youths, some of whom had actually jackrolled at some stage of their lives or were likely to do it again:

Q: What do you do when a girl refuses to have sex with you?

A: (X) You see, I have told myself that "cherries" (girls) can't tell me anything, when I want it she must give, you see girls think they are clever sometimes. She will make excuses claiming she is sick and all that. I make it clear that when I say I want it now. If you are soft and you let her get away with it, you will not get her.

(L) Hai! No ways, she likes it or not, she has to give it.

(X) You see, in the township you have "amanyora" (cruel people) who take it by force.⁵⁵

Such attitudes need to be seen as an integral part of a society which prescribes different gender roles. This is often reflected in an extreme form, through the way young males think about sex and the role women are expected to play.

Q: Give me a few words to describe sex in the language of the Magitas (the Guys).

A: Ukupeita (to spray), ugushaya nge kauza (to hit her with the pipe), ukuhlaba (to stab).⁵⁶

The different words listed above (which are probably common to most cultures) conspicuously lack any implication of reciprocity and deliberately bestow the male with the status of the doer and the woman with that of the victim. Furthermore, implicit in these images is the inseparable interconnection between sexuality and violence. This is further graphically demonstrated in the following quotes:

D: There are guys who have sex with many girls, "badla abantwana" (they eat the girls). When such a guy walks into the house with a girl, you know he is going to score ...

Q: How?

D: You can see from the way he carries himself when he walks out of the house, he will be smiling and walking proudly, the girl will be looking on the ground. He will have humbled her. She will come out walking with her thighs apart because the "thing" is sore.⁵⁷

In South Africa, racism compounds this dynamic through the creation of powerlessness and impotence which imposes a form of "inferiority complex" upon its victims. Black males of all ages have to deal with their inferior status, often experienced as emasculation, in society and in the workplace where they are treated as "boys". This inferior status contradicts their socialisation and leads to chronic feelings of inferiority. This is also accompanied by deteriorating social and economic circumstances and the consequent experiences of unemployment. Psychologists have pointed out that for many men, work is inextricably tied to gender expectations and their experiences of masculinity. Unemployment is thus experienced as a personal, rather than a social failure.⁵⁸ This often induces a sense of inferiority which translates itself into violence against women who are vulnerable and less able to defend themselves physically. The jackroll menace coincides with a dramatic rise in youth unemployment.

A conjunction of the factors mentioned above, leads to a situation where violence is used as a means of increasing self-esteem. Women, as less powerful persons, become the victims of displaced aggression, the victims of a symbolic reassertion of masculinity and control. Thus, the use of physical force against young women has found widespread acceptance and this is clear from the opinions voiced by some unemployed township youth:

Q: Do you normally fight with your girlfriends ... (interruption)

A: (T) Listen, you are mistaken. You don't fight with her, you beat her up.

(P) (17 years old) I remember I had an appointment with her and she stood me up, I later realised that she was with another "bari" (fool). I waited until he was gone and then I called her, I could not hold myself, I just had to punish her.

Q: Surely you would expect her to do the same if she finds you with another girl?

A: (P) (laughs) She has to understand that I am a man.⁵⁹

It is within this context that jackroll has taken root. Its emergence is particularly interesting, in that it points to the popularisation of sexual violence amongst the youth

in the township streets. There are a number of things which make it different from ordinary rape. Firstly, it is primarily a youth phenomenon. Although males of all ages can rape, jackroll is committed by people who are still fairly young. Secondly, it is almost always committed in the open, and the rapists do not make attempts to conceal their identity. As a matter of fact, it seems part of the exercise is to be exposed so as to earn respect. Most incidents of jackroll are committed in public places like shebeens, picnic spots, schools, nightclubs and in the streets. Jackroll is often committed by roving gangs of armed youths. However, it is also true that individuals also commit rapes with brazen openness. For instance a man by the name of "Kakhathi" in Meadowlands is known to be a lone jackroller, and so was Jeff Brown, the leader of the original Jackroller gang.

A peculiar characteristic of jackroll is that it is seen as a sport of the tough gangsters. There is in fact a common township saying that: "Jackroll is not a crime, it is just a game".⁶⁰ As one commentator points out: "It has become a male fashion, that is, a popular form of male behaviour indulged in by even young school boys The tough and "manly" Jackrollers become their role models."⁶¹

It also seems plausible to argue that jackroll is directly linked to attempts by young males to reassert their power via distorted masculine sexuality. When jackroll first emerged, the victims were carefully selected. Initially many of the victims were those women who were thought to be out of reach because of their class and status. Such women would be called by derogatory names such as "amahaiza" meaning snobs.

Q: What do you think of people who jackroll?

A: It is not a nice thing, but sometimes I don't blame them. These women think they are better than anyone else, they look down on us, they prefer men who have money and drive in nice cars. When these women get jackrolled its okay, she likes big men so let them give it to her.

Q: What kind of woman is that?

A: It is the kind that don't even want to speak to you, when you say hello, they just shake their bums and walk away from you. Some of them even invite jackroll, they walk in the street wearing minis and short skirts, these women invite rape. When you seen such a woman you get aroused, but when you talk to them they snub you. We (Magita) can't stand for this shit ...⁶²

Young women are thus victimised both directly and indirectly. Women have to be ultra cautious about their movement, what they wear and which places they visit. These added restrictions help to further entrench their particular sense of inferiority and marginalisation.

Isabellais a 17 year old student in Soweto. She says:

I am afraid of the jackrollers. They are affecting all of us as girls. We are not safe anymore. We can't even walk in the streets without being harassed by hooligans.⁶³

Needless to say, jackroll has devastating consequences for its victims. As Diana Russell asserts:

Some rapes result in unwanted pregnancies, many of which turn into cases of forced motherhood The consequences is loss of freedom which last for the rest of the women's lives, one of the most serious of which is to prevent women from pursuing their own desires and interests. This is yet another way in which rape functions to keep women subordinate to men.⁶⁴

The youth gangs like the Zebra Force, have claimed many women as their victims. It does not seem like most gangs are the exclusive domain of the young males. Women are peripheral yet crucial "components" of this youth culture. They are seen as objects of competition and as sources of affirming the "masculinity" of the young men. This gender specific youth subculture does not occur in a social and cultural vacuum. It draws from and exaggerates and caricatures commonly held values in the township. As Glaser points out:

Sexual roles and stereotyping inculcated through the home and the school environment, and reinforced by the media, are retained in youth subcultures, rather than acting against sexual hegemonic norms, youth subcultures tend to exaggerate them.⁶⁵

The practice of jackroll is an emphatic description of the chauvinistic ethos which underpins the pervasive youth culture. Like the case of the Christmas Day rape, it is an act of youth terror against women in the township. Having said that, it is important to guard against presenting women as passive recipients of male violence. There is evidence to point to the existence of survival and defence mechanisms used by women to cope with the pervasive male-based youth culture.⁶⁶

Gangs and other patterns of association in the townships

The gangs should not be treated as homogenous entities, nor should they be seen as similar across the board. There are different patterns of association amongst township youth. The most common is the friendship network, defining the company in which youngsters spend most of their time in the street with friends. These are loose associations which vary in size and which often form the nucleus of any gang. Many gangs, such as the Zebra Force, originate primarily from this source. Many of the gangs would gradually evolve as the friendship clique takes on an increasingly violent and criminal orientation. It is this development that often brings some form of

organisation and structure, as particular individuals become central in the life of a gang. Most gangs operating in the township revolve around noted "dare-devil type" personalities sometimes known as "bariski" meaning risk takers, or "amagozo", people prone to violence, who often appropriate the status of the most feared man in the community, or public enemy number one.⁶⁷

It is important to note that gangs operating in African townships like Soweto have a relatively short lifespan as compared to gangs in so-called "coloured" townships. They also happen to be much smaller. These gangs also revolve around personalities, unlike gangs in so-called "coloured" townships which have more to do with a sense of territorial and community identity. Youngsters are born and bred in surroundings where particular gangs have been operating for decades. Gangs in African townships are in a sense predators operating on the periphery of society. There is a sense in which the gang culture is far more pervasive and entrenched. Because the gang revolved around an individual or two, it tends to disband when the person is removed either by death or imprisonment. Although these street gangs have a shorter lifespan, they are equally menacing, and have equally paralysing effects on their social surroundings.

These gangs differ from what is sometimes called "schemes".⁶⁸ The word was originally used to refer to a friendship network, but has since taken on new meanings. It is also used to refer to groups of more seasoned criminals who associate with people in the same trade, in and outside the township. The schemes are not street gangs (as they involve a more adult membership) although they do also have younger members. They also have a more fluid membership, unlike street gangs which after some time are likely to have a static membership. Schemes are associated with the developing drug trade in the township, and the car operations, to which most of the hijackings are linked. Indeed, these schemes provide the role models for younger and inexperienced youths.⁶⁹

There is a lot of interaction between these two levels of association. The emergent street gangs are sometimes connected with more ambitious projects in the township. For instance, the Amajapan, a gang of young car thieves operating from Pimville, were part of a larger car-dealing enterprise. The younger members would steal the cars and then transfer them over to their older contacts. These contacts served to dispose of the cars. They were also providing remuneration. The youths would also receive bail money from their contacts in the case of imprisonment. Their connections sometimes provided them with money to see witchdoctors who would strengthen them against bad luck.⁷⁰

Originally the jackrollers, like the schemes, were more tightly knit, smaller groups of older youths. In this way they were different from the street gangs which tended to attract younger boys. However, the fluidity between the different forms of association and their frequent contact paved the way for younger and younger jackrollers. What is clear is that membership of a street gang is often a first step on the path towards a violent career on the wrong side of the law.

Gangs and Politics

Both Pinnock⁷¹ and Glaser⁷² argue that gangs are a form of resistance to the hegemony of the dominant classes. They suggest that gangs arise out of a politically hostile environment and they are in some senses a response to political domination. Furthermore, they suggest that although gangs are peripheral to the political contest, they have serious implications in the struggle for hegemony.⁷³ Glaser argues that the tsotsi subculture of the 1950s should be interpreted against the background of the structural marginalisation and impoverishment of black working-class youths on the Reef during that period. He goes on to point out that:

The tsotsi subculture, through its value system, style and ritual, aggressively denied hegemonic consensus. The tsotsi values, such as a brazen rejection of law and the glorification of violence, criminality and hedonism were defined in direct antagonism to the consensus value system.⁷⁴

Glaser, following the CCCS, argues that the resultant subculture constitutes a form of resistance to the structural constraints facing youth in any given context. In a similar vein, albeit in a different context:

... Hall and Jefferson stress that the interaction of culture/subculture involves an active response on the part of the subcultural members to constraints and possibilities of structural location. Resistance is an assertion of identity, or making yourself felt.⁷⁵

Van Onselen in his path-breaking work on "the Regiment of the Hills" in the early twentieth century also implies that the Ninevite bandit gangs constituted a form of resistance to the authority of the white state. In this he classifies these gangs as "anti-social" rather than "social bandits" (in contrast to Hobsbawn's notion). Nonetheless, he goes on to suggest that this did not negate their oppositional character in the South African context.⁷⁶ Referring to the Ninevites, Van Onselen goes on to point out that:

Months before politically conscious blacks met to form the African National Congress, a black army on the Witwatersrand with branches as far afield as Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Pietermaritzburg was delivering a serious challenge to a repressive and privileged state.⁷⁷

This, Van Onselen argues, was not due to the threat to property which they posed, but due to the fear that they endangered the state's law enforcement capacity in the mine compounds and cities.

Certainly the Ninevite leaders had a low level of political awareness, but they were able to perceive their followers as being state rebellion in an unjust society. To the black working-class ... the organisation saw itself as redressing the balance between the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless in a markedly inegalitarian and racist society For these reasons, if none other, we should reassess the revolutionary potential of the lumpen proletariat in South Africa's historical evolution.⁷⁸

The suggestion made by Van Onselen here is rather important. Having graphically described the origins and character of gang culture amongst the Ninevites, he takes a step further in suggesting that this subcultural analysis lends meaning to a form of cultural *resistance*.

It is true that gang activity in the townships often makes the task of social regulation and law enforcement almost impossible. Concretely, the predatory nature of gang violence is a source of serious concern and paranoia to the white privileged minority. Whilst it is probably true that the present gang culture embodies elements of cultural resistance which have a potential of being an affront to the dominant classes, they remain a menace to the poor and the oppressed, and more significantly, often they serve to specifically obstruct progressive political mobilisation. My main anxiety with the current application of the abovementioned paradigm is that it runs the risk of mystifying and romanticising the role played by such youth gangs. It also runs the risk of overlooking the negative consequences of their aberrant anti-social behaviour. As Pinnock points out:

Gang activities are obviously not a recipe for winning popular hegemony. They are not an evolving culture of liberation. Perhaps they are not even part of a culture of resistance. (Organisational impetus for this necessity lies elsewhere.)⁷⁹

This paper argues that the gangs which emerge in the post-1985 period display a distinct rivalry towards organised political forces within the township. They do not merely exist on the fringes of the political movement, instead they often serve to actively obstruct rather than enhance its objectives.

The emergent gangs of Soweto seem to have had a particularly hostile relationship with the political organisations and activists operating in the township, which has been punctuated by repeated overt and usually fierce conflict.

This conflict has often translated itself into prolonged battles in the township. Many clashes were focussed around the very issues of defence against gang violence. In cases where a local gang has terrorised a neighbourhood for some time, when a

person has been raped or a house broken into, a local body of "comrades" would often organise to defend the community.⁸⁰

Diepkloof became the site of many such battles between the jackrollers and the "comrades".⁸¹ "Comrades" organising from Fidelitas High School, were organised as a counter-force against the Jackrollers. It has been alleged that following the rise of the Jackrollers in Diepkloof, a "hit squad" was formed which was led by a "comrade" known as "Slovo". This "hit squad" went out in search of notorious gangsters. Noted personalities within the Jackroller gang were killed mysteriously by such alleged comrades.⁸² Following the death of Archie Makukeya and Mandla Vilakazi, who were prominent Cosas activists,⁸³ members of the Jackrollers, Wiseman Tenza, Roger Miya, Jeff Brown, Makhekhe Hlatswayo and Manjaro Shabalala, were all killed in a series of battles which were waged in the months of 1990. Within the same period, Sugar Nkomo, the leader of the notorious Rastafarian gang, was also beheaded and set alight in another part of Soweto.⁸⁴

The Jackrollers were not the only gang involved in such confrontations. In another part of Soweto, one saw the emergence of the "21 Jump Street", a gang operating in the Mofolo area which also displayed clear anti-ANC affiliations. The gang was stopped from necklacing Peter Bhembe, a civic activist at Mshenguville squatter camp. It was claimed that the gang had "come to discipline the comrades". Other gangs such as the Ninjas in the Emdeni-Zola area, were also particularly hostile to activists working in that area. Leading activists were killed by these gangs.

Allegations have regularly been made that such gangs were actually sponsored by the police and other government forces. Such allegations are not completely implausible considering the events in other areas. For instance the "Three Million" gang which terrorised the Free State township of Maokeng is said to have been funded by operatives of the police. They were alleged to have been supplied with money and guns and were apparently commissioned to kill ANC leaders in the area. The gang, made up of 60 members, lived in two houses in the township and operated with seeming impunity.

Another noteworthy case was that of the "Gaddafi Squad" or "G Squad" which operated in the township of Khutsong. The main target of this gang was the Khutsong Youth Congress (KYC). A group of activists were abducted and mutilated by the gang, the victims being forced to eat their own ears.⁸⁵ This seeming antagonism between political activists was presented at its most extreme when many people were brutally slain at the Sebokeng night vigil. It is alleged that the mourners were attacked by gang members who had previously killed an ANC activist. Perhaps the most significant indicators are the criminals who masquerade as political activists and who are termed "comtsotsis". There is, not surprisingly, evidence of this sort of occurrence, since political turmoil often provides the space for criminals to operate conveniently under the cover of political dislocation. Indeed, some of the excesses of the activists have been dubbed as criminal elements themselves.

This is also further complicated by the occasional defection of the young who then form criminal gangs. The vital significance of the "comtsotsis" resides precisely in the fact that they appear to straddle both the political and the criminal worlds. Indeed, it is arguable that the momentum of these clashes between gangsters and political activists carries them to the realm of gang wars. Since both the "comrades" and the

gangs have an organised presence in the township, they often compete for superiority and control over communities.

The animosity between the gangs and activists must also be understood before the backdrop of an ineffective police force, where schoolchildren, being the most readily organised group, have had to respond to the challenge of community defence, thus finding themselves directly opposed to the gangs. More importantly, what the "comtsotsis" and other criminal gangs symbolise, in stark contrast to Van Onselen's Ninevite gangs and Glaser's tsotsi gangs, is more than filling a political vacuum created by an underdeveloped political movement in the case of the Ninevites, or an elitist exclusivist movement in the case of the tsotsi gangs. These gangs of the mid-80s rode in on the back of political organisations. It was precisely the insurrectionary phrase "people's war" and "ungovernability", rooted in the thrust towards building organs of "people's power" and coupled with intensified repression, that provided the material conditions conducive to both gang formation per se, and the increasing socially sanctioned use of violence which came to define the activities of gangs.

In this context the youth gangs themselves became a "site of struggle" as competing political interests either battled with or attempted to manipulate the criminal element. In a climate of deep economic recession, these gangs are even more susceptible to such manipulation against a backdrop of state-sponsored and bureaucratically sanctioned covert activities. These gangs have a material (rather than simply political) interest in disruption and dislocation, and take on a more ominous political significance. Indeed, the gangs on the other hand subsist on turmoil and disruption. Far from realising the supposed "revolutionary potential", these gangs may well provide the soldiers of the oft described and seldom identified "third force".

Conclusion

The era of the jackrollers heralds a serious threat which is evidenced in the horrific forms of violence and social decay incubated in the barrack-like townships which vociferate the historical tragedy of apartheid. Soweto is indeed the centre-stage of unfolding macabre social drama, and sections of the black youth continue to play a leading role. The world of academia can no longer choose to see the youth only when the act is in unison against their oppressors. Nor can it also afford to romanticise and mystify criminal youth formations and thus ignore their potentially counter-revolutionary nature.

It is ironic that the re-entry of previously banned political organisations into the daily political scenario promises to further sideline the youth. The youth, as a collective force and the one-time engine of the South African struggle, now faces insurmountable political, economic and social problems. The failure of the present and indeed future governments to place youth issues onto the agenda could swell the ranks of the growing *alternative force* which is presently being nurtured in the township streets.

Notes:

¹ The name Zebra Force like many other gang names, is derived from the fictional world of the movies. The name has also been used by other gangs in the township.

² In the first three months of 1991 reported crimes in Soweto were as follows: 319 people murdered, 414 raped, 1 114 residential burglaries, 1 219 cases of theft, and 760 armed robberies. These statistics were reported by Colonel De Vries in the *Star* 19/05/91. Such statistics do not portray the full picture since they only point to reported cases.

³ There is enormous controversy in the country about the actual definition of the youth. There is no consensus on what the actual ages are. This paper opts for "commonsense" definition which encompasses people in their adolescence through to their mid-twenties.

⁴ There is a tendency within the media to treat the black youth as a homogenous entity. This approach often portrays the black youth as a problem. For example the research conducted by the Inkatha Institute, which largely shaped Barbara Foulcher's documentary on the so-called "lost generation". Not only does this paradigm fail to address the complexities and nuances involved, but it is also fraught with value-laden judgements about black youths.

See also Bosman, M. For a detailed critique. Paper presented at the ASSA Conference, the University of Stellenbosch, 1990.

⁵ Hyslop, J. "Schools, Unemployment and Youth", in *Education, From Poverty to Liberation* Nasson, B. And Samuel, J. Cape Town: David Phillip, 1990. See also Bundy, C. "Street Sociology and Pavement Politics: Aspects of youth and student resistance in Cape Town", 1985. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol 13, April 1987.

⁶ Bundy, C. op. cit.

⁷ Hyslop, J. op. cit.

⁸ Scharf, W. "The Resurgence of Urban Street Gangs and Community Responses in Cape Town during the Late Eighties". *Institute of Criminology*, University of Cape Town, 1989.

⁹ Pinnock, D. "The Brotherhoods, Street Gangs and State Control in Cape Town". Cape Town, David Phillip, 1984.

¹⁰ Glaser, C. "Anti-social Bandits and the Rise of the Tsotsi Subculture". History Masters Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990.

¹¹ See van Onselen, C. "The Regiment of the Hills, Inkosi Wezintaba". In *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, Vol. 2: New Niniveh. Johannesburg: Ravan Press 1982.

¹² This paper draws extensively on the work of Wilfred Scharf, which was an attempt to explain the resurgence of youth gangs in the Western Cape in the post-1985 period. See Scharf, W. "The Resurgence of Youth Gangs and Community Responses". op. cit.

¹³ This categorization has been adapted from the work of Ko-lin Chin which was an attempt to understand the rise of youth gangs in Chinese communities in the USA. Chin addresses issues which are in many respects similar to circumstances in the black townships of South Africa. See Chin, K. "The Social Sources of Chinese Gang Delinquency", 8 December 1989.

¹⁴ Whilst this paper draws on various sources, by using interview material it is hoped that explanations of socio-criminological work can attempt to move beyond the level of theoretical abstraction and grapple with the actors. This will hopefully make a move away from deterministic, structuralist models of explaining youth delinquency.

¹⁵ Pinnock, D. op. cit.

¹⁶ Interview with Thabang Lepere, brother of a Zebra Force member, September 1991.

¹⁷ Pinnock, D. op. cit.

¹⁸ Gorodnov, V. "Soweto, Life and Struggle of a South African Township, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983.

¹⁹ See South African Race Relations (SAIRR) Surveys 1986 to 1989.

²⁰ South African Institute of race Relations 1989/90.

²¹ See Riordan, R. "Marginalised Youth". Paper presented at the *Marginalised Youth Conference* held by the Joint Enrichment Project, June 1991.

²² Interviews conducted by Connie Molusi.

²³ See Ramphele, M. "Social Disintegration in the Black Community – Implications for Transformation". Paper presented at the *National Conference on Marginalised Youth*, 6 June 1991.

²⁴ Scharf, W. op. cit.

²⁵ See Hyslop, J. op. cit. and Bundy, C. op. cit.

²⁶ See Macleod, J. "Ain't no Making it: Levelled aspirations in a low income neighbourhood", pp. 137-162, 1987.

²⁷ See Clark, J., Hall, S., Jefferson, T. & Roberts, B., "Culture and Ideology in Social Process", *Open University Press*, 1983.

²⁸ The term was used by Glasgow in describing the street culture of young Afro-Americans in the ghettos of America. See Glasgow, D. "The Black Underclass", pp. 77-104, 1980.

²⁹ This feature is comparable to those identified in the tsotsi subculture of the 1950s. See Glaser. Paper presented at the *African Studies Seminar*, September 1990.

³⁰ See Pinnock, D. "The Brotherhoods" op. cit.

³¹ For a detailed discussion of the Gramscian notion of commonsense see Gramsci, S. "Political Thought: An introduction", 1982.

³² See Ramphele, M. op. cit.

See also Noe, J., Paper presented at the *Soweto Crime Convention*, 8 May 1991.

³³ The interviews were conducted in "Imchamtho" a language used by black youth in Soweto. Although this paper does not attempt an analysis of the linguistic elements in it, it does acknowledge that, this language like any other language, mirrors the culture of its speakers. This language of the "underworld" exhibits an extensive vocabulary which often denotes an acceptance of violence and crime. It is also fraught with sexist connotations. See Vogelmann, L., p.100 in McKendrick and Hoffman, "People and Violence in South Africa", 1990.

³⁴ Interview with Deza and Mabenzo from Diepkloof Zone, 2 April 1991.

³⁵ Tony Montana was the big time drug-lord played by Al Pacino in the film "Scarface". This quote demonstrates the extent to which the fictional world of the movies has influenced youth culture. A similar observation was also made by Cross, "Perspectives in Education", Vol 12, No 2, when he noted the various names given to gangs and noted individuals. Another well-known Soweto-based jackroller named Tebogobu Buchibo, became widely known as Morambula, a name derived from Rambo.

³⁶ Field interviews held in Orlando, Soweto, September 1991.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Interview with M, ex-gang member from Diepkloof, Soweto, June 1991.

⁴¹ Field interviews held in Orlando, Soweto, September 1991.

⁴² Speech given by Prince Morare at the *Soweto Crime Convention*, 8 May 1990.

⁴³ Pinnock op. cit., p. 63.

⁴⁴ Telephone interview with Makhosonke Thusini, youth activist from Killarney.

⁴⁵ Interview with Thabang Lepere, op. cit.

⁴⁶ Interview with Mendi Messina, leader of the task force which was sent out to catch the Zebra Force, September 1991.

⁴⁷ Interview with Mr Ackerman, defence attorney.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mr Shabangu, chairperson of the Killarney Civic Association, September 1991.

- ⁴⁹ Interview with Capt Mtambo, matron of the Salvation Army Girls Home, September 1991.
- ⁵⁰ See Scharf, W., "Street Gangs, Survival and Political Consciousness in the Eighties", *Institute of Criminology*, University of Cape Town.
- ⁵¹ See Vogelmann, L. *The Sexual Face of Violence*, pp. 119-139, Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1990.
- ⁵² In a workshop held by the *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation* with youth from Alexandra and Soweto, 27 September 1991, all of the participants felt that (jackroll) sexual violence was a major problem in their neighbourhood. This trend was reproduced in similar workshops held in other townships including Soweto.
- ⁵³ Wilson, quoted in Vogelmann, op. cit.
- ⁵⁴ Mary Mabaso interviewed by Diana Russell, 26 March 1991.
- ⁵⁵ Field interview, Orlando, Soweto, September 1991.
- ⁵⁶ Field interview, Orlando, Soweto, 1991.
- ⁵⁷ Field interview, Orlando, Soweto, September 1991.
- ⁵⁸ See Vogelmann, L., "Violent Crime: Rape", in McKendrick, B. & Hoffman, W.C. (eds), *People and Violence in South Africa*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- ⁵⁹ Field interview held in Orlando, Soweto, 1991.
- ⁶⁰ See Mathiane, N., "Beyond the headlines: Truths of life in Soweto", pp. 148 -153, Southern Publishers, 1990.
- ⁶¹ Diana Russell interview with Mary Mabaso, op. cit.
- ⁶² Field interview, Orlando, Soweto, September 1991.
- ⁶³ Workshop held by the *Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation*, Orlando Communal Hall, May 1991.
- ⁶⁴ Russell, D., "Rape and Child Abuse in Soweto: An interview with community leader Mary Mabaso", March 1991.
- ⁶⁵ Glaser, C., op. cit. p. 166.
- ⁶⁶ One of South Africa's biggest protest marches against rape and sexual harassment was held in Soweto as women organised against the rape menace in the township. Further research into youth culture as it relates to women can expose and highlight different ways in which young women defend themselves and cope with sexual harassment in the context of the township.

⁶⁷ For instance Tebogo "Morambula" Buchibo, Jeffry Brown, and Makhusha, amongst others.

⁶⁸ The word "schemes" in the context of the township is derived from a word denoting the careful selection of a soccer team.

⁶⁹ One of the noteworthy activities of the schemes, are the frequent picnics which used to be held at the Fun Valley, west of Soweto. This would often involve various people parading their latest car or even their women and expensive wardrobes.

⁷⁰ Interview with a mother of M, a member of the Amapan gang operating in Pimville, April 1991.

⁷¹ op. cit.

⁷² Glaser op. cit.

⁷³ This paradigm is developed by Glaser using the analytical tools provided by the *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*. The strength of his work lies in his careful and critical adaptation of a primarily eurocentric analysis.

⁷⁴ Glaser, C., *African Studies Seminar Paper*, No. 278, September 1990.

⁷⁵ O'Donnel, M., *Age and Generation*, p. 44, 1985.

⁷⁶ See van Onselen op. cit. p. 146.

⁷⁷ ibid. p. 192.

⁷⁸ ibid. p. 195.

⁷⁹ Pinnock op. cit. p. 105.

⁸⁰ This is not an entirely new development, in the early 1980s there were very fierce battles between the Amabasa and the "comrades in Orlando.

⁸¹ Diepkloof is said to have been the place where the "jackroll" phenomenon emerged. Some key members of the group lived and operated from Diepkloof. Apart from hijackings and rapes, it is said that the jackrollers also stole R287 000 of pension payouts. Sandile Mamela, *City Press*, 12 August 1990.

⁸² Interview with M, from Diepkloof.

⁸³ *New Nation* 3 August 1990.

⁸⁴ Thandeka Qubule *Weekly Mail*, 1989.

⁸⁵ Philippa Garson *Weekly Mail*.

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