

Coping with violence: institutional and student responses at the University of the Western Cape



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KEYWORDS

University of the Western Cape

Campus

Residences

Students

Violence

Potential danger

Spaces

Safety

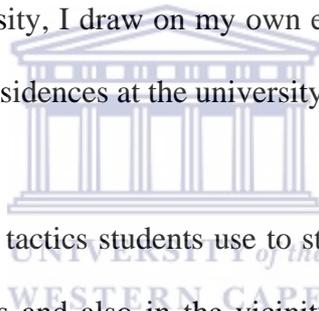
Tactics

Security



ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on research conducted at the University of the Western Cape, a previously 'coloured' university with its beginnings rooted in the political tensions in South Africa. The university is geographically disadvantaged since it is situated on the Cape Flats, which is viewed as a potentially violent area with high crime rates. The study focuses on students who stay in in- and off-campus residences since they are exposed to potential violence when they move inside as well as outside the campus and residence vicinity. In addition to semi-structured interviews conducted with students from the university, I draw on my own experiences as a student having lived in on- and off-campus residences at the university.



In this thesis I investigate the tactics students use to stay safe in the face of potential violence in student residences and also in the vicinity of the university. I refer to violence in the same way as Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) do - as falling on a continuum along with other forms of violence which include structural violence, torture, genocide, political violence, state violence, symbolic violence, sexual violence and colonial violence. When students move outside of campus and residences they fear being robbed, murdered or sexually violated. Students also felt that if this should happen to them, others present will not step in to help them. The tactics students use to stay safe outside and on campus include moving in numbers, staying away from deserted or specific places at certain times, walking fast with a serious facial expression, and greeting oncomers. In residences women particularly feared going to ablution areas at certain times of the day because of stories they heard

about sexual violence taking place in showers. The tactics they used to stay safe from that involved taking showers during ‘peak’ hours. However, a lack of trust which students have in residential administrators impedes the safety students experience in residences. I questioned how students can feel safe outside residences when residential organisation leaves their safety precarious. Overall I found that awareness of potentially dangerous spaces, through stories, the news media or witness, informed students’ tactics of safety.

Furthermore, this thesis explores the relevance of formal campus services in response to violence in the everyday lives of students who live in in- and off-campus residences. I discuss the changes that have taken place in terms of campus security, and how the meanings of safety, play an important role in the ways the university as an institution responds to violence. The meanings of safety and security also translate into specific safety interventions, which I found to focus more on perpetrators of violence from ‘outside’, than on perpetrators of violence on the ‘inside’. In the institution’s dealings with sexual violence I also explore how perceptions of sexual violence and relationship dynamics influence the infection of HIV/AIDS, and the university’s approach to dealing with this threat to students’ safety.

DECLARATION

I declare that *Coping with violence: institutional and student responses at the University of the Western Cape* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Bridgett Virginia Sass

November 2005



Signed.....

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

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While I am indebted to a number of individuals, I would especially like to extend my gratitude, firstly to the participants in this study for their time and permission to publish their stories; they are ultimately the foundation on which this thesis is built. I acknowledge the financial assistance of SANPAD and the National Research Foundation towards the research. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, however, belong to me and are not necessarily to be attributed to SANPAD and the NRF. Furthermore, my supervisors Sharyn Spicer and Diana Gibson were indispensable and their contributions invaluable during the process of completing this work. My appreciation goes to my family and friends who do not always see the point to my studies, but nevertheless pitched in whenever I needed their help. My partner in 'crime', Abidemi Paul Kappo who consumed the midnight oil with me: thanks for your relentless encouragement, help and support. To all those who lent supporting hands, especially Heidi Sauls, Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard, Glenville Wyngaard and my other colleagues who expressed their vote of confidence in me: thank you very much! Ria Reis, I did not forget that you initiated the idea of conducting this research at UWC! Much appreciated. To the Church, particularly Vanita Blake, I wish to extend my heartfelt thankfulness for inspiring and including me in your prayers. But above all, *to God be the glory: great things He has done!*

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

According to Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) violence is a continuum and as such involves various forms such as structural violence, torture, genocide, political violence, state violence, structural violence, gendered violence, sexual violence, colonial violence, and the like. They also argue that anthropologists should disrupt conventional differentiations made in relation to violence, e.g. public/private, visible/invisible, and legitimate/illegitimate (2004: 4). Lindegaard and Henriksen (2005: 57) argue in relation to living with violence in Cape Town that “the power of violence not only lies in the act itself but also in the disturbing effect, which the fear of violence has on witnesses’ ability to establish a sense of safety.” Accordingly, even within the most violent situations people try to find ways to stay safe. The linkage between violence and strategies to avoid it is of particular pertinence in South Africa today. “Studying violence through the lens of safety adds a dynamic element to the analysis ... because strategies of safety are about manoeuvring and negotiation rather than breakdown and victimisation” (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2005: 57).

This is of particular pertinence for South Africa as one of the legacies of its apartheid past is the persistence of a violent social context characterised by high levels of unemployment, extreme differences in wealth and poverty, persistent racism, xenophobia, easy access to guns and ongoing public and interpersonal violence. Although public figures try to downplay statistics which portray South Africa as the ‘crime capital of the world’, the murder rate remains elevated. In 2000, 22 000 people

were killed. Violence was the cause of demise in 55.2% of deaths presented to the two mortuaries in Cape Town` in 2003 (Prinsloo, 2003: 37). Rape, robbery, hijacking and burglary are also common. Such figures are broadly publicised in South Africa via the mass media and through regional governmental endeavours to reduce crime, materialising in more sophisticated crime interventions. Such alarming statistics also inform foreign students about violence even before they arrive in South Africa. In the face of potential danger, students need to keep themselves safe.

The University of the Western Cape (UWC), a one-time 'coloured' university is geographically disadvantaged in relation to perceptions of potential threat because it is situated on the Cape Flats, an area viewed as potentially violent owing to high crime rates. The challenges UWC inherited after 1994 included its economic erosion resulting from efforts to make education available to poor students, its image as a 'bush' university with second-rate standards and a student body that was potentially 'dangerous' and lacking in control. Without shops and recreational facilities within walking distance, UWC is quintessentially 'in the bush'. When they move outside the campus and residence vicinity, students are inevitably exposed to potential dangers in the area.

Although safety and security are central to the ways in which people respond to violence and is predominantly juxtaposed to safety, violence is also *for* safety and security (Moran and Skeggs, 2004: 1) since people perpetrate, retaliate or avoid violence by behaving violently. The responses to violence, the tactics students use to stay safe – “the threat of, the drama, the anxiety, the possibility – shape[...] the whole public imaginary of violence” (Moran and Skeggs, 2004: 1). I employ the term

‘tactics’ similar to the way de Certeau (1998) does – in ‘resistance’ to the ‘strategies’ used by the state. The state-used strategies refer to the structural order which brought about racial segregation and contributed to poverty and crime and violence¹. People use tactics in resistance to the social order, which is not necessarily changed as such. The context that students at UWC move in, whether on or around campus, as well as how the location of the campus exposes students to possible violence, are considered in this thesis. The thesis has a number of aims, one of which is to examine the approaches to safety of the people who are mainly responsible for it, namely campus security staff. This thesis additionally seeks to illuminate the ways in which students interact with violence in the moments of its occurrence.

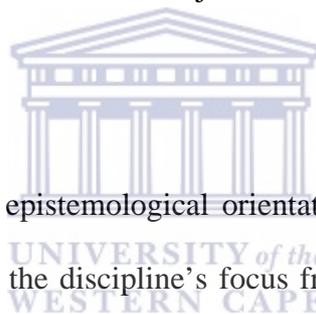
A university is expected to be a safe space. UWC and its residences are marked by clear boundaries (electric fences, gates, turnstiles). Since the university has a responsibility to ensure student safety it is committed to providing students with ‘a home away from home’ as reflected in the mission statement of the residential body. For this to happen, other factors play a part in establishing confidence in safety in residences, factors beyond physical boundaries. The administration and organisation within residences contribute to student experiences of it as being safe or not. Democracies function well when its citizens have confidence in its institutions, and its ability to protect them (Ullmann-Margalit, 2004: 14). The notion of the residences and even the campus as being a kind of ‘home’ draws on stereotypical meanings attached to it (home) as a haven of familiarity, comfort and safety. In the thesis I consequently investigate the dynamics within residences and to what extent the commitment of the university to ‘create home away from home’ translates into the feelings and experience of students of it as such.

As sexual violence is an important issue related to the sense of safety or the fear of possible violation in South Africa, and especially on the Cape Flats, I also look at the way it is dealt with on campus and in residences. Despite the development of a protocol aimed at dealing with and treating rape survivors in the Western Cape, sexual violence has been and is perceived as mostly part of the emergency response on the campus of the University of the Western Cape. Viewing sexual violence in such a light can have implications for the reporting of it and also allows little room for students' views of what sexual violence is. Sexual violence is a human rights issue and failure to understand the context within which it takes place, may lead to the ineffectiveness of policies and rape protocols. Because a rape protocol already exists, it is important to investigate the relationship between the protocol and student interpretations of sexual violence and to explore the interface between the two. An aim of this study is to gain insight into the extent to which students are aware of, and understand, the rape protocol in the context of campus life.

The specific aims of this study are thus threefold. I investigate tactics students use to stay safe when violence occurs, and generally how students live with everyday threats of potential violence, or imagined violence. Secondly, the undertaking explores the relevance the formal campus services have in respect to the above in the everyday lives of students who live in on- and off-campus residences respectively. Finally, I examine how meanings of safety play out in student and institutional responses to violence and how it contributes to safety.

1.1 VIOLENCE AS ISSUE IN ANTHROPOLOGY

During the 1900s, anthropologists were largely silent on the subject of violence since it was not considered a 'proper' topic for the discipline. For instance, Geertz (1995) remarks that he 'seemed' to arrive either too early or too late to witness the violent turmoil as it descended on his fieldsites in Morocco and Java respectively. The disciplines that were first to develop theories of the causes, meanings and consequences of mass violence and genocide include history, psychology and psychiatry. The first anthology of violence published in 2004 is an attempt at instituting an anthropologically informed field of violence studies. This is reflective of the discipline's late arrival on the subject of violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 5).



The theoretical formulations, epistemological orientations and bourgeois identity of most anthropologists diverted the discipline's focus from structural violence and the pathologies of power (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004:5). We can assume from this that studying violence placed anthropologists in a moral predicament (given their colonial connections to violence, see Malinowski, 1967: 69), at the same time making it difficult to 'participate' in their research sites and also to avoid being harmed (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 3). On the other hand, anthropologists have also blatantly turned a blind eye to violence that has devastated the lives of the participants in their research sites for much of the twentieth century (Starn, 2004: 395).

It was at the turn of the twentieth century, however, that a growing number of younger anthropologists emerged who did not sidestep emerging genocides (Scheper-

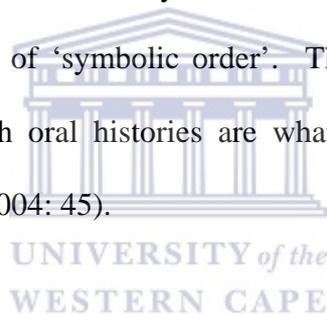
Hughes, 2004: 9). Instead they aligned themselves with the victims and survivors of violence and designed their research to enhance human survival (Pedelty, 2004; Swedenburg, 2004; Binford, 2004). A great deal of anthropological research has also been done on structural violence which emphasises the potential for violence inherent in wider macro socio-economic processes. Structural violence is thus present in institutional practice and ways. There are not necessarily particular agents who individually inflict violence. It is a concept closer to notions of social injustice (Farmer 2004). A problem with this approach is that different social processes and problems are seen as similar and it is assumed that they can all be understood by using this approach.

Another area that has received attention is that of symbolic violence. This happens when people view and experience cultural practices and meanings of which they are part as legitimate, for example when women accept that men are more powerful and have more authority and accept that it is simply the way things are supposed to be. They do not understand or recognise what is really going on, precisely because it seems so 'natural'. For Bourdieu this kind of violence is exercised upon people with their complicity (Bourdieu, 2004).

For the purposes of this study I could draw on my own experiences and understanding of living and having lived in potentially violent environments, as well as on that of the participants who had experienced violence at some or other level. Although people experience and define violence differently, we all have ways in which we live with it, ways of coping, avoiding it and escaping from it.

1.2 WAYS TO AVOID VIOLENCE OR STAY SAFE

Not much attention has been given to tactics of safety in situations of violence or imagined violence. For the purpose of this thesis I drew mainly on a small number of studies that addressed this topic in some or other way. In this regard Feldman (1991) conducted research in Northern Ireland where he focused on oral history texts of political violence. The climate within which he did his research was tumultuous, to the point where his participants left their social environment for interviews in a 'neutral' setting (Ibid: 12). His work focuses on how people create safety during the period of extended civil war. His insights offer explanations as to how knowledge about violence enables people to find ways to avoid it. People cope with potential violence by creating systems of 'symbolic order'. The representations of violence which are exchanged through oral histories are what make the orders 'symbolic' (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 45).



Drawing on the work of Feldman, Jensen (2001) conducted his research in Heideveld South Africa. He focuses on perceptions of violence as an important factor in marginalised communities and the problems of governance. He argues that people in Heideveld deal with violence by the creation of systems of 'symbolic orders' based on telling stories about violent incidents, where it happened, who was involved, how people dealt with it and so on. Such stories help people to predict where violence might occur, when it can happen, under what circumstances it is likely to occur, and how it might be avoided. Although Jensen draws on Feldman's theoretical approach he does not attend to the link between such representations and bodily experiences and embodied 'understandings' or 'intimations' of violence.

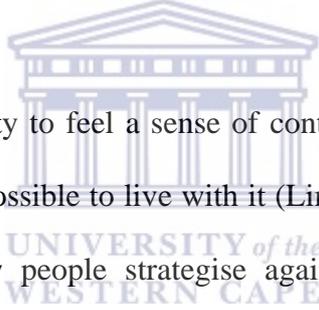
Lindegaard and Henriksen (2004), in turn drew on the work of Jensen, but also stress the above connection, and emphasise that, like symbolic orders based on telling stories about violence, bodily experience and tacit knowledge are factors in how people stay safe. As they argue, it is not only narratives of violence that raise awareness of violence, but also when for no rational reason, we feel unsafe in certain places and would for instance check whether the vehicle's door is locked when approaching a red traffic light. In other words, people create their safety using tactics which are not only based on representations of violence, but also its lived experiences.

How people live with potential violence and the tactics they use to stay safe expand knowledge of being in the world with everyday violence. This study draws mostly on Lindegaard and Henriksen's (2004; 2005) work to explore how students avoid violence and it also explores what they do in instances of violence, since people's experiences of, and responses to, it differ. Various other factors also play a role in how people respond in instances of violence or how they try to avoid it. These strategies can be informed by for example their social position, class, gender and 'race'.

In South Africa increasing attention has been paid to strategies of institutions such as schools to keep pupils and staff safe from violence (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004). The purpose of alarm systems and high fences in schools is to ensure an environment conducive for learning. This violence which schools safeguard their 'inhabitants' against is largely viewed as a threat from the outside and the violence within the institution, except in the case of for example sexual harassment or sexual assault and

rape, is frequently not considered. This is also representative of notions in the wider community that public violence is more of an issue than domestic violence.

The difference between schools and university campuses is that 24-hour protection is supposedly available on the latter. This is because staff members are on campus for extended periods of time, and a larger number of students also live in campus residences. For these reasons, security on campus itself is 'tight'. Yet, male and female students cannot utilise space equally on campuses. In this regard, Lindegaard and Henriksen (2004) and Gibson (2003) argue that men are more at ease when venturing into dangerous places at night as opposed to women. This analysis nevertheless portrays women as somewhat passive in relation to violent spaces.



People use strategies for safety to feel a sense of control over violence, potential or experienced, thus making it possible to live with it (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 40). In their study of how people strategise against violence, Lindegaard and Henriksen (2004) found that people living on the Cape Flats use strategies that differ from those of people living in the Southern Suburbs in Cape Town. They also found that women and men live differently with violence, are aware of it differently and express its victimisation differently.

The strategies (gendered) that men and women use to keep safe from potential violation include technology (such as alarm systems and high fences), networking with others in the community through gossip to stay informed about the latest violent incidents and therefore avoid certain 'hotspots', staying at home or in the safety of a car, and fighting back (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004). More than this, their study

found that these were important strategies, but that bodily experiences of being in the world also contribute to knowledge of staying safe.

1.3 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Because sexual violence is viewed as largely private, this area is often treated as somehow separate from public violence. There is, however, also a continuum between the two (Gibson 2003). Most of the available literature nevertheless focuses on sexual violence in relation to broader socio-cultural processes. Internationally and in earlier research, the work of feminist theorists (Brownmiller, 1975; Rose, 1977; Clark and Lewis, 1977; Sanday, 1981; Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1983) drew attention to the structure of gender relations (patriarchy) and gender-related ideology (e.g. rape myths) but failed to explain sexual assault. Feminist anthropologist, Peggy Sanday (1981) subsequently placed sexual assault and associated sexual ideological themes within particular macro structural environments. She argues that cross culturally, some societies are more “rape prone” than others. In settings where levels of rape are high, society is characterised by negative views of women, there is a high tolerance of interpersonal violence and little economic and political power for women. What she sees as “rape free” societies, on the other hand, have these characteristics to a lesser degree.

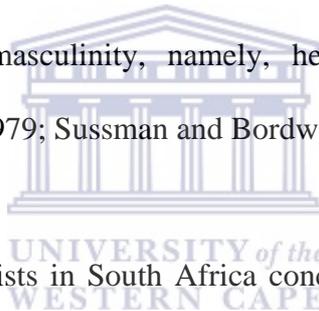
This critical-feminist tradition firstly portrays rape as a direct consequence of sex role socialisation in socially stratified societies (Deming and Eppy, 1981, Brownmiller, 1975; Rose 1977; Sanday, 1981). Studies done in North America argue that women are socialised into being rape victims and men to being sexual aggressors. In line

with this analysis, sex role socialisation inevitably results in rape and heterosexual relations are interpreted as exploitative, with rape becoming the most extreme kind of exploitation.

The problem with this kind of analysis is that it gives little recognition to individual differences. Not all males are sexually aggressive. This analysis also fails to explain why some men are sexually aggressive and others not, even if all men were supposedly exploitative of women. Although such accounts explain the perpetuation of perceptions of sexual violence and identifies some of them, it does not explain how such ideologies emerge.

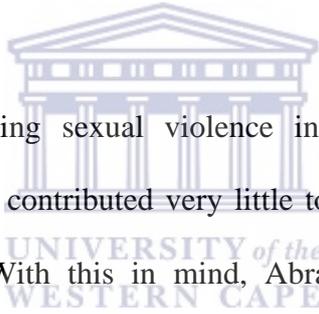
Considerable work has also been done on the learning of sexual aggression and the associated ideological content of such a process. Ecologically (referring here to how humans adapt to the environment or humans changing the environment to suit them) rape is more prominent in poor neighbourhoods characterised by unemployment, high proportion of black population, and high rates of personal violent crime (Deming and Eppy, 1981). Thus, a correlation is made between rape and other predatory crimes. This link between rape and poverty is also stressed because poor “climates” provide an environment for insensitivity towards humans. This supposedly explains the high levels of predatory rape in these communities. A great deal of the extant literature also indicates that sexual aggression is learned – often from peers. Some adolescent male groups accordingly control and enforce gender expectations which normalises sexual aggression as part of being young (Koss, 1985).

Older literature already indicated that men often view and practice sexual aggression as part of sexual expression. Various authors also suggested that the social meanings of gender roles and the significance of sexual activity to sexual identities were associated with sexual aggression. In some male groups, heterosexual success seemed to be important for developing a positive “self-concept and for social status” (Chappell *et al.*, 1977). Kanin (1967) presented strong empirical evidence that in some male groups, it is popular to enforce a certain kind of masculinity that accompanies heterosexual success. The nature of interactions involved a callous orientation toward sexual activity and showed little respect to women’s expressed wishes. Evidence about pair and group rapes support the same point. Previous data suggested that public participation in group rape affirmed to peers that a male had met an important standard of masculinity, namely, heterosexual sexual intercourse (Brownmiller, 1975; Groth, 1979; Sussman and Bordwell, 1981; Vogelman, 1990).



A large body of literature exists in South Africa concerning the high prevalence of sexual violence (Women’s International Network News, 2003). Other literature also links it to HIV/AIDS (Gibson *et al.*, 2003), child rape (Kawsar, *et al.*, 2004) and gang rape (Pinnock, 1997; Vogelman, 1990; Jensen, 2001). At the same time, increasing attention is being given to the rape of males, particularly in prisons (Mezey, 1992). In the South African context more recent literature focuses mostly on gender violence and the role of males in taking responsibility for rape (Conradie and Clowes, 2003). A compilation of individual research edited by Conradie and Clowes (2003) gives attention to involving males in taking responsibility for sexual violence in an effort to alleviate the crime. The book also looks into stereotypes about male sexuality that perpetuate the notion of men who assert their power through sexual violation.

In further research in South Africa, violence and sexual coercion have been reported to dominate sexual relationships (Abrahams, 2004). According to research focusing on adolescent pregnant women, the conditions and timing of sex are dictated by their male partners. This is done through the use of violence and through circulating certain constructions of love, intercourse and entitlement to which teenage girls fall prey (Ibid, 2004). These sexual experiences are further endorsed by female peers who indicate that silence and submission are appropriate responses to sexual violence. Adolescents remain in such relationships for reasons including peer pressure to have a male partner and feeling loved upon receiving gifts from their partners (Abrahams, 2004).



While most studies concerning sexual violence in South Africa focus on the experiences of women, it has contributed very little toward an understanding of the most crucial risk factors. With this in mind, Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman and Laubsher (2004) conducted a study in Cape Town on sexual violence focusing on men as sexual violence perpetrators. Their study gives an account of the prevalence and risk factors for such violence against intimate partners. These risk factors include using violence to solve problems in other settings, multiple partners, alcohol abuse and verbally abusing a partner. Risk factors were also linked to certain types of conflict resulting from ideas of male sexual entitlement and dominance (Abrahams *et al.*, 2004).

In relation to male perpetration of sexual violence, other literature links the construction of masculinities in South Africa to its historical legacy, and equally

relates it to the environment – poverty and socialisation (see Gibson *et al.*, 2003: 67). It is argued that men assert their power over women and children out of an inability to control their violent environment (Salo, 2000; Abrahams, 2004). As a means to feel empowered and in control, males lash out at those who are in a sense weaker than they are. But the core argument of much of the current South African research is that masculinities are complex and will differ from context to context. There is no single masculinity and therefore not any simple explanation for its role in sexual violence (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Salo, 2000; Becker, 2001; Morrell, 2001; Gibson and Hardon 2005).

While of a more personal nature, a number of books about the experience of rape are often insightful as they bring a completely different perspective to the understanding of sexual violence. In this regard, a book by anthropologist Cathy Winkler (1996) is an important example of the use of a dreadful personal account to also raise anthropological questions. The rape, as described in her book, is a typical example of somewhat stereotypical approaches to such violation as “exotic” and extraordinary because it is perpetrated by a stranger who breaks into her house. In her book Winkler also challenges commonplace assumptions about rape and describes how the rapist attempts to control her not only physically, but also tries to override her existence through words. While raping her he would, for example, tell her that she enjoys it. The rapist tries to replace how she defines herself sexually with his own definition. The way she defines rape through her own experience in her book is what members of society should support in fights against the impact of rape (Winkler, 1996).

In South Africa the best-known personal accounts in the public domain are the books by Alison (Thamm, 1998) and Charlene Smith (2001). Alison's experience took her very close to death, even defying it, and her book celebrates her strength and commitment to life that carried her through her ordeal. Smith's account also includes her fight for survival and she also speaks out against poor health care for rape survivors. She uses her position as a journalist, and subsequently as sexual violence survivor, to empower other survivors, but also to fight against injustices in health care for survivors.

A number of anthropological studies also give attention to rape by multiple perpetrators and/or in institutional settings such as schools and university campuses internationally; the best known example is research by Peggy Sanday (1990) on fraternity gang rape on American campuses. This study focuses on students and Sanday places them within a broader institutional setting. Sanday found that within fraternities a culture of 'brotherhood' exists and it is part of a nationwide sexual subculture. Brotherhood involves excessive use of alcohol and drugs, pornography is included and on the whole women are objectified within this subculture. This, Sanday argues, is to blame for the incidence of gang rapes within fraternities and many universities fail to take responsibility for it. She tries to give more insight into, and understanding concerning, the women who become involved in fraternity party life and thus 'potential' rape victims, as well as the 'brothers' in fraternity houses, and accordingly the potential rapists (van Heerden 2003).

A study by van Heerden (2003) focuses on strategies university students in Cape Town use to stay safe from sexual violence when moving outside, though in the vicinity of a high-security campus. Although recent newspaper reports indicate that

sexual violence happens even inside the campus itself, she does not pay attention to it. Although universities take precautions against violence from the outside, they tend to pay little attention to how stereotypes of sexual violence perpetrators, space, silence and other conceptualisations may perpetuate sexual violence. Preventing violence from entering the university is crucial when it is situated in a violence-ridden area.

1.4 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis focuses on violence and tactics of safety. Chapter 2 begins with the historical background of the research site, discusses the methodological tools used in this research, as well as my 'native' role in the undertaking. Chapter 3 enters the student residences and questions whether the processes of administration and organisation within residences create spaces of safety both within residences and outside campus. Chapter 4 looks at student experiences of violence, where and when they feel particularly unsafe, how they avoid it and what they do in instances of violence. It also investigates the factors that play a part in different responses to violence. In Chapter 5 I proceed to the development of security measures at UWC, how the institution responds to violence and the implications of its security interventions on safety. Chapter 6 returns to the focus of the thesis which concerns how students at the university stay safe in the face of potential violence as well the role of the university in maintaining safety, and shows the larger relevance of this study in general terms.

CHAPTER 2

Going *into* the field? I live in the field

INTRODUCTION

The research described in this thesis was done at the University of the Western Cape, a former 'ethnic' coloured and currently a predominantly black university. Despite its disadvantaged origins, the university has a history of political struggle against apartheid, oppression, discrimination and engagement with historically marginalised communities. After 1994, UWC had to deal with many problems bequeathed by South Africa's legacy of apartheid, such as being situated on the Cape Flats (an area viewed as potentially violent and with high crime rates), its economic erosion resulting from efforts to make education available to poor students, its image as a bush university with low standards and a student body that is potentially dangerous and out of control, and the institution's huge financial debt. The University campus, the residences, its surroundings and students are the focus of the study. The chapter gives an overview of the research site, methodology and my own role and experiences as a 'native' researcher.

2.1 THE RESEARCH SITE

The main entrance to the UWC campus lies on Modderdam Road Bellville. As Lever wrote in 1999 "Even the location conspires against them: UWC remains "in the bush", without shops and recreational facilities within walking distance" (Lever, 1999: 1-2). The particular site where UWC is situated is the historical legacy of

apartheid writ large. The area surrounding the UWC campus was originally farming area among the sand dunes where most of the coloured population was forcibly resettled. On the campus itself, the current Senate Buildings used to belong to the former 'coloured' version of the tricameral parliament. This aspect, as well as the involvement of UWC in the resistance against the former regime, were reflected in the words of erstwhile rector, Professor Jakes Gerwel, who said in his inauguration speech in 1985 that: "academe and the university also have a real role to bring about political change... At a time when the crisis of authority, the crisis of validity— ...the crisis of legitimacy—of the state and the government...is written in huge letters in every house, every school and the university"(Lever 1999: 2).

UWC was originally a 'bush' college for coloured students established in 1959 by an Act of Parliament. It opened in 1960 in a vacant primary school building in a desolate area in Bellville South², with 170 students, 10 of whom were female. Initially the college fell under the tutelage of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, and was controlled by white National Party supporting academics, which were in favour of racial separation and viewed themselves as "white custodians" of their "coloured protégés." Its student body was drawn from pupils coming from former poorly resourced coloured schools and the institution was generally viewed as second-rate (University of the Western Cape, 2002). The college was run like a high school and students were allowed no real representation on a student body.

In 1970, the college was awarded academic independence and attained the right to develop its own courses, set its own exams and confer its own degrees. For nearly three decades since, students and staff unswervingly defied segregation and inequality in society particularly in higher education. The first expression of defiance to the

'conservative' administration happened in the same year when a student was disciplined for not wearing a tie to class and other students burnt their ties in resistance against the university's formal dress code. Protest action initiated by students and black staff subsequently realised the appointment of the university's first black rector, Mr. Richard van der Ross, in 1975 (University of the Western Cape, 2002). Fees at UWC were kept low to enable poor black students to enrol and the university was referred to as the University of the Working Class. When Gerwel became Rector in 1985, UWC was promoted as the "intellectual home of the left", with a mission to promote "People's Education" in a "People's University" (Lever 1999). After 1994 UWC, like many other former black universities, had to deal with its lack of financial viability and efforts by the government to amalgamate it with a technikon in a process of restructuring higher education in South Africa.



Surroundings

UWC is bordered on one side by the Cape Flats Nature Reserve. It also lies adjacent to Belhar, a former informal settlement, which was later turned into a suburb "where the government built the 'ministerial' residences of the executive of the defunct Coloured Representative Council" (Cloete and van Dongen, 2005: 1). The development of Belhar originated from governmental efforts to remove squatters from the land on the Cape Flats³ that had been designated for the University of the Western Cape. Belhar thus formed part of a government housing project using a transit housing system on the locale of the Cape Flats, an area infamous for high levels of crime and violence. Due to gangsterism and poverty in the area, students from the University of the Western Cape, particularly those who live in the university residence situated in Belhar, (Hector Peterson Residence), are at high risk of robbery

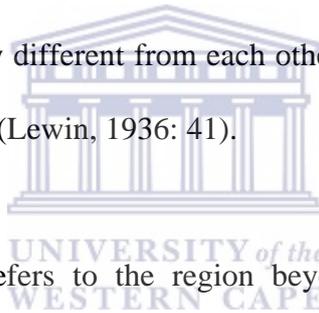
and other forms of violence. On campus there are nine residences, all of which bear the names of political figures in Africa.

The closest business centre and entertainment for the surrounding areas lies in Bellville, some way from the campus. To go to town, students use the train or mini bus taxis, both forms of transport which are viewed and experienced by users as potentially unsafe and violent. Because of its lack of facilities and its poor location, students who live on campus nevertheless experience violence around and outside campus. These social and historical factors place students at the mercy of the area and force them to develop tactics in their everyday lives to stay safe. Examining how people live with violence and how they adapt to the presence of high crime rates, is a way of investigating practices and possibilities of being in the world. How people live with violence, whether "private, public, structural or symbolic; there are issues of general relevance to understanding how people can be in the world as they live with violence" (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 20).



Figure 2.1 Maporama, ADC Worldmap, Knowledge Factory (2005). Not to scale.

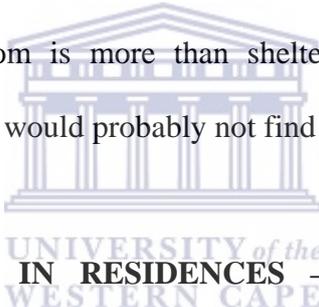
Lewin's (1936: 41) notion of 'space of free movements' can assist in making sense of the different spatial experiences of students who stay on campus and those who reside in Hector Peterson Residence. In conceptualising space, Lewin argues, spatiality includes a 'person-environment' relationship and a sense of 'belongingness to' an environment. Space is not simply a neutral entity. A person is not solely 'in' space, but our conceptual frameworks of space inhabit space as well. People in other words add a dimension of experience and thought to the space. Occupying a space with intense anxiety, for instance, relates to incidents of violence that may have taken place in that space previously. This is the connection between space and our conceptual frameworks, the meanings we attach to that space. These frameworks are defined by their spatial relationship. At the same time "life space is articulated into 'regions' that are qualitatively different from each other and more separated by more or less pervious 'boundaries'"(Lewin, 1936: 41).



Space of free movements refers to the region beyond which we do not move, 'boundaries' we do not cross physically. In this space we can move around freely and without restriction. At the same time the region outside the space of free movement is unattainable, but not necessarily out of reach (Lewin, 1936: 43). I argue that the free movement space is that space in which students do not feel threatened. For students living on campus (who do not have cars or for whom access to private transport is more restricted) such space is smaller than that of students staying off campus, particularly at night. In Hector Peterson Residence, for instance, students without private transport are confined to the parameter of the hostel, unless they take the shuttle to campus which expands the freedom of movement space considering the distance between Hector Peterson Residence and campus. But even taking the shuttle

to campus still limits students to the confines of the campus boundaries. Moving outside of this freedom of movement space is where potential danger lurks more prominently. These boundaries create limited movement space, for moving outside of the boundaries which are formed by stories of robberies, murders, attempted rapes and other forms of violence, could possibly expose students to the same fate. This conceptual framework becomes more complex, though, when students feel that any place is unsafe. In Chapter 4 I discuss potentially dangerous spaces in more detail.

One of the freedom of movement spaces is the rooms of residences, in which students feel more safe and more 'at home', since their belongings surround them, and walls, doors, padlocks, turnstiles and security staff act as barriers to threats. For many students having a hostel room is more than shelter, but provides them with a comfortable environment they would probably not find elsewhere.



2.2 COMING TO STAY IN RESIDENCES – DEVELOPING SAFETY TACTICS

All the students who come to university have a story to tell – many involve the sacrifices they and their families had to make to enable them to study. Many students are the only one from their family who made it to a tertiary institution. Their frame of mind at the initial stage of living in residences influences their vulnerability to potential violence.

For me, coming to stay on campus for the first time a few years ago, proved an important milestone in my life (after many problems I encountered with

accommodation during my undergraduate years) - forming what living in the hostel would mean for me. Since my parents live in Atlantis, 60 kilometres from Bellville, travelling to campus everyday was financially impossible. It would also mean that I would have spent a lot of time travelling and would have had limited access to the library and other resources. When I commenced my tertiary studies my mother was retrenched and money was scarce. I could not buy prescribed textbooks. I depended on the library for my notes. Staying on campus made the library and computers accessible, which was important given the emphasis on typed assignments at the university since 2002. These circumstances are common among those who come to stay in residences and help understand the meaning of staying in hostels.

Having a place to stay where I could come and go as I pleased and did not have to account for my whereabouts to anybody, giving me a space that I 'owned', was a dream come true and a privilege. I finally had a comfort haven. This meant freedom for me, and independence. At home my grandmother, who raised me, was always concerned about my safety and whereabouts. This had caused discomfort and anxiety and it was a relief to leave it behind. As a result, when I moved into the university residence, issues of safety were initially distant from my concern. In addition, I came from a very sheltered background and was quite naïve about living in the residence.

At the same time I had lived most of my life in 'dangerous' places (Atlantis and later Elsie's River) and felt that I was familiar with violent environments. In a way I felt a sense of superiority when observing other first-year students, particularly women, whom I viewed as vulnerable, inexperienced and full of naiveté. When I began my study I had been on campus for some time and was well informed about the area and

its perceived dangerous spaces, and also about the goings-on on campus.

When I looked at female students in particular, I viewed them as potential victims, and as somehow 'inviting' victimhood. In a sense I believed that one needs to be tough in order to deal with violence. I nevertheless became more aware of how I, and other students, dealt with the possibility of violence on and off campus.

Most of the women I interviewed felt that walking alone on campus late at night was dangerous. This fear was based on warnings from other students or staff within the residences, and these warnings were often based on stories they heard about rapes occurring in certain places on campus. In the case of foreign students, they were informed by stories they had read in newspapers or by speaking to acquaintances studying in South Africa before coming to study at the university.

When I first came to live in a residence on campus, I was cautioned by a night porter who regularly saw me leaving for main campus late at night. Since I did not have a personal computer and the hostel did not have computers available to students at that time, I had no choice. Other students who also work in their departments usually join together when walking to or from there, but since students from my department did not work at night I was forced to walk alone. I was new and not informed about stories concerning violence on campus – my own sense of being a tough girl coming from a tough neighbourhood probably also influenced my lack of concern with safety. I also argue in this thesis that this ignorance may sometimes also be the basis for feeling safe in and around residences.

Nevertheless, despite my bravado, walking along “the N1”⁴ (*Figure 2.2 A*) late at night felt eerie at times - especially since the N1 is opposite The Barn (*Figure 2.2 B*). The barn, formerly a cafeteria, is a hang-out place for students, staff and people from outside UWC. People go there to relax, drink, dance or buy junk food. Over weekends The Barn is crammed with people; conversations can be heard some distance away, accompanied by the thudding of the latest Rhythm & Blues or *kwaito* music hits. During weekdays there is one bouncer on duty, over weekends the barn attracts a large crowd and fights often occur. Accordingly, more than one bouncer works over weekends.

In the case of fights, security staff from Campus Protection Services step in. The feeling of discomfort and even some fear I experience when passing The Barn at night, may be related to my awareness of these happenings. When students and visitors drink excessively over weekends, their drunken or passed-on bodies are often seen scattered outside during the early hours of the morning. One morning the window in the entrance door to Eduardo Dos Santos residence was broken because the night porter would not let a man enter. Because I was aware of these events, I had developed my own safety tactics. I walked very fast, wore clothes that concealed the femininity of my body and walked in a way that would be seen ‘unfeminine’ whenever I returned to the hostel during the early hours of the morning. These were my tactics to stay safe; I used them because they had worked in the past. Although I am small, people have often commented that I look serious or angry, someone not to be messed with and thus assertive. Because many people made comments about it, I realised that using serious facial expressions in places I, and others, view as potentially dangerous, or areas that provide certain ‘clues’ of possible danger (being

dark and/or deserted) may be a tactic of mine to avert potential danger. Although I am uncomfortable on campus after dark over weekends, night time during the weeks seems less threatening.



Figure 2.2. **A.** The N1 which is the main footpath connecting the campus residential area to main campus. **B.** The barn adjacent to the N1.

Later staying in Hector Peterson Residence, I became more careful when I moved around the hostel. This caution was informed by stories concerning certain spaces which others perceived as dangerous. On the path from Hector Peterson Residence to campus for example, students frequently look back over their shoulders to watch out for robbers. My own tactic is to walk very fast with a serious expression on my face. I have found that others understand walking fast as purposeful, and possibly even as an indication of the agency and serious intent of the walker – it thus becomes a way to reduce the chances of victimisation.

I became aware of the tactic of walking purposefully when I visited Middestad Mall in Bellville by myself for the very first time. I was strolling outside the mall when a man suddenly grabbed my arm tightly, and shoved paper ‘money’ into my hand. It was a gambler who apparently conned people and then forcefully removed their valuables. It all happened very fast, shocked me and caught me off-guard. A man, who knew the area and the way in which these con artists operated, was watching from his motorcycle. He stepped in swiftly and pulled me away from the other man. He then told me to walk purposefully, straight to where I needed to be. Walking purposefully has since then become my way to stay safe. When I walk fast, it seems as if I am familiar with the area and where I am going. I try to never look ‘lost’ or uncertain because it would make me seem vulnerable. In addition, whenever I walked to Symphony Way where I have to catch a taxi, I left my cellular phone in my room. I started to do so after a participant told me about her own experience of being robbed at Symphony Way. Carrying or talking on a cell phone makes one less alert and more of a target. While I conducted this research I was brought in close proximity of potential violence, by visiting places that students viewed as ‘unsafe’, and also of people who had experienced violence.

2.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC RECORDS: GIVING ACCOUNT

This thesis is based on qualitative research that was conducted during 2004 and 2005. For the study of violence qualitative methods are more suitable to obtain the participants’ experiences of the world. Such methods also focus on the subjective perspectives of the participants and are sensitive to the contexts within which everyday life unfolds. Using qualitative research methods emphasises rich detailed

description of the tactics used to stay safe instead of counting and quantifying patterns of behaviour. By making use of qualitative research methods I took an inductive approach which means that I firstly engaged with the natural setting describing events as accurately as they occurred and were experienced as possible (Babbie and Mouton, 2001), instead of beginning with an existing theory. Qualitative methods also allowed me to establish rapport with the participants and to be flexible in the ways in which I conducted the interviews. This thesis draws on participant observation, semi-structured interviews – both formal and informal, social mapping, field notes, posters, the university's rape protocol and an electronic noticeboard (Thetha General Community Noticeboard (see 2211400⁵, 2005) to read students' views about issues pertaining to my study. Photography was also used as a research tool to capture perceived unsafe spaces.



In order to get a good idea of how students experience violence across various spaces inside and outside the borders of campus, it was important to interview students from various campus residences. Experiences of living in residences on and off campus differ and my experiences of living on, as well as off campus attest to that. For my sample of 20 participants, I selected (through making use of the snowballing technique) students living in all the residences on campus and those living in one off campus residence, Hector Peterson Residence. Hector Peterson Residence is situated about a ten-minute-walk from campus on the edge of Belhar. The reason I selected these students is that they are potentially exposed to violence more often on and around campus, than students who stay in residences on campus. Students living in Hector Peterson Residence are vulnerable when they move to or from campus, when they wait for a taxi at Symphony Way, or a bus on Erica Drive (*Figures 2.3 and 2.4*)

or commute by train. I see them as potentially vulnerable because, during the time of research, robberies and murder had occurred in the area surrounding the residence.

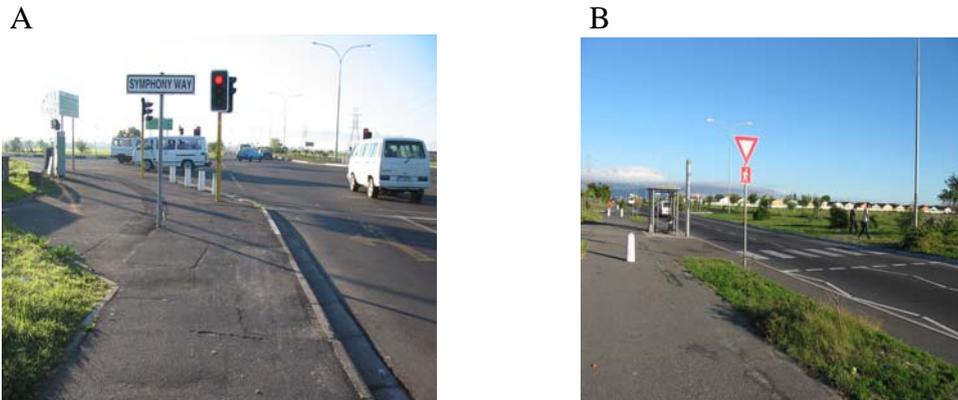


Figure 2.3. **A.** This is Symphony Way, the taxi pick-up point where students from Hector Peterson Residence access transport to go to surrounding areas (see *Figure 2.4*). Symphony Way is also considered a potentially dangerous place because of incidents of robbery that occurred there. **B.** The bus stop on Erica Drive opposite SASOL garage is also considered dangerous and I refer to a near-robbery incident in Chapter 5 that took place there.

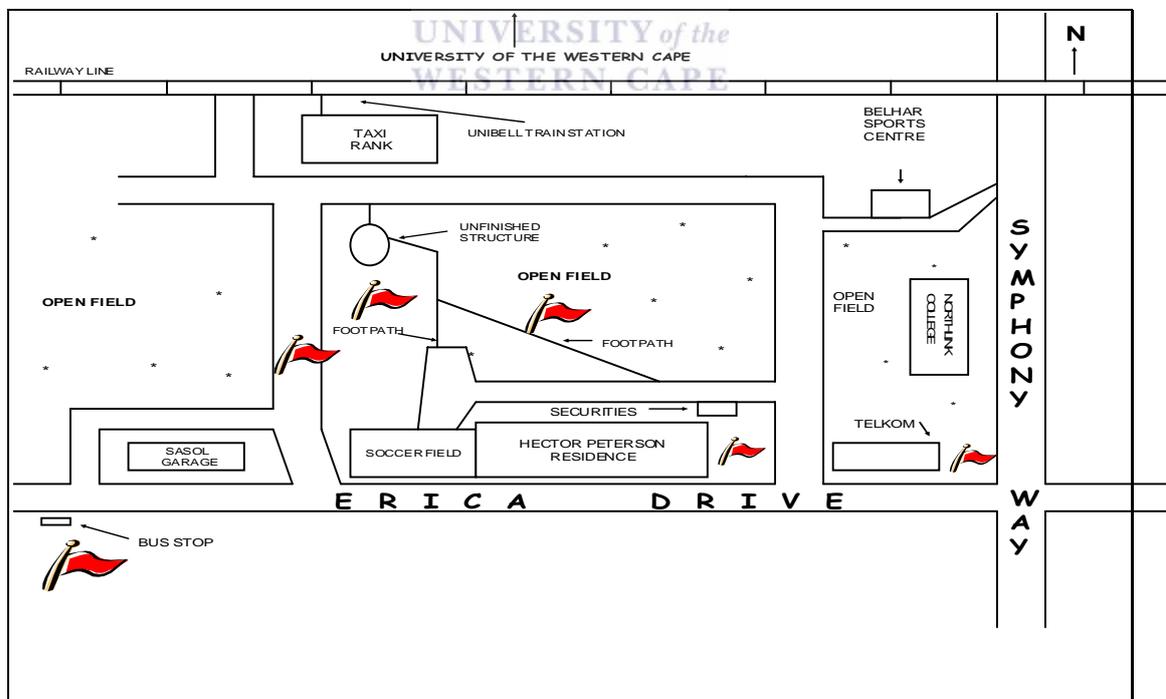


Figure 2.4. Map of the area between campus and Hector Peterson Residence. The places perceived as dangerous are marked with red flags. The flag on the corner of Symphony Way is the taxi pick-up and drop-off point for Hector Peterson Residence students specifically.

Students in my sample are South Africans or come from other African countries. Hector Peterson Residence, in particular, houses mostly international students⁶. Students who grew up in South Africa and in Cape Town are more familiar with the country and are aware that certain areas are probably more dangerous or safe than others. Foreigners do not necessarily know this. My argument, which is further expounded in Chapter 4, is that a body 'inscribed' by stories, witnessing, or experiencing violence, reacts in a particular way to stay safe and might even be less vulnerable to future violence than someone who is unaware of it.

The 10 students from Hector Peterson Residence consist of 5 males and 5 females; the same holds true for the 10 students who live in on-campus residences. The participants ranged in age from 19 to 45. I did not place restrictions on age since everybody's experience concerning living in residences, vulnerability to violence and tactics to stay safe is valuable. I also found that the ways in which my participants coped with the potential threat of violence was similar across age ranges. While Hector Peterson Residence houses first-year students, I only included postgraduate students

Since I used a snowball sampling technique, it was not difficult to talk about violence. When I had in-depth interviews, it was done in the language the students preferred and it usually took place either in their rooms or in mine. I also had many informal and everyday conversations with fellow students about the topic and this information contributed to my understanding. Such conversations were very important for the free flow of discussions.

Doing research where I live.

The term research 'at home' has a long tradition in anthropology and generally refers to research undertaken in the anthropologist's own society. The undeniable heritage of anthropology 'at home' is nevertheless indebted to the methodological, epistemological and theoretical research traditions developed by anthropologists working 'abroad' (Fainzang, 1998: 269). Doing anthropology 'at home' requires a fresh gaze on familiar phenomena. This may raise methodical and theoretical problems and peculiarities when one is doing anthropological research while simultaneously sharing the same cultural background with one's research participants (Hadolt, 1998: 311), but doing so proposes new passageways towards understanding of the individual in society (Fainzang, 1998: 269). Conducting research in one's own society requires the anthropologist to reflect on two important issues (van Dongen, 1998: 279). The first is the process of making 'the other', and the second is that of being a 'native' among the natives. Van Dongen argues that in the former, defamiliarisation is critical and that becoming a 'stranger' in a familiar place is crucial for understanding one's own cultural setting.

Although the predicament of making the other is often referred to in anthropology generally, it is perceived negatively and even as 'writing against culture'. But understanding people is based on mechanisms of separation, and is a process we are familiar with from an early developmental stage. Viewing 'othering' as paradoxical and ambivalent means that a fundamental separation between anthropologists and people written about exists. This encourages the idea of participants in research as objects, making them different and inferior. Consequently, this may give shape to relations of power and inequality (van Dongen, 1998: 279). However,

defamiliarisation from one's own culture has the benefit of helping the anthropologist avoid overlooking what is usually taken-for-granted and obvious.

Conducting my research opened up a whole world to me. I had already embodied my own tactics to stay safe in my 'habit-memory' (Hastrup, 1995), thus making the process of research an awakening of my mind as to how I live with violence myself. In other words, because the potential of violence, and of having to behave in ways that might keep me safe, have become normalised to me for as long as I can remember, studying others' tactics for staying safe, also meant that I had to become very self-reflexive to enable me to become aware of and research myself in relation to violence and tactics of safety. Finding out how the university dealt with cases of violence put me on a learning curve, and also made me more informed than my participants, thus creating that necessary distance in the process of making the other. In other words, in the process of defamiliarisation as discussed previously, I was on a different level compared to my participants and hence more informed. I tried to think and behave like someone who had been violated in some way, assuming that, in such a case, the person would search for formal support. I had to find my way around by searching for how 'I' could be helped. In doing research at home, "...identities are not fixed and otherness is not a stable phenomenon" (van Dongen, 1998: 284). All participants and I share in some characteristics, for example we study at the University of the Western Cape, but the participants' experiences, positions and approaches to avoid possible danger differed.

Using participant observation as a research technique had its own complications since I was both a 'native' and a researcher. Like many anthropologists studying other

cultural settings, I lived with and observed students and staff on campus over a period of time (Helman, 2001: 10). Initially in social science research, anthropologists were ‘outsiders’ coming into a village to observe activities with assumed ‘objectivity’ and ‘detachment’. Over time the realisation that the ‘other’ had their own point of view and that anyone, irrespective of race, caste, history and such, is also in many ways similar to us anthropologists, brought a shift from using an external gaze to look at the ‘other’ under study to a subjective one. A sense of sameness and equality made closer understanding between ‘us’ and ‘them’ theoretically possible as opposed to prior studies of an exotic and ‘strange’ culture which mainly emphasised difference and romanticised ‘otherness’ (Hastrup, 1995: 2 ff). Anthropologists conducting research for extended periods of time thus found that more information is gained by using participant observation (Hardon *et al.*, 2001: 229). Being a student at UWC for a substantial number of years and also having lived in two hostels (one on and one off campus) over the last three years I was no outsider. With my position as an insider it was easier to make contact with students living in hostels and rapport could be easily established from within the campus ‘community’. This helped in my attempt to explore how students manoeuvre amidst stories and experiences of violence on campus.

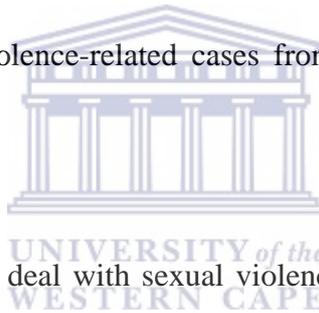
I am what Abu-Lughod (1991) calls a “halfie”, my cultural and research identity is mixed. I am both a student, and in relation to most of South African anthropology, an ‘other’ and accordingly found it difficult to assume the self on anthropology. According to Behar (1993: 339), “under these circumstances, you become an ethnographer but refuse to speak from a position of unsituated authority.” Although I

am a native anthropologist I cannot claim to represent the authentic voice of the insider either. My experiences can only be subjective.

Power ambiguities in various research encounters

Interviews with staff

I conducted semi-structured interviews with staff members from different university constituencies such as the Health Clinic, Counselling Services, Campus Protection Services and other groups that offer support for violence on campus. I arranged meetings which usually took place during working hours for the convenience of staff members. The interviews were often interrupted because staff also had their professional duties to fulfil. I interviewed staff to learn more about procedures to be followed in dealings with violence-related cases from their ‘professional’ point of view.



When I questioned staff who deal with sexual violence, about procedures, followed when a student reports sexual violence, it took some effort to get hold of the university’s rape protocol I was often referred to the Gender Equity Officer on campus. This gave the impression that structures for dealing with violence were not well-developed. I felt it necessary to get an official viewpoint because students who had experienced violence complained to me about inefficiency, breaches of confidentiality and anonymity at the Health Clinic.

It was difficult to reach the staff members given their schedules and meetings were sometimes postponed. Getting beyond a gatekeeper, such as a secretary, also posed challenges. Obtaining the cellular phone numbers of staff helped. Some of the

interviews were very comfortable and easy while others were difficult. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that some people do not like being interviewed, being the 'object' of study, and felt the need for a sense of control. The Director of the Counselling Services in particular wanted detailed information about the research methods I was using for my study. She was also a researcher, and being under the gaze of an inquisitor (me) seemed to engender discomfort (Hastrup 1995: 129). I did not want to use a rigid format for the interview, and the notion of asking to do an 'interview' was problematic, since it connoted formality. On the other hand, it made it possible for me to get access to staff. They viewed an interview as more 'legitimate' and scientific—it had a purpose, a goal and could show outcomes. This was not just 'chatting'. The nature of the relationship between us was based on the understanding that I requested the interview and they obliged me by 'granting' it. Although I had hoped for the opportunity for more informal discussions, I learnt that some people preferred the formality which they seemed to view as less of a waste of time. I quickly learned to ask for an interview when I tried to make an appointment with key 'informants'/participants. This was especially so in relation to getting past the gatekeepers in the academic setting. The student participants, however, felt intimidated by the idea of an interview, possibly because they viewed it as an unequal relation of power between the researcher (myself) and themselves. An interview is also viewed as a form of interrogation.

One staff member agreed to be interviewed and gave me very significant information. At the end of the interview she nevertheless said that she did not want me to use the information she had given in my study and I had to exclude this data from this thesis.

Interviews with students

My interaction with student participants was more informal and relaxed. At the start of my conversations with participants, the air was filled with discomfort. I had to speak generally about campus life and crack some jokes to ease them up. At times I also found it helpful to use facial expressions, gestures and animation to make them comfortable (Meth, 2003: 322). By sharing my own experiences and asking them about stories that had been told to me, I managed to establish rapport and was able to probe more. When I talked to first year students they often stressed that they did not know much. Yet what input they gave was still meaningful for widening my understanding.

In addition to formal interviews, I had informal conversations with students living on and off campus with the aim of getting closer to students' day-to-day experiences and observations regarding my topic. My questioning was often casual and relaxed. During such conversations, participants tended to give more spontaneous answers (Hardon, *et al.*, 2001) and seemed quite comfortable. It was also during such a conversation that one of the participants shared his experiences of an attempted rape.

To put participants at ease, I usually asked more general questions about what programme they were enrolled for, how they experienced their courses, living on campus and so forth, to establish rapport and ease them into the conversation. We talked for 45 minutes to two hours at a time. Some of the interviews/conversations required follow-ups as soon as I thought of issues I could have delved into more, or questions I did not ask. Most students were reluctant to have our conversations tape-recorded despite the fact that I explained its benefits and despite the degree of

familiarity between us. I avoided putting pressure on them and tried to keep them feeling comfortable. In such cases I made notes immediately after the interviews and took them for verification. In one instance a participant disagreed with my notes, although I vividly recalled her saying exactly what I had written. This alerted me to the fact that the topic of violence is sometimes distressing, that people can change their minds or say things they think the researcher wants to hear. By participating in everyday life on campus and in the hostels, observing, informal conversations, more formal in-depth interviews with students and staff I was able to triangulate and validate data.

Photographic representations of ‘dangerous’ spaces

Anthropologists have taken a critical look at issues of voice, authority and authorship in photography and filmography. Who the photographer represents, what his/her objectives are in doing so, the ‘language’ used and the environment in which photos or film is taken are dilemmas of research and representation (Ruby, 2000: 196). Nowadays a paradigmatic shift has taken place in the relationship between the person who films/photographs and the filmed/photographed. A reassessment of the moral and intellectual implications of documentary authorship has been undertaken. In particular, the documentary with its pluralistic demonstrations, belies the notion of images as mere recordings. Consequently, some image makers and theories now recognise films, fiction and non-fiction, as enunciation made by someone wishing other people to deduce meaning in a specific way (Ruby, 2000: 202). Although these concerns do not address photography of spaces *per se*, they are applicable to issues of voice and authorship represented in this study.

Photographic representations are not transparent and neutral and are not reflections of ‘what is there’ (Ross, 2004: 35). However, given the combination of participatory observation and interviews, the participants identified the dangerous spaces that I subsequently photographed, as well as many of the same spaces I later too experienced as unsafe. Photography as a research tool is usually used by asking people about certain issues, topics, taking photographs (or letting the participants take photographs) and then interviewing participants in a study about them. A participant in the study accompanied me to the places (s)he described and showed me where to take a photograph, which angle (s)he wanted me to use and which aspects to emphasise. Thus I used photography as a means to capture their space memory. I wanted to give a representation of the space memory that was identified and narrated by the participants. These, for example, included spaces on campus that students felt threatened by - especially at night. It also involved spaces off campus where they needed to access transport. Our mutual engagement in those spaces involved emotions and senses which I would have been removed from if it had not been part of my everyday experience as well. In addition, photographs were also taken of posters that were put up on campus notice boards to show that information about violence is almost never seen. These photographs are not neutral or objective either, since the absence of information regarding violence represents an ideology, for example, that HIV/AIDS interventions deserve more public space for attention than violence, as exemplified by the widespread circulation given to HIV/AIDS posters and information on campus.

2.4 ETHICAL REFLECTIONS

The nature of this research raised very sensitive issues. The names of the participants in my research were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities. Although one of my participants actually said I could use her name, I judged it best to use a pseudonym. I also had to find ways to conceal their relationships to me, where they stay and other details about them. I did not actively probe for sensitive or painful information, but students often brought it up of their own accord. One participant, for example, told me about his experiences of jumping off a moving train for fear of being thrown out. He was clearly still traumatised and found it difficult to speak about his ordeal.

This study is of potential benefit to the university because very little information is given to students about safety on and around campus once they arrive. Since this topic affects all of the university students it was something they could easily relate to. They participated because they wanted to contribute to making the campus community aware of the dangers that exist and how students experience and cope with them.

CONCLUSION

This chapter gives a description of the research site – the University of the Western Cape – where this research was based. It discusses its history and places in relation to the surrounding areas. In doing so, I illustrate how the location of the university maintains its position in the ‘bush’. These factors expose students to potential violence. I articulate my experiences of coming to stay in residence as the starting

point for how I developed tactics to stay safe when moving on campus. Although this research focuses, *inter alia* on how students stay safe, I was also studying myself in relation to safety. The interviewing process opened challenges of power at times, but also informed this study of how interviews are differently perceived and experienced. The two chapters that lie ahead contain photographs I had taken either for the purpose of illustration or to capture space memory of perceived dangerous spaces. The following chapter brings us closer to the everyday experiences of students in residences and questions the availability of support for when students leave their freedom of movement spaces.



UWC residences, administration and organisation: a hub of support for the unsafe beyond?

INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Residential Services is committed to assist each resident student to achieve and elicit, through democratic and transparent processes, his/her full potential in providing our highest levels of services. We further pledge to deliver effective and efficient services which will contribute and enhance the educational experiences whilst allowing for individual growth. This will be done through continuous participation and liaison with our clients, in transforming residence life into an integral part of the educational environment.

Residential Services aim to:

1. involve, when necessary, parents, students, the university constituencies and broader community to participate in decision-making regarding residence life;
2. acknowledge the cultural diversity of our community;
3. encourage freedom of religion, choice, thought, association, expression and maintaining mutual respect;
4. practice non-racialism and non-sexism;
5. promote sports, culture, social and academic development;
6. provide home away from home.

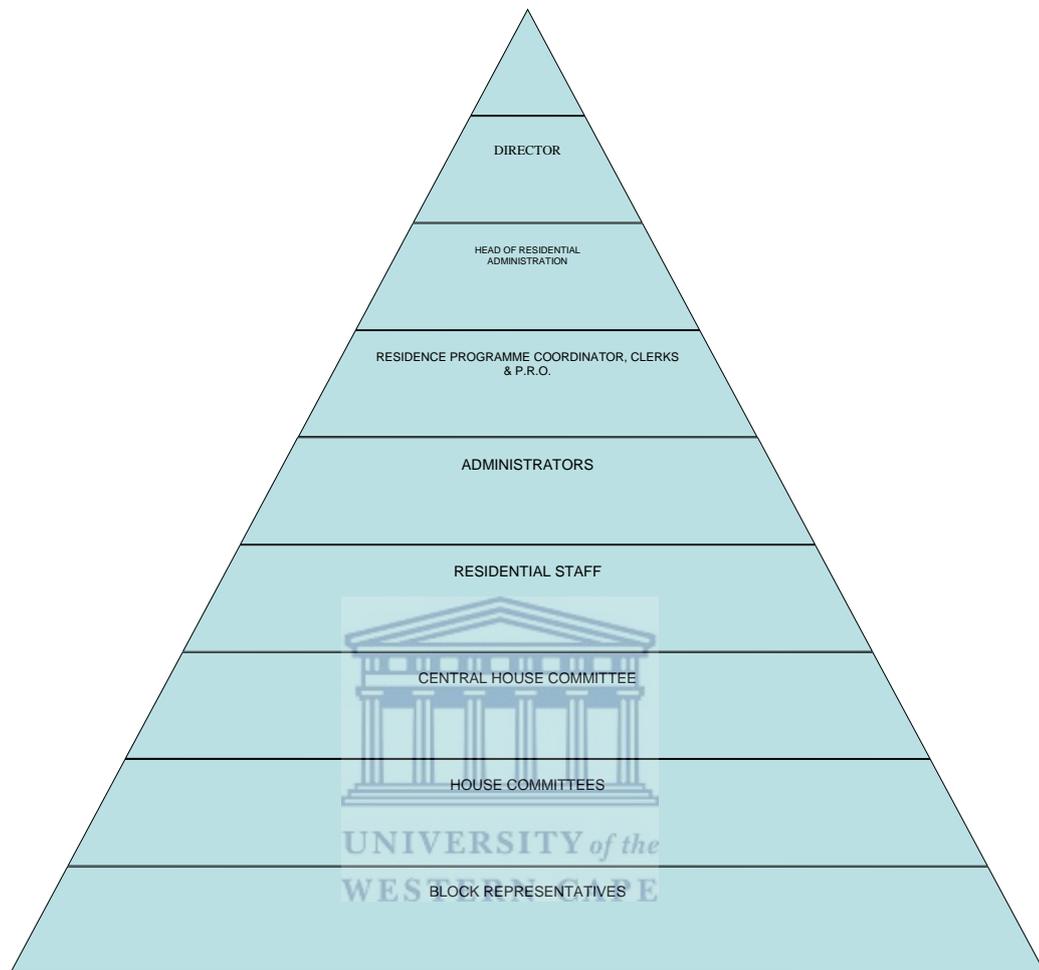
(University of the Western Cape, 2001)

Every organisation uses a mission statement to show its administrators and the public its purpose and essence. While a majority of institutions state their commitments and aims in their official mission statements and planning documents, few of them are actually able to realise those commitments. Mission statements are thus more a reflection of desirable attributes, and often, because of their idealistic nature, omit possible conflicts and stumbling blocks. Universities and their departments use mission statements to market themselves to prospective students and staff. This chapter investigates to what extent the organisation and administration of the University of the Western Cape's residences reflect its mission statement and put it into practice. It gives an example of the hierarchy within residential administration

and organisation. Furthermore, this chapter takes a look into student life in the residences and the politics and dynamics that play out in residence administration and organisation - none of which a mission statement is able to capture. The aim of this chapter is not to disparage the processes of administration and governance, but rather to shed light on a number of issues that play a role in the production (or not), and the intention, of providing safety. Finally, it sets the tone for the following chapter which discusses the tactics students use to stay safe, as well as describing the places in which students move on and around campus.



Figure 3.1 Hierarchy within residential organisation



3.1 RESIDENCE ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION

To create at least a feeling of safety for residents, it is important for them to have a sense that the organisation of an institution has at least a sense of 'order', expected and reliable structures that are in place, function well, are 'open' to their needs and concerns and respond appropriately. It is thus necessary to understand how the organisation 'functions' in theory and in practice.

Residential and Catering Services, one constituency of the University of the Western Cape, presides over the residential body. This includes management and administrative staff (in the Residence Administration Building), staff within the hostels⁷, the Central House Committee and individual House Committees which consist of residents. Each hostel has a coordinator who oversees its housekeeping; 2 matrons who deal with administrative and technical tasks and three night porters responsible for similar tasks to that of the matrons.

Other functions of Residence Administration are to process student applications and placements into residences and to activate their student cards for access to the residences and dining hall services. At the start of each academic year students anxiously queue in front of the Residential Administration Building (in the vicinity of the hostels) to apply for residence on campus. A large number of students want to stay on campus because it is much cheaper than renting a flat or boarding, and provides easier access to facilities such as computers, the internet and the library. In addition, many students find staying away from their guardians very desirable not only for independence, but also because staying at home may not be conducive for studying. Rafilwe⁸ (25), a first-year student from Khayelitsha, was very excited at the prospect of studying at UWC and getting away from the noise and financial suffering of the people with whom she lives. She also has a daughter whom family members look after during the week, she goes home for weekends. She feels that living on campus gives her the opportunity to focus on her studies and to mix with people from other cultural backgrounds and nationalities.

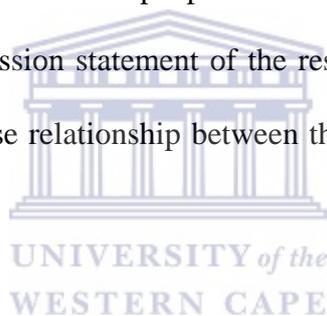
International students are given first preference for residence in the hostels and South African students are allocated rooms depending on how far from the university they live (officially a minimum distance of 60 kilometres). International students often apply for their studies and residence from their home countries and pay for it before they arrive. Although residence administration does not have official structures in place for electronic placements, unofficial placements are made. Applicants also receive assistance with their applications from acquaintances or family members already registered at UWC. Problems often arise when they arrive and their rooms had been allocated to someone else. This means that the student has to find alternative accommodation until another room in one of the residences can be made available. This is sometimes the first frustrating experience students encounter as their 'initiation' into university residences.



The organisation of residences

Gender segregation in job occupation is very evident within the residences. For example, two matrons are on duty in the residences during the day and at night a porter or janitor (in almost all residences this is a man) reports for duty. The gender difference in the job title is also noteworthy. This suggests that men are more suited for night duties as opposed to women, and *vice versa*, in line with stereotypical gender roles in wider society (Dale, Jackson and Hill, 2005: 24). Women who work the nightshift in residences are not adequately explained by this stereotype, since a considerable number of security jobs on campus are occupied by women who are married, and have children as well. More accessibility to security jobs for women is probably due to the fact that such work pays a lower salary and involves less training than that of a matron.

Some residences allow a student who serves on the House Committee to stand in when the night porter or matron does not report for duty. This happens especially over long weekends and public holidays, but sometimes happens any day of the week. In case of sexual assault, this arrangement may be to the disadvantage of resident students who wish and need to report such incidences. Survivors of assault are unlikely to confide in a student rather than the night porter, because a student substitute may not treat the information as confidential. This can result in underreporting. The university's Rape Protocol (discussed in Chapter 5) does not make provision for such instances which are not uncommon. While residence organisation involves a number of people who should help materialise the commitments made in the mission statement of the residence department, for this to happen there should be a close relationship between the processes of organisation in the working of democracy.



Every residence has one student representative per corridor. Residents elect 10 representatives to serve on the House Committee for each residence. A Central House Committee, which constitutes representatives of all residences, is elected to be the top governing structure for all students living in the residences. The Central House Committee consists of 10 members.

After Student Representative Council (SRC) elections, the Central House Committee (CHC) is called upon to arrange elections for the next CHC, which in turn arranges House Committee elections for the various hostels. The CHC makes application forms available to those who wish to serve on the House Committee and each candidate needs to present a manifesto to the resident students and to get the

signatures of 10 other residents in support. The purpose of the manifesto is to state what positive changes the candidate can bring about - similar to campaigning in governmental elections. At 'ground' level, a corridor representative is chosen to deal with problems within the individual corridors.

Unfortunately residents are caught in the gap between policy and reality and successful elections are only an ideal. Unsuccessful elections in the residences are due to a number of factors. Firstly, the CHC does not ensure democratic elections and that candidates actually deliver on their manifestos. A second problem with elections within hostels, in particular Hector Peterson Residence, is the fact that coordinators handpick those he⁹ wants to serve on the committee – undergraduate students who will not challenge their decisions and therefore will not represent the views of the residence populace. The specific coordinator therefore rules since he makes decisions for everybody in the hostel without running ideas by the students. With the result, postgraduate students who make up the majority in Hector Peterson Residence do not take queries to the House Committee, but rather directly to the coordinator. It should also be recognised on the other hand, that students who are elected for the residence House Committee do not fulfill their roles. Ultimately, the residence staff deals with and is blamed for all problems that arise.

Students frequently lack trust in residence management because they feel their queries are not addressed. Inefficiency and limited communication are the order of the day. For example, the residence coordinator at Hector Peterson Residence called a meeting this year (2005) to discuss an upcoming social event planned for Youth Day. To the coordinator's surprise, students were more interested in issues which were of

importance to them, since an occasion for discussion hardly ever happens. A build-up of social networking and talks preceded this meeting since students wanted to be well-prepared to voice their concerns. Several issues were raised in the meeting including disrespect towards students, poor transport and safety.

The first among issues raised was the very purpose for the meeting the coordinator called. On public holidays, social events are usually held to commemorate the deaths of important people who fought against apartheid for example, or in celebration of social transitions. The residence coordinator thus called a meeting with the residents of Hector Peterson Residence¹⁰ to discuss what they wanted to do on the upcoming Youth Day for their welcoming function. Students voiced their disinterest in any social event since the previous excursion residents went on proved unsuccessful. Buses were hired to take students to Cape Point and along the way the buses stopped at shebeens to buy alcohol, and shopping malls for foodstuff. The buses consequently arrived at their destination very late. When students arrived at Cape Point they could not enter because no bookings were made. They could not go anywhere else either because entry was disallowed for the same reason. Students were furious and the House Committee explained that they were under the impression that the coordinator made the necessary arrangements (blame directed towards staff). In this meeting with the residence coordinator, the residents of Hector Peterson Residence demanded an explanation and apology, but their demands were denied.

In the meeting students also addressed the issue of matrons who throw toilet rolls in students' rooms instead of placing them neatly and the fact that staff unlock residents' doors without waiting to hear if someone is in the room before entering. This results

in the staff walking in on students getting dressed or in physically intimate situations with a partner. Residents present in the meeting additionally raised their concerns about the shuttle that transports them to and from campus and asked the coordinator to speak to his superiors about the policy regarding the shuttle and its *modus operandi* (I discuss the message I posted concerning this later). Students also requested the constitution regarding elections of House Committees and asked the coordinator to stop handpicking students to serve on the committee. Students also requested that any communiqué from the coordinator to the residents should be typed on a letterhead and signed by him for endorsement and accountability. This was not adhered to in the ensuing newsletter and the core points raised in the meeting were not included in it.

Safety of residents was another issue raised in the meeting with the coordinator. During long vacations such as the June and December periods, shuttle services are not provided for residents of Hector Peterson Residence who work on campus. During December criminal activities *en route* to campus are more prevalent and no protection is provided for students. While the coordinator made notes during the meeting and promised a follow-up meeting to students it never happened. Lack of participation on the part of the students in governing bodies and of staff members in residence organisation additionally contribute to limited confidence in the system, an issue I will discuss next.

3.2 LACK OF TRUST IN RESIDENCE ORGANISATION

For democracies to function well, it is necessary for its citizens to have confidence in their institutions which are its building blocks (Ullmann-Margalit, 2002: 14). The

same applies to the democracy of organisation in the residences: for it to function well, it is important that the residents have trust in it. In the context of trust in, and within, institutions in South Africa, factors including racial oppression and the resulting tensions between different racial and ethnic groups break down society's trust in institutions (Bak and Asvik, 2005: 1). Due to the enormous inequalities that persist among various groups in South Africa "... the legacy of past distrust in institutions and among social groups is nurtured and becomes in itself a barrier to social, economic and political progress" (ibid: 1). This tendency can be counteracted once trustworthiness of public institutions and their role-bearers is strengthened. Trust constitutes complex features which generally involve positive expectations, reliance, risk, suspension of watchfulness and granting of discretionary powers. Since residents rely on the future contingent actions of residence administrators, who may act in unpredictable ways, residents are forced to trust them 'to do the right thing', a positive expectation (Bak and Asvik, 2005: 7). Residents take risk since the administrators are expected to keep us safe and make discreet decisions generally. Because residents trust the institution and grant it discretionary powers, they do not constantly monitor whether the decisions are implemented which will become clearer as I later speak about silence on the part of residents.

This may likewise be applied to the student residences. Democracy within the residences will therefore not exist unless the residence bodies are trustworthy. A number of factors play a role in unsuccessful organisation in the residences, namely: lack of communication between residences and organising structures, lack of awareness, lack of accountability between residence committees and residents; bad relationship between the residential department and residence committees; and

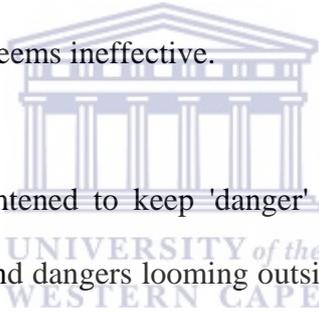
performance of representatives which are unsatisfactory. With structural incongruities and role confusion among structures, student organisation on the whole, and residential organisation, require mechanisms to ensure the availability of good candidates for elections in any given year (University of Cape Town, 2001). Where students were democratically elected by residents to serve on residence committees, they failed in their duties, resulting in coordinators handpicking students to serve. This shows interplay of inefficiency both on the part of the staff and committee members¹¹.

When administrative and organisational activities proceed higgledy-piggledy and students lack the desired support to feel safe within residences, one may infer that a platform or a base for safety is also not extended to the spaces students enter once they leave the residences. The technologies of safety are discussed next and I engage in a discussion which questions the notion held of safety 'inside' that supposedly keeps students safe from danger lurking 'outside' the hostels.

3.3 CAMPUS SECURITY: CREATING HOME AWAY FROM HOME?

According to Lindegaard and Henriksen (2005: 57) safety "is not only about creating order in relation to violence; it is also about inclusions and exclusions of social groups." The security measures meant to 'protect the safety' of the students, the inhabitants/ insiders, include the university's electric fences, strategically placed surveillance cameras and security guards at the main entrances. Recently security guards have been employed to patrol the hostels and to ensure 'legitimate' entries. Students must scan their student cards to pass through various turnstiles, or when

accompanied by a visitor or baggage, a side door is opened for them (see *Figures 3.2 and 3.3*). The purpose of the turnstile is to control entry of non-residents and to curtail theft or other offenses. Whenever someone wants to visit a student in one of the hostels, the security guard, who is supposed to stand at the entrance of the hostel, will open the door for him or her. But often nobody stands watch at the entrances and the matrons who work during the day are in an office far away from them. They also have too much on their hands to constantly walk to the entrance to allow visitors in. This can be very frustrating as students often have to wait for a very long time to be admitted to the hostel. The visitor would then simply ask a passing student with an activated card to enter and would be passed through the turnstile. Students are warned that if they allow non-residents through the turnstiles with their student card, it would be confiscated; although this seems ineffective.



As indicated, security is tightened to keep 'danger' from 'entering'; the 'inside' is accordingly viewed as 'safe' and dangers looming outside must be kept from entering. This diverts attention from possible danger on the 'inside', which is similarly overlooked in relation to common perceptions of 'home' it can be *the* place where domestic violence takes place. Family violence is nevertheless easily regarded as less serious and less prevalent than other forms of violence. The failure of individuals to understand the impact and frequency of wife abuse is perhaps linked to the view that acts of violence within the home are a private matter, a view that is maintained in a patriarchal society (Faramarzi *et al.*, 2005: 1). Likewise, in terms of securing students in residences, this same ideology is adopted. Despite efforts made to filter out supposed threats from 'entering' hostels, the inside is not as safe as is assumed. Theft happens, such as frequently computers from students' rooms. One student's room was

almost completely stripped of its contents, including the computer. This resulted in distrust between students and security services especially since the thieves managed to get away with large items. Even surrounded by security gates and high walls, such incidences are unnerving.

It seems that what is at stake here is a form of structural violence (Farmer 2004), it is a kind of violence that is not direct but is present in institutional practice and ways, and which can become embodied. According to Bourdieu structures in physical space mediate social structures, which, in turn, are incorporated into mental structures and systems of preferences (Bourdieu 1999: 126). When moving through such apparently controlled spaces students and their bodies, their experience becomes naturalised and they do not perceive it as violence, not even when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe. My main concern is, however, not with the kind of violence students experience, but in how they try to deal with it, avoid it or prevent future exposure to it. What they do is to try to restore the symbolic order instead. When a theft occurs (which does not happen infrequently) students take extra precautionary measures to ensure the security of their valuables. Catherine (26), for instance, took all her valuable documents to her lecturer for safekeeping after the theft mentioned above. She was afraid of losing valuable documents she would need to depart from South Africa.

A sense of hopelessness is also engendered by the inefficiency of the security measures.

If people can steal my belongings by just entering my room, what would keep them from entering my room when I am here, and doing something to me? The security at the residence gates is so inefficient and strange people are just allowed inside. The only thing visitors are expected to do is to write down who they are, where they are from and where they are going, and anybody can fill in invalid information because the information is not validated.

Complaining and reporting does not help because nothing will be done about the issue. So one must just keep quiet when something happens.
(Philip)

Catherine thus creates a sense of symbolic order for herself by 'learning' that security is not efficient. Yet she accepts it as well in a sense, or, as Bourdieu (1977) would say, is complicit in it, because Catherine argues that complaining will not help. She takes her valuables for safekeeping elsewhere instead. This creates a sense that her most valuable possessions are at least 'safe'. Similarly the 'story' that there are structures for security are in place supposedly enhances the sense of symbolic order, but in reality this is not always so. The disturbance of this order, the realisation that it does not function as it should, can increase a sense of unsafety. The university officials are viewed by students as representatives of the institution, they are both the 'narrators' of the 'official story' of how to keep safe and the very real agents that are supposed to implement not only the symbolic, but also the administrative and 'physical' order. Yet this is not always so. One night I walked to the janitor's office to find out what time the last shuttle leaves from campus for Hector Peterson Residence. The janitor needed to confirm the time and called the security person at the entrance gate. There was a book in the security office with the shuttle's schedule, but the woman at security said she could not locate the book. The janitor and I walked down to the booth and found the book next to her. This incident disturbed my sense that there was some order, some control and left me feeling insecure. Similarly, the technology for safety on campus; the high walls, turnstiles, electric gates, CCTV cameras and so forth are present, but operation and management of them is disordered.

3.4 THE RESIDENCES



Figures 3.2. **A.** This is the entrance to Eduardo Dos Santos Residence (mostly houses postgraduates) on campus. To enter people need an activated student card which will let the student through the turnstile. **B.** These are various blocks in Eduardo Dos Santos Residence.

The residences on the university premises are situated away from the main campus thus making the residential area distinct from the formal academic site. On campus there are 10 hostels and there are another five off campus. In total there are 2770 students at UWC who stay in residences (table below gives a breakdown of students in each hostel). Most residences are built with face-bricks and are divided into blocks which run alphabetically. Doors to the rooms have a keyhole but students are not given a key since only residence staff have access by key (staff usually come around to run routine checks or to distribute toilet rolls every fortnight). Previously students could use keys to unlock their doors but because duplicates could be made and students could return after moving out and unlock other students' doors, it was a better (and cheaper) alternative to abolish that method. Now students lock their doors with a padlock and can then open and close their doors as they wish. Each door also has a peephole. Synthia saw a peephole for the first time in her life when she came to stay in Liberty Residence at UWC. She said that to her it was an alert to unsafety since safety would not require one to see who is knocking at the door first before opening it.

Table 1. All residences of UWC and number of residents in each hostel

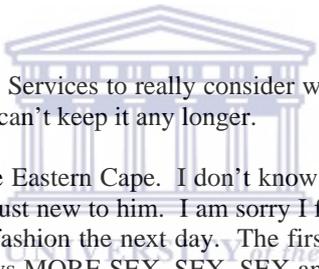
RESIDENCE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Cassinga (first-year students)	252
Cecil Esau (first-year students)	359
Ruth First	302
Chris Hani	204
Basil February	301
Coline Williams	301
Eduardo Dos Santos (mostly postgraduate students)	302
Hector Peterson (mostly postgraduate students)	305
Liberty	191
Ex-Staff quarters	30
Gorvalla Lodge	174
Blou Lelie, Belhar	7
Dalia	10
Waterfront Tygervalley	32
<u>Total</u>	<u>2770</u>

First-year hostels

On-campus residences consist of two residences (Cassinga, Cecil Esau and in which only first-year students stay for one year. The following year they are transferred to other residences (depending on promotion and vacant rooms). All first-year to third-year students (except for those who serve on the House Committee) stay in double-rooms, which they share with a student of the same sex. This means double the furniture and extras, including wardrobes, study desks and chairs, book shelves, beds and pillows, and a broom and dust bin. It is rumoured that students who serve on the House Committee do so for the benefits of staying in a large single room, and to gain access to other exclusive privileges.

Students who apply for double rooms fill out a form on which they mention the desired characteristics of a potential roommate. This procedure can nevertheless not guarantee that the two roommates will get along with each other. A first-year student may also be of any age and for people who lived independently before, staying in a

double room can demand major adjustment. Compromise between roommates is therefore a necessity when it comes to their respective study or play times and having friends over. It is not uncommon for students in double rooms to have sex with their partner in the presence of their roommate. This was an issue often raised when the House Committees held meetings with residents. One student complained, albeit tongue-in-cheek, that it was winter time again and students would be crawling into bed with each other to 'keep warm'. Others simply laughed and the topic was soon changed. Despite the fact that this is common throughout hostels and concerns students, students are not reprimanded about it (I discuss the issue of sexual harassment in greater detail in Chapter 5). A student raised his concern to UWC's *RAG Magazine*:



I would like the Residential Services to really consider who they place where. I'm not one to gossip, but goodness, I just can't keep it any longer.

I have a roommate from the Eastern Cape. I don't know if the boy was cooped up all his life or whether this freedom is just new to him. I am sorry I feel I have to comment. The boy has sex like it's getting out of fashion the next day. The first day he arrived in our new room, it was SEX, the following days MORE SEX, SEX, SEX and SEX. His new entire life at UWC revolves around SEX. And he is not even discreet about it. He just does it even when I am in the room.

A reminder to all first years... you do not have single rooms, if you want sex, go to a hotel. (Campus Life Dot Co.ZA, 2005)

Notably, this student (quoted previously) apologises for raising something that affects him negatively. Students' concerns often stay 'muted' and the story they tell each other is that students have little ability to address their concerns. According to Bourdieu (1977) this is a kind of violence in itself. The 'acceptance' of the status quo as something unchangeable was further illustrated when I raised my dissatisfaction with the shuttle service to Hector Peterson Residence on the Theta Board (discussed in more detail later). A PhD student commented in response that the message posted was very brave and that he would never be able to do something like that.

Unfortunately this 'silence' seems to filter into and dominate in instances of intimate partner violence, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. To return to the issue at hand, perhaps, by posting the message, I had also been the narrator of a story that informs others how to stay, if not safe, then at least not feeling uncomfortable, harassed or embarrassed

Cassinga and Cecil Esau residences have long corridors with the number of students on each floor ranging from 18 to 30. Women and men stay in separate blocks in first-year hostels. This policy was implemented recently as a result of efforts of the Gender Equity Unit in protest against same-sex bathrooms, showers and toilets. Despite this effort, men still use showers and toilets in women's blocks. This policy therefore does not reduce the anxiety women feel when going to the ablution areas. In this regard, women and men create symbolic order by keeping other women informed about the potential dangers in ablution areas, which inform their tactics for safety. These tactics would include taking a shower earlier during the day or in the morning for instance.

Other hostels

In other residences the corridors are also long, but not as long as those of Cassinga and Cecil Esau. Corridor doors are open throughout the day and when it gets really windy broken doors are constantly heard slamming during the night. Having long corridors makes theft easier because students who live at the end of the corridor usually have to walk longer distances to the ablution area. Women tend to feel very unsafe going to toilets. But to get the mundane things done, risk is inevitable.

Going to the toilet at night is scary because there are stories going around about things happening to women in the bathrooms. I also envision somebody grabbing me there. But one has to do what one has to do and if one fears all the time nothing will get done. So risk is inevitable.

(Mary, on campus)

Mary indicates that whenever she goes to the ablution area she feels anxious because of stories about rapes that occurred in showers. She fears that the same thing might happen to her. In her awareness of the potential danger, she surrenders to the need to get 'things' done. Being overcome by fear means giving in to it, surrendering to its paralysing effects on completing daily practices. She has no other choice than to do what is necessary. Although aware of the potential dangers that lurk in ablution areas, Mary 'misrecognises' the violence - the debilitating effects going to the toilet for instance has on her, since her condition in this fear has become naturalised and invisible (Bourdieu, 1997). But telling stories about what happened to other students in ablution areas is a means to deal with the fear. These circulating stories of violence which mark certain places as potentially dangerous, make students aware of the violence, and cause them to evaluate their tactics to stay safe (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 50).

Students do not always lock their door when going to ablution areas because they think that they will return soon. But sometimes people slip into their rooms and steal whatever they can get their hands on in their absence. For this reason students are advised to lock their doors whenever they leave their room irrespective of where they go. In practice this can be inconvenient because in non self-catering residences (described next) where students have to wash their dishes in the bathroom (for lack of communal kitchens), they have to put their dishes on the floor first before unlocking the door. They may also be cooking and want to wash dishes in the meantime. This makes it necessary to constantly unlock and relock their doors. When residents take

the risk and leave their doors unlocked it is often based on a tacit agreement that someone will watch over their room when they leave. This is a tactic of safety and eases their minds. Robberies seldom occur when a neighbour is keeping an eye on a room.

Non-/self-catering residences

Most of the residences are not self-catering residences which means that they do not have communal kitchens or lounges. Students staying in such residences are expected to buy food from the dining halls, which is, of course, more expensive. But it is the norm for students who prefer to cook their own food to do so in their rooms. On each floor students share the ablution area which consists of three toilet stalls, three hand basins, three shower stalls and one bathroom with only a bathtub. Students usually reserve one hand basin for dishes (for 'sensible hygiene' under the circumstances), but while one student is washing dishes, another would be excreting waste, with only a toilet door to separate them. This is very unhygienic and is an issue that is not given priority among changes that need to take place in residences.

The toilets, bathroom and shower stalls occupy one large space. The enclosures of the toilets, bathroom and shower stalls do not stretch from ceiling to floor. It was rumoured that a man who climbed over a shower stall, raped a woman taking a shower in one of the residences during the early hours of the morning. The translucence of the shower doors also adds to the lack of privacy. Students generally feel unsafe in showers, but women especially take their showers during 'peak' time when most students are awake in the morning or early evenings. This is a means to safe amidst stories of danger. In other dealings with the particular organizational or

social structures which are in a sense 'violating' them, students when using the toilet while someone is cleaning dishes at the hand basin, keep in their fart while defecating for fear of humiliation. These conditions transgress the rules of privacy discussed next.

Privacy in the ablution areas is thus not optimal. Johnson (2005) offers helpful insights into the meanings of privacy. Previous definitions of privacy were devoid of bodily presence and focused mostly on power, feelings of personal control, 'the state of being alone', keeping personal matters and relationships concealed and 'protecting personal matters in the public sector' (Schopp *et al.*, 2003; Street and Love, 2005). Later these definitions extended to an approach which included the body and was followed by Lawler's (1991:166) 'sociological' definition. To her, privacy:

"means all of the following, either individually or in combination, a lack of audience, no unnecessary exposure of the body, minimizing the possibility of embarrassment, maintaining a person's dignity, and an aspect of personhood" (cited in Johnson, 2005)

Women and men sharing ablution areas offers no privacy for intimate personal practices and bodily functions. Although the privacy of students is limited in most toilets on campus, women's bodily activities may need more privacy than men. Privacy is thus not only in opposition to public, but privacy also involves an aspect of gender. Women menstruate and the personal activity of changing sanitary towels is shared with men. Although there is knowledge that the ablution areas are unisex, the doors are still marked with respective 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' signs. When visitors come to the hostels they think the toilets are for men and this creates discomfort when women walk in seeing men urinating. Additionally, the sounds that emanate when using the toilets, which are partly enclosed with walls similar to toilets in more public spaces such as the student centre or shopping malls, alludes to the same compromise of the 'private'. Moreover, no distinction is made between 'kitchen' (public space in

the context of hostels) practices and 'toilet' (intimate space) practices. Students clean their dishes in the designated hand basins, while others use the toilets right behind them. This transgresses all the requirements for privacy in Lawler's definition since people in the toilets have an audience, bodies are exposed causing embarrassment, a person's dignity is not maintained ignoring the aspect of personhood.

The concept of 'boundedness' as an aspect of our personal privacy has only recently come to some prominence. The contents of our bodies are normally 'bounded' in ordinary social life. Through child-rearing practices we are 'potty-trained' for this 'boundedness'. When body contents are released inappropriately through incontinence, flatulence or vomiting, these practices are sources of immeasurable embarrassment (Johnson, 2005). Likewise, sharing space which requires the privacy of feminine and masculine bodily practices changes that space and makes it ambiguous. A mixture of 'kitchen' and private bodily practices further complicates the use of the space. Furthermore, feelings of safety in ablution areas are impeded by partly enclosed walls as mentioned earlier.

In light of this, self-catering hostels are more desired among the students because fewer students stay on one floor, there are kitchens and lounge areas with a television and they generally tend to be quieter. In these residences each floor has a private shower room (not a stall) and a private toilet (like the ones in airplanes) and in such residences on campus a maximum of five students occupy a floor. Hector Peterson Residence has a maximum of nine students on each floor, but this number varies according to the structure of the block. The number of students staying on a floor affects noise levels, cleanliness and risk of theft. Students fear that confronting

noisiness and uncleanliness will wreak enmity. This is a kind of **violence**. It can at one level be seen as symbolic, because, as Bourdieu (1977) argues, this kind of violence is often unnoticed especially because people are so familiar with it, rendering it invisible. It is also a kind of structural violence, of “controlling processes” (Nader, 1997), where violence is more than only physical force against residents. This form of violence impedes the freedoms and survival of residents (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004: 21-2). This is manifested in the form of residents avoiding confrontational situations by remaining silent about their grievances. Remaining silent is thus a tactic to keep the peace.

Hector Peterson Residence

Hector Peterson Residence is often referred to by students as ‘the suburbs’ (one student once called it Constantia¹²) and Eduardo Dos Santos Residence as ‘the township’. Other students or visitors describe Hector Peterson Residence as “a different world.” One reason for this is that on campus residences are in close proximity to each other. It tends to be very noisy on campus and students are often heard shouting from their windows to people walking outside. Music is also often played loudly. Hector Peterson Residence, in Belhar (a distance from the university) is a secluded hostel, is free-standing, and has an electric drive-in gate with security staff at the gate. Students pass through the turnstile. It also has its own parking area. A shuttle service which departs from the parking area for campus every hour on the hour is provided to students who stay in this hostel. Students murmur among themselves about problems within the hostel and few speak, as I mentioned earlier. A particular grievance I expressed on the University's electronic noticeboard concerning the shuttle service was thus considered brave. The messages are a bit lengthy, but at

this juncture I would like to let the reader in on the way concerns of students are dealt with. Here follows my message:

The shuttle that transports students from Hector Peterson Residence to campus and back has now turned into a private taxi. Instead of sticking to the designated route, the shuttle now takes students who stay deep in Old Belhar (and believe me it is quite a detour!!) home. WHAT'S UP WITH THAT??!! We, the residents at HPR, do not have time to sit and wait while the driver makes special deliveries. When we leave campus we want to go straight to the hostel as it has been since we became familiar with the service. The students are not taken into consideration at all, and it is as if we are indirectly told: "You need a lift right? So you will accept whatever service I provide. Take it or leave it. I don't care that you are postgraduates who have things to do". Students complained about this, but yet the problem persists. If some students who live in Old Belhar can be taken home, that means that all students who live in Delft, Bellville can also be transported home by Hector Peterson – Campus shuttle. OPEN THE SERVICE UP TO MORE PEOPLE THEN. WHY DISCRIMINATE? Why do most UWC staff just insist on being inefficient and think nothing of the students? Postgraduates, so-called “flagship” of the university MY BEHIND!!

Furthermore, our lives as passengers in that shuttle are put in danger since the shuttle is OFTEN overloaded. There is a reason why the law prohibits overloading vehicles. Or should students die first before somebody pays attention?

From a very annoyed Hector Peterson resident
(9921535, 2005)

The coordinator of Hector Peterson Residence then emailed me to inform me that my notice will be brought to the attention of the Director of Residential and Catering Services, who emailed me the following morning to respond. I was very annoyed because I did not email anybody - I placed a public notice on the Theta Noticeboard and expected response through that forum. I then copied the email and posted it on the forum for the campus community to see:

It is well known or maybe you do not know this but before the management of Residential & Catering Services embarks on any process, project or action it will first consult with the constituent that would be affected. We pride ourselves in consulting with the relevant stake holders and in this case we consulted with the student leadership at HPR regarding the shuttle services at HPR, there was no exception

At the beginning of the year there was a process in place and the Res. Coordinator has gone to great lengths to ensure that everyone was informed about the transport. Notice were displayed as there were some suggestions from the House Committee as well regarding the shuttle. Eventually we agreed, and a notice was again displayed indicating what the modus operandi would be for the shuttle.

As far as carte blanche of transport or provision thereof is concerned, I find the argument rather frivolous because the students who are using HPR transport other than HPR students are also residence students. They are housed in properties that are rented by the university in Belhar. So if you as a residence student are entitled to transport, then surely they as residence students, should be entitled to transport. I can assure you, I would like the day when all

transport for students are banished and students should find their own means of transport to and fro without the university having to provide this service. Can you imagine the cost the university would be saving but what about the lives of the students especially those who work until late at night in the labs?

Sometimes we have to look at the bigger picture to get a better sense of what is happening.

We trust that this response addresses your issue and trust that you would have a fulfilling time on residences for the duration of your stay.

A second student then responded to the Director's message:

It was with dismay that I read the Director of Residence & Catering Service's response to the previously posted message concerning the Hector Peterson Residence shuttle service. To this effect, I have the following to say:

- 1). If indeed an agreement took place between the residence authorities and the student leadership at HPR concerning the shuttle service, the resolution arising from this meeting was not communicated to the student populace residing at HPR (of which I am one).
- 2). Contrary to the Director's response, no notice was posted as regards the modus operandi (route) of the shuttle from campus to Belhar. I stand to be corrected on this. Another question is: Why is it that the shuttle stops its services during vacation? HPR students are postgraduates and thus are not ineligible for vacation. Hence, who accounts for the safety of those students who stay behind to do academic work?
- 3). It was also shocking that a genuine concern as regards safety of students can be termed "frivolous" by the authorities involved. Checking up my dictionary reveals the meaning of "frivolous" as thoughtless, idle, playful and the like. I want to believe the university should pride itself in listening to suggestions made by students, and not resort to personal attacks.
- 4). Finally, let me ask this question. How feasible would it be for us students staying outside campus to have our own transport as referred to by the Director in his response? Moreso, the issue of the shuttle overloaded with students was not addressed in the response. The Bible says: "He that has ears, let him hear." I rest my case and I believe the authorities will provide answers to this riddle.
(2215671, 2005).

These messages actually led to something very interesting, because subsequent to our messages, Hector Peterson Residence had problems with its hot water. The coordinator of the hostel then put a letter under my door in which he asked me to email the head of technical services asking him to solve our problem. With the letter he enclosed all previous correspondence between himself, technical services staff and the Director of Residential Services. I hesitated a bit, but later 'posted' the notice. The Director of Technical Services was very accommodating and responded the next day, informing us that he will give the problem priority. I was even invited to observe the technicians while they fixed the problem. Other updates on the problem also

followed. Breaking the silence on issues that needed to be addressed within the hostel proved in my own experience to be very rewarding in terms of getting the problem solved, and also in gaining respect. What I realised additionally was that if all students demanded attention for their concerns (which is not the case), they will be able to break the silence and bring about many positive changes within the residences and on campus as well. On the other hand, students who do complain often feel that their concerns are ignored and later give up. Bearing this in mind, my tactic for maintaining order 'telling' my story to others may prove one way to deal with the disorder in residences. The issue at hand remains: if the Director of Residential and Catering Services had informed the students at Hector Peterson Residence about the residence UWC was renting to accommodate students, students would not have been in the dark about the route of the shuttle and there would have been no problem.

CONCLUSION



As indicated in this chapter, the purpose of mission statements is to capture the essence and aims of the organisation to its administrators and the public. The mission statement of Residential and Catering Services at the University of the Western Cape bedevils the daily experiences of residents who live under structures that do not support adequate organisation. When residence staff in collaboration with committee members do not commit to apt organisation and administration as their mission statement suggests, disorder and dissatisfaction result and students do not get their money's worth. Lack of communication among the bodies also results in practices that are ineffective. The experiences of residents are thus that Residential Services is not democratic and transparent in their provision of services. Also, residence

authorities do not liaise with students and view residence life as very separate from the educational environment, contrary to its mission statement. When one looks at inefficient organisation, it is fair to speculate that reports of crimes or offenses will not be dealt with efficiently. This kind of violence, which is often misrecognised and overlooked, is what Bourdieu (1977) refers to as symbolic. It may not necessarily be expressed as direct aggression or physical violence, but remains a form of violence nonetheless. The presence of this violence results in students feeling unsafe, who then continue to live in discomfort and anxiety under its cycle, as discussed in this chapter. Although they may not have trust in the residence structures, they find other means to safeguard their valuables, for instance in the case of Catherine (discussed previously). This forms part of the discussion in the next chapter which focuses more on the tactics students use to stay safe.



CHAPTER 4

Awareness is power: tactics for staying safe in violent spaces

INTRODUCTION

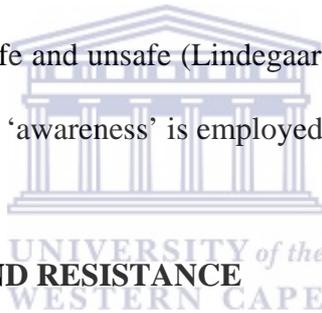
“Violence is everywhere.” (Lindiwe)

In order to understand the concept ‘awareness’, Hastrup’s (1995) explanation of consciousness is invaluable, especially to identify with people’s behaviour in violent situations. She explains that our patterns of thinking are not subject to paths of practical reason but we rather constantly reformulate our whole existence through our actions; a reconsideration of our ideas of consciousness is thus necessitated (Hastrup, 1995: 99). Hastrup reminds us that we are inarticulate and expression is not limited to the verbal. Expression, rather, takes place in various forms (Hastrup, 1995: 99).

Given Hastrup’s suggestion to understand consciousness from multiple angles, we approach a field within which questions of ontology and methodology join: how do people think and how do we know? (Hastrup. 1995: 99; Ross, 2004: 35). What tools should anthropologists use to access these forms of consciousness that are so intertwined in social space, affecting it, being affected by it and being its defining capacity? In an environment of violence, students are affected, they can potentially have an influence on it through the tactics they use to stay safe and, at the same time, become the defining capacity of such an environment.

We cannot fully comprehend other people, except through structured imagining or ‘intuition’, perhaps deducing part of their implicit reasoning from its (‘intuition’s’)

various expressions. Knowledge is not directly and exclusively expressed in words. Situating this in experience rather than words and, consequently, in the recentred self rather than the floating mind, changes the location of knowledge. It is largely unexpressed and reserved in the habit-memory, and not exclusively in the brain. Even if conscious of the environment of which we are part, this involves a degree of inarticulacy on the part of human agents (Hastrup, 1995: 99-100). Since knowledge of a violent environment (informed by experience, stories or witness) becomes inscribed in students' bodies, the tactics used to stay safe are relocated in expressed and (very importantly) unexpressed consciousness. Therefore, bodily experiences, (in addition to exchange of stories, investing in technology of safety, and exchanging gossip in social networks), of being in the world inform our knowledge of violence and the way we distinguish between the safe and unsafe (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 46). It is in this light that the concept 'awareness' is employed throughout this chapter.



4.1 SPACE, VIOLENCE AND RESISTANCE

Former notions of space regarded it as merely an area which is permeable, neutral and accessible to all. But more recently ideas of space suggest that it is never neutral, and as the history of South Africa's spatial planning proves, spatiality is overwhelmingly ideological (Ross, 2004: 35). According to Michel De Certeau (1988 cited in Ross, 2004: 35), to understand a place is very much related to one's own position in it. This suggests that the views of onlookers will differ from those occupying the space 'looked onto'. Ross thus argues that employing spatiality entails an engagement with emotion and the sensual in everyday life, which would otherwise be 'alien' (see also Clifford, 1998: 35). Moreover, these spaces are also very fluid and the experiences

of them differ from person to person. What would be a space of opportunity for a robber is a space of threat and potential loss for another. While some use space for calculating escape in situations of robbery, others use it to confront and retaliate. Furthermore, gender and age do not occupy space in the same ways - movements are moulded by (unwritten) social rules dictated by violence and fear. Space also mutates with time. The scene of laughter the one moment is a scene of murder the next and the same spaces are experienced differently by different people when they occupy them. "The encoded body and killing zone bec[o]me sites of a transaction where residual historical and political codes and terror and alterity [a]re fused, thus transforming these sites into repositories of a social imaginary" (Feldman, 1991: 64). Spaces of violence may also expand given the involvement of witnesses or people who come to the assistance of somebody who is being violated.

This brings me to how the concept tactics will be employed in this section. There is a number of ways in which the "powerless" employ tactics in negotiating ideologies of proper living. For the definition of "tactics," de Certeau explains:

A tactic is a calculated action, determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power...(1984: 36-7)

Later on, de Certeau elaborates that:

Tactics are procedures that gain validity in relation to the pertinence they lend to time--to the circumstances which the precise instant of an intervention transforms into a favorable situation, to the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of a space, to the relations among successive moments in an action, to the possible intersections of durations and heterogeneous rhythms, etc (1984: 38)

Ideology, he argues, is a product of power, a strategic practice, which is used by the weak. The weak or the marginalised resist ideology through tactics and reproduce it

to new ends, although for moments at a time. Although they resist, they do not change the broader structural order. Despite restrictions by objective life conditions such as race, class and gender, they must manage within a strategic space of power. This is achieved through everyday practices of appropriation and consumption and people create room within which to move. These practices take place in a realm divided into two fractions: one where strategy and production occur and one where consumption and tactics happen, and the differentiations within the group of the weak – or the strong, for that matter – become indistinguishable. For instance, in the vicinity of the University of the Western Cape elements of violence (e.g. robbers or murderers) use tactics in relation to the broader structural order - state institutions – and engage in strategic practices toward other people (student victims of violence). The ideology is the existing segregated townships known as the Cape Flats inherited from the apartheid regime which forms part of the broader structural order. Hunted and troubled by intense state interventions, the elements survive through the strategic domination of turf (the vicinity of campus) (Jensen, 2001: 32).

Strategies, on the other hand, are the ‘forces’ (structural violence, e.g. racial segregation that caused poverty and crime) that place the people on the Cape Flats in position where they need to protect themselves (Jensen, 2001: 31). Tactics are thus used to resist the strategies (structural order), which is expressed in the forms of violence students are exposed to in the vicinity of UWC.

Lindegaard and Henriksen (2005: 44), on the other hand, use the word ‘strategy’ instead of ‘tactic’, and use it similar to the way Bourdieu (1990) does. Accordingly, strategies are acts of awareness which are seldom thought-out and reflected upon.

Although the term is potentially confusing given its strong connotations to rational choice theory, it refers to social agents' continuous construction in and through practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 129). On the one hand strategies of safety are rational since they make perfect sense to the agent, yet on the other, these acts are not necessarily expressed or well thought-out. I use the word tactic instead, especially to emphasise structures surrounding the university which students resist. Although these tactics are used daily, they do not necessarily change the general social order (poverty, unemployment, crime and so forth).

4.2 EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

The violence experienced by students who stay in Hector Peterson Residence and Belhar mostly takes place en route to campus. Students from Hector Peterson Residence are also more prone to experiencing violence than those who stay on campus because they move around in places that are considered dangerous. At Symphony Way (see *Figure 4.1*) and between the hostel and campus, students have been robbed and stories of rape and attempted rape are told about this area. Furthermore, taxis in the vicinity of Belhar pose additional safety hazards by being the sites of robberies and through its link to drivers known to be reckless. Students tell stories about their experiences and this serves as warning to others.



Figure 4.1. Symphony Way which is the taxi pick-up and drop-off point.

When I took a taxi from the hostel to Delft one Sunday afternoon, I got a great shock when a man sitting in front of me pulled out a gun and demanded money from the taxi guard at gunpoint. Other people in the taxi looked at the man and he asked them what they were looking at, probably to avoid them looking at his face. The money the man received from the guard was probably enough because he did not harass the other passengers. The driver sped off after the incident and then stopped to tell another taxi driver along the way what happened, in Afrikaans. I cannot really understand Afrikaans, but gathered from their conversation that they wanted to get hold of the man.

(Peter)

Students generally, whether they stay in Hector Peterson Residence or in on-campus residences may experience violence in taxis since all residents need to travel to Bellville or other surrounding areas for shopping, religious reasons, research or extra-mural activities. Lindiwe also found herself in a situation which could have led to gun violence.

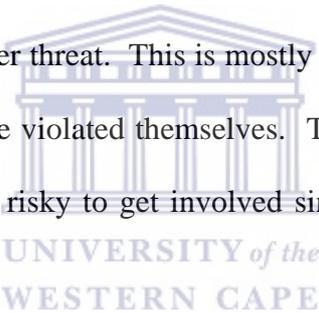
Violence is everywhere and just the other day when I took a taxi from Bellville, the guard¹³ instructed somebody to sit in a specific seat in the taxi. An argument ensued and the guy next to me pulled out a huge gun. I demanded to get out of the taxi, but the guard asked what happened. I told him to open the door first and then ask questions. I got out as fast as possible. The guy with the knife ran away but his friend sat in the front of that taxi. Because the guard got hold of the friend, he was beaten up.

(Lindiwe)

Viewing violence as omnipresent is a way of staying safe by reminding students to be on guard all the time as it might happen at any time and in any place. If they are not constantly aware of their environment they can become unsafe. Thus students continuously draw on tactics of safety to keep out of harm's way.

4.3 THE QUESTION OF SAFETY WHEN IN A CROWD

The safety perceived to come from being in a crowd, for instance in a confined public space like a taxi, was shaken in the examples of Peter and Lindiwe. When a number of people are together in a small confined space, they tend to feel safe. The presence of others sets aside danger and sociability works to ease fear (Ross, 2004: 39) - until a gun is pulled out. Yet the supposed safety found in a group can be largely imagined. The safety felt when in a crowd of people is based on the assumption that others will come to one's assistance when needed. Accordingly, when people are alone they feel more powerless against potential violence (Lindgaard and Henriksen, 2004: 55). Yet in this study it was evident that students often do not come to the assistance of others whom they perceive to be under threat. This is mostly because they are afraid that by intervening they might become violated themselves. This is especially the case with female students who see it as risky to get involved since intervening may be to her own detriment.



I heard a desperate cry coming from my neighbour's room in HPR early one evening. I was unsure from which room the cry came so I stepped out into the corridor to see if I could spot the room. Standing in the corridor I was uncertain whether I should intervene out of fear for the perpetrator turning on me. Instead I decided to retreat to my room and fortunately the security staff came and I later heard that it was a guy beating his girlfriend in her room. What led to my uncertainty to intervene is the xenophobia I often experience in taxis. When people are treated badly by the drivers or taxi guards, I noticed that other passengers simply ignore it. This gives me the feeling that if I should intervene to help a victim and the perpetrator turns on me, other people will not support me.
(Synthia)

Awareness of the consequences of intervention therefore holds Synthia back and keeps her safe. She does, however, feel torn between helping and intervening and in a different setting (Malawi) she would be more willing to intervene. Testing the level of safety in situations is therefore necessary, although students may be willing to take

risk when a significant other is in danger. Mary also fears that when she is in trouble people around will not help her.

I fear that when someone rapes me nobody will intervene while it happens. In Nigeria this will not happen, because other men will run after the offender and beat him up. (Mary)

A sense of camaraderie in Nigeria therefore contributes to a feeling of safety for Mary as well as the fact that she knows justice will be served because offenders will pay for the consequences of their actions. Men act as protectors and the bearers of justice. Because she fears that bystanders in Cape Town will not help her should something bad happen to her, she always walks with fellow students when she goes to her department on campus at night, again confirming that the mere presence of people, especially ones who are not complete strangers, is a tactic of safety.

Phumzile experienced an incident where her bag was snatched from her in a public space. Bystanders did not intervene. The bag-snatching took place in Symphony Way where taxis drop-off passengers or pick them up.

I saw two guys sitting on the opposite side of the road and it looked to me as if they were waiting on a taxi. When I stepped out of the taxi I saw the two guys move toward me, but I thought they were crossing the road because they were walking to Extension. But then they came toward me, one guy with his hand under his top as if hiding a knife or a gun (I did not see him with anything while he sat waiting) and walked to me as I walked backwards but he then got hold of my bag. I shouted and one guy ran away, but I held onto my bag the other guy held and there was a struggle. At one point the bag was on his side and I held onto the straps. He managed to get hold of the bag and ran off. I followed the guy and ran closely behind him. The guy couldn't even run. My adrenalin was pumping and I was determined to get my bag, but the guy managed to escape. I told a traffic officer who came by that I had been robbed, but he just went off on his own after I thought that he would help me see if I could get hold of some of my belongings. People passed by asking what happened, but nobody would come up with a solution. My cellphone, cards, ID were in the handbag and it meant that I had to start afresh.

(Phumzile)

Belhar is a predominantly coloured area and racism is often rife in such communities especially towards Blacks (see Adams, 2005: 9; du Preez, 2005: 14). It is possible that the traffic officer and bystanders did not help Phumzile because she was a black

woman. Studies show that whites in America are more likely to help whites in emergencies than blacks (Bryan and Test, 1967; Gaertner, 1971; 1973; Piljavin, Rodin and Piljavin, 1969). This is not conclusive in the decision not to intervene, however, since other factors may play a role as well. Bystanders may also decide against helping victims depending on the costs involved (Gaertner, 1975: 95). Not helping a victim, especially when a weapon or threat of coming to bodily harm oneself is involved, can also be a way to stay safe.

While making a telephone call in Parow one Saturday morning, a guy held a friend of mine at gunpoint. She called me to draw my attention, and thinking she was teasing and not turning back immediately, I turned around eventually to see what was happening. The guy holding the gun was very nervous because his fingers were trembling on the trigger. I thought that I could easily fight the guy, only if the lady were not there. I simply handed my cellphone over. Other people walked by without offering any support and Saturday mornings are very busy around shopping malls. If I were alone I would have held the guy's hand up to empty his cartridge, and then would have beaten the guy up.
(Collin)

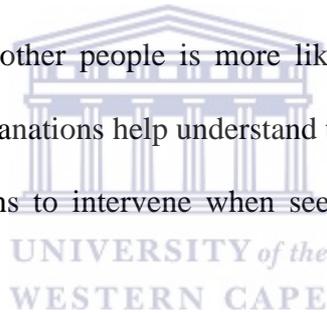
At the same time the response by a group of people against someone who offers violence can equally help everyone to keep safe, as discussed by Bulelwa. She said in Johannesburg, where she comes from, people stand together against violence.

Everybody has this idea that Joburg is rough but people can talk on their phones when walking in the streets. Even in the townships. Hillbrow and Yeoville are rough where the Nigerians are though. At the taxi rank near home the taxi drivers will beat someone up if they steal a cellphone. Here people can get away with it and the others will do nothing. So back home there is more unity.
(Bulelwa)

In Nigeria, according to Collin and Mary, and in Johannesburg according to Bulelwa, bystanders would fight the perpetrator. According to Chekroun and Brauer (2002), people are more likely to exercise 'social control' in high personal implication situations. They define social control as "any verbal or nonverbal communication by which individuals show to another person that they disapprove of his or her deviant (counternormative) behaviour" (Chekroun and Brauer, 2002: 854). Put differently; if

people feel a personal threat in situations where they see someone else being held at gunpoint, they are more likely to intervene, and thus make themselves safer.

Latané and Darley (1970) cite instances where victims of murder and other offences were left unattended even after the assailant had already left. In one instance a switchboard operator who was raped and beaten in her office in the Bronx ran outside the building naked. Forty people surrounded her and watched how the assailant tried to drag her back into the office and none of them interfered. Two policemen happened to pass by the incident and arrested the assailant (Latané and Darley, 1970: 2). The authors conclude that if bystanders fail to *notice, interpret* and decide that they have *personal responsibility* toward the victim, they are less likely to intervene. In addition, the presence of other people is more likely to keep a bystander from rescuing a victim. These explanations help understand the possible thinking processes involved in people's decisions to intervene when seeing something bad happen to somebody.



4.4 WHEN DRASTIC SITUATIONS CALL FOR EXTREME TACTICS

Using the train to commute around Cape Town is known to be risky and many commuters experienced violence of one or other form (Marud, 2002) leading to protests against the absence of security on trains. A number of participants in this study also told of frightening experiences they had on trains. Other stories tell about people who were robbed in trains, especially trains that run along Cape Flats lines.

Such stories are part of the symbolic order students create to stay safe. Because of such stories students avoid commuting by train. Here follow stories told by two students who survived after they had no choice but to jump off the train.

At every station stop I raised my head from the book I was reading to check who gets on and off and at one stop 4 guys boarded the train. Although I found it strange that they were standing since there were vacant seats, I resumed reading. A commotion and people scurrying drew my attention to those 4 guys. I heard about gangsters who rob people, but it was clear that these guys were not interested in people's belongings, so they must have been out to kill. It was very surreal, and even seeing one of the guys stabbing an old man repeatedly with a knife, seemed like a dream to me. Women ran around in the carriage and it dawned on me that I needed to do something fast. The window behind me was fortunately broken and I told myself that I needed to jump because the guys were coming my way. I told myself this continuously to convince myself and looked out the window to scan the railway track in search for poles. I previously heard that when people jump from trains, the poles along the tracks are what kill them. Fortunately there were no poles. I knew that the same knife that killed the old man was what would kill me. The train fast gained momentum and as it did so, I moved out of the train through the window frame, held on the outside and jumped. Fortunately there was no oncoming train otherwise I would have been killed. I moved as I fell so as not to do too much damage to one part of my body especially my head, but could not avoid bashing my forehead. I lost consciousness from the fall. Security guards patrolling the tracks found me and they took me to the next station. Later I learned that people in that train were thrown off by those guys.

(Peter)

Because Peter had to use the train to commute, he had his own safety tactic while he was doing so – he looked at the doors at every stop, making a ‘mental’ note of potentially threatening people who boarded. This tactic was informed by stories he heard about what happened to other commuters who were robbed in trains and he used it to stay safe. His tactic was also based on a tacit embodied response to what made him feel uncomfortable or raised a feeling of potential threat in him. His first clue was that the four men remained standing although there were seats available. When he saw the men stab someone his response was almost whole embodied, initially making it seem like a bad dream. When he realised that jumping out of the train might be all that saved him, he drew on other peoples’ stories that, 1) he could jump and might survive, and, 2) that hitting a pole might kill him. Before jumping he scanned the railway tracks for poles. Grabbing onto the window frame and hanging outside for a moment was apparently almost instinctual, as was the realisation that he

should try to fall in a way that would not damage his head. As Lindegaard and Henriksen argue, the body is socially informed as “a field of perception and practice” (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2005: 45 quoting Csordas 1994: 10)

Phillip had a very similar experience. He traveled first class on the train – another tactic of safety since the tickets are more expensive, a ‘better class’ of people supposedly use it. According to Philip:

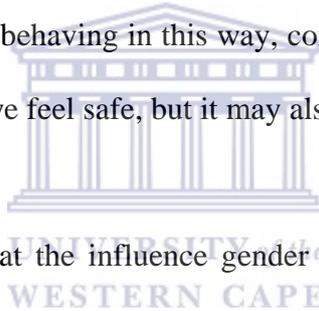
The train was full of passengers and I was in a first class carriage. Then at Belhar Station most of the people got off and there were only three remaining, me and 2 other passengers. At that point I was busy reading a letter my brother sent from home and was not paying much attention to my surroundings, but four guys stepped onto the train when it stopped. The next thing I saw was those guys pulling out knives and they started stabbing people. People rushed to each other so that they could be together and my hand was stabbed because I tried to stop one guy. Then the guys started throwing them off the train through the windows. One man died instantly as his head hit the ground, but he and two others survived. This happened below the bridge at Spar¹⁴ and men were playing cricket close by. I could not get up after the fall and told the guys about what happened without realizing that I was bleeding. Metro Rail Security then came and called the ambulance who took me to Delft clinic, while the others went to Groote Schuur Hospital. Staff at the clinic was not very helpful and did not even x-ray me. They just stitched me up. I did not even bother taking it up with them because it would not help, so I just returned there to have the stitches removed.
(Phillip)

In extreme situations such as the one in which Peter found himself, people in the area of Belhar and students at UWC particularly, are forced to think fast to save their lives. After Peter’s traumatic experience, he never used the train again. Since Collin (and other students) learnt of Peter’s experience, he never takes the train. I also hardly use the train unless someone accompanies me. The few occasions I actually used the train, I was very uncomfortable. As I sat in a deserted carriage in front of broken windows it conjured up stories I had heard about robberies and of outsiders throwing bricks at passengers through broken windows. Yet, for some students the train is the only reliable form of transport and they are comfortable using it. Bulelwa, who comes from Gauteng said:

Commuting by train feels very normal. Even wearing my chain and bracelet is fine. I even use my cellphone in the train. At the moment the train is my only means of transport. The

train is also cheaper although it is not very reliable because one can be late for an appointment.
(Bulelwa)

My own gendered expectation was that Bulelwa, rather than Collin, would be particularly careful of the train. Besides being aware of the possibility that something might happen to her in the train, Bulelwa also behaves with confidence. For her Gauteng is more violent than Cape Town and she feels and behaves as if she is 'tough'. This is very similar to how I generally behave when walking in the vicinity of the university. Lindegaard and Henriksen give similar examples, but of men who adopt 'feminine' strategies of safety, that is, they move together in groups or run fast to cover potentially threatening spaces. Bulelwa and I use more 'masculine' tactics – at the same time we also obtain a sense of safety through the idea that bad things only happen to 'other' people. By behaving in this way, consciously or unconsciously, we both create a space in which we feel safe, but it may also make us more vulnerable.



The following section looks at the influence gender roles have on the way people create safety for themselves. Information gathered at a workshop at the university helped explore how students relate to each other in terms of gender.

4.5 GENDER ROLES

Attending a workshop run by the HIV/AIDS Unit of the University of the Western Cape, it was very interesting to learn what perspectives peer facilitators of workshops hold about what it means to be a man and a woman respectively, especially concerning HIV/AIDS. More interestingly, the men attending the workshop were part of MAP¹⁵ (Men As Partners) being trained to facilitate HIV/AIDS workshops on campus. At one point of the workshop men and women formed separate groups and

listed things about their gender they were proud of. The women struggled for a long time to think of things they could be proud of as opposed to the men, and after a long time managed to list some. Taking a look at the discourses around gender is important when studying violence since they impact on how women and men view themselves, and each other, in relation to violence. This was what each group had to say:

What it means to be a woman

- Able to express their emotions without being ashamed of it
- Give birth
- They are more sensitive and caring
- Do not have to pretend that they are strong
- Can take advantage of men
- Are happy about affirmative action
- Make better parents than men
- Can do anything without being stigmatized, e.g. have a man's name and not be called a *moffie*¹⁶.

What it means to be a man

- They were born to lead
- Can physically dominate
- When they speak people listen
- Have better opportunities and salaries
- Do not live in fear
- Can protect

- Women depend on them

During this group exercise, women and men took pride in stereotypes pertaining to their respective genders without even realising it. The outcome of this exercise not only mirrors gender roles in broader society, but also the way most of the participants deal with and think about violence. Unlike the men the women failed to see themselves as initiators, leaders, protectors, speakers, and being able to physically dominate or protect.

When women and men were asked to say what they *could* do if they switched gender roles, it was interesting that women failed to see their value as women as opposed to their value if they were men. Men valued themselves both as men and as women. The following were what each group listed they *could* do if they were members of the opposite gender:



What women *could* do if they were men

- They would not worry about sagging breasts
- Could wear the same shirt the whole week
- Do anything they want to and go anywhere
- Respect women
- Break silence of women abuse
- Have power to start war – physical and financial
- Give responsibility of children to woman (and just pay the money)
- Have sex with anybody
- Teach sons not to cry but to “be a man”

What men *could* do if they were women

- Express their emotions
- Get pension at the age of 60
- Could share affection
- Look after their partner
- Be open about sex issues to other women
- Spend more time with the family
- Be open and honest
- Get away with lots of things
- Loving and caring
- Break the silence
- Conscious about nutrition



Apart from the fact that women would be freed from sagging breasts, women saw themselves as having freedom of movement, sex and action, they identified with being men who respected women, taking the initiative, start of war and fighting against abuse. Fighting against abuse comes across more as a wish in this context and this would likely not have been among the responses in a different situation where MAP was not the focus of the workshop. The men's responses also formed part of gender stereotypes about women and the idea of breaking the silence seemed more of a wish, especially given the fact that women themselves did not mention that in the first round of the exercise. Such "...discourses inform tactics of safety" (Lindgaard and Henriksen, 2004: 58) and were generally the ideas women had of men in danger and *vice versa*.

Although the students in the workshop are aware of changes that have taken place in South Africa with regards to social mobility for women (for example, the significant presence of women in parliament¹⁷), their responses suggest that dominant gender stereotypes still affect their thinking. Culturally defined beliefs about what it means to be female or male thus still persist (Golombok and Fivush, 1994: 18). “Males are stereotypically considered to be aggressive or instrumental; they act on the world and they make things happen. Females are stereotypically relational; they are concerned with social interaction and emotions” (Bakan, 1996; Block, 1973 cited in Golombok and Fivush, 1994: 18).

Education influences how strongly people adhere to dominant discourses (Golombok and Fivush, 1994: 19). During the workshop women with university degrees nevertheless agreed on gender stereotypes and regarded male traits more highly than their own. If women value themselves less than men, it affects the relationship between them (Bammeke, 2002: 76) and to violence.

4.6 GENDER AND VIOLENCE

Women and violence

Men and women in this study had different experiences of violence based on gender. Because women are viewed as ‘soft targets’ they are violated through robbery, rape and other forms of violence. For women, living in a potentially violent situation can be difficult, not only because they fear victimization, but also because it is difficult to speak out against it.

Women also should learn to speak about violence, because when they talk, others will hear their stories and will also want to talk. In this way women can then build networks and fight against violence.

(Liz)

Men have power over women because of the dominant ideology and expectation that women are weak and vulnerable. This reinforces the subordination of women who fear being violated.

Being a woman makes one feel vulnerable because one does not have the strength to fight and one does not have a voice to talk. The threat of something happening to me is always real. Not a day passes when I do not feel conscious of security. [Practicals in] Nyanga¹⁸ is the closest place I could choose [to conduct my research] but it poses quite a danger because of hijackings that take place there. I am conscious walking around there every time and not speaking the language puts me at greater risk. I am told at different times to go home and not take up South Africans' jobs. The speed at which taxi drivers drive is very careless and as if there is no tomorrow. I just feel unsafe.

(Synthia).

A number of things made Synthia feel insecure as a woman in the midst of possible violence. She is not strong and fears she will not be able to ward off an attacker. Hijackings that take place in the vicinity of her research site are threatening and she exposure to it. The language barrier between her and the people in Nyanga, the xenophobia directed at her and the speed at which taxis drive make her feel unsafe. This is even more harrowing since Synthia needs to pass through this space everyday.

Expectations about how women should behave in dangerous places affect their responses in potentially violent situations. Female passivity is viewed as second nature, "but it illustrates that emotions as other forms of practice are informed by discourse" (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 55).

...men usually weigh up the situation and see what they should do, if they should confront the perpetrators. Women can't weigh up the situation, they should avoid it at all costs and that is what I do.

(Melanie)

Women express a double vulnerability – they fear being mugged but also being raped.

Men have advantage because they think that women are the weaker sex. So women feel scared that they are women because men would not only take away women's purse, but could also rape them. But things are a bit level now because guys should also be scared that they could get raped. Things are a bit safe now because there are security staff at the hostels and they are trying their best. We also have to think about not walking around late because that makes a person an easy target. This Kenyan guy who was killed during the vac[ation] must have gone to a shebeen. The Barn was closed and they should really think about keeping The Barn open.
(Lindiwe).

The murder of a Kenyan student from Hector Peterson Residence near the hostel triggered awareness of the danger students face outside the hostel. Unlike in the past, the rape of males is increasingly feared.

Women nevertheless feel vulnerable and in need of protection by men, female students who cross the field (*Figure 4.2*) to campus get a sense of safety from the presence of security staff who stand watch at an unfinished structure on the field. Since men are viewed as protectors, they stand guard, irrespective of whether they are equipped or even trained to deal with violence. If anything should happen to a student, the security is supposed to release the dog to chase the perpetrator off. Yet in one instance where a student was attacked the security staff member held onto the dog – probably as self-protection.

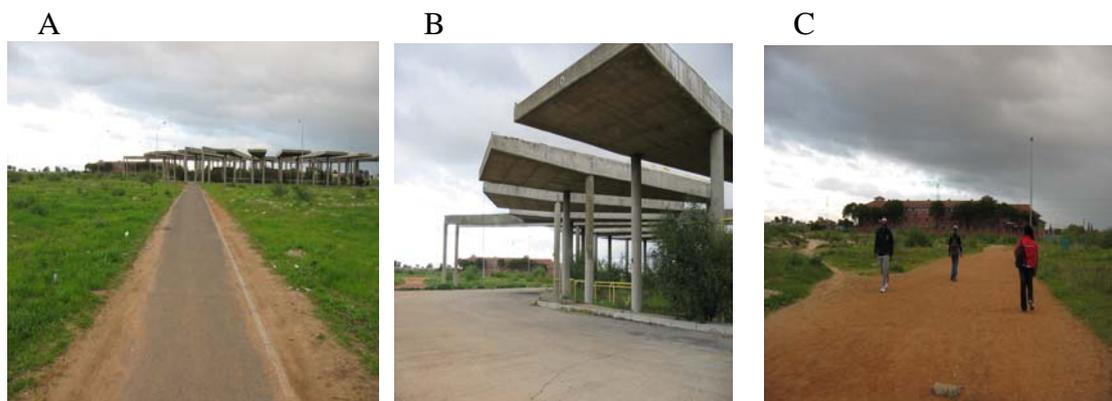


Figure 4.2. **A.** The field between UWC and HPR. **B.** Unfinished structure between Hector Peterson Residence and campus often referred to as a dangerous place by students. **C.** Path to Hector Peterson Residence.

Often the security staff do not stand watch on the field between campus and HPR.

Students who cross the field at midnight run the risk of attack because the field is

deserted. The unfinished structure seems to be a good place for muggers to hide and catch their 'prey' unguarded, which is exactly why security staff are placed there. It is also one of the places both males and females identified as a dangerous space. It makes them feel very vulnerable and they only feel at ease once they passed it.

Thando feels safe once she gets to campus, and those years when she stayed in the hostel, she felt safe once she passed that unfinished structure. People just hide away behind that structure and appear very unexpectedly. It is that unexpectance that catches people off-guard.

Even though we may be aware of the dangers of walking around campus, we use tactics such as looking over our shoulders, smiling and greeting oncomers, walking with serious facial expressions... But there are times when violence may catch us off-guard, which Lindegaard and Henriksen (2004: 39) refer to as random. They explain that people can deal with everyday violence, but random violence is extremely unsettling. Tactics of safety concerns situations where distinctions between safe and unsafe are clearly defined. These tactics provide people with a sense of control over the occurrence of violence, making it possible to live with it (Ibid: 40). Time also plays a role in feelings of safety because during peak hours people feel more at ease crossing the field. It is daytime and many people are around – this increases perceptions of safety and is also a tactic to ensure it.

Staying safe through confrontation or escape

Women who do not respond to situations of violence in the way Phumzile did in the example given earlier, rather run away or simply do nothing. This is often because they have been socialized and are expected to be passive. Women who are socialised into fulfilling traditional roles of the 'submissiveness' tend sustain such behaviour because that is how things are supposed to be (Bourdieu, 1977). There tend to be other significant similarities among women who are abused such as low income, low

level of education and residence in a village (Faramarzi, Esmailzadeh and Mosavi, 2005: 5). Studies conducted among wealthier, highly educated women from affluent areas might show different results. Once women are exposed to stories that contest such passive notions, for example, of an abused woman who took their children and left the house, they behave differently. Examining women's exposure and responses to domestic violence is very helpful in understanding their responses in relation to community violence.

What factors contribute to women either fighting or taking flight in situations of violence? This can be illuminated by comparing two participants in this study.

It was after 4 in the afternoon and I walked to my previous home which is close to the University's train station. It was very windy that day. As I walked I saw two guys walking in my direction but they passed me. I continued walking but then something told me to turn around. It was really windy and when I turned one of the guys grabbed at my bag. The guy was caught off guard as he was not expecting me to turn around before he had taken my bag. Immediately, he said that he was only looking for a R5. I replied that I did not have a R5 even though I had money as well as my cell-phone in my bag. The second guy then approached. The first guy insisted that he was only looking for a R5 as if a R5 was of little value to a university student. When I again replied that I did not have any money, the first guy then rudely demanded that I give him my earrings. As I attempted to pull the earrings from my ears, I insisted that I remove them myself. At this time, the second guy seemed extremely irritable as I was still trying to assert myself under the circumstances. He threatened to kick me. The earrings were not such a concern because they were old. After giving them the earrings, the guys noticed my tekkies¹⁹. I noticed this and subsequently realised that they were not done with me yet. The two guys then walked with me to a nearby park where I could sit down to remove my tekkies. I decided that I would not allow them to take my shoes, and starting to think about possible ways to prevent this. At the park, the two guys sat down on poles situated towards the end of the park. I stood between the two poles (that they were sitting on) at this time, and while they looked down the road in one direction to watch for any oncoming people, I ran in the opposite direction. I ran towards a road where I saw another guy and other people who were building on one of the houses in that road. I knew that if the two guys chose to follow me, they would have to deal with those builders. I managed to get away safely.

(Jo-Anne)

Jo-Anne did many things – she looked out for men (who are viewed by women as a potential threat), when she passed them, she turned around. Although she lied about the contents of her bag, she gave them her earrings, but tried to maintain control by taking them off herself. As soon as saw an opportunity she ran away – towards other

people. Although in a distressing situation, she planned her escape and waited on an opportunity to do so. Afterwards she became even more careful and hardly ever walked home alone. She rather waited for her mother to come from work in the evening to pick her up from campus than leave campus earlier. She now also she avoids spaces that she thinks will place her in a compromising position. These fears are spread throughout other areas in her life:

I recently obtained my driver's licence, but even so am very afraid to drive on routes unfamiliar to her. My fear is inadvertently encouraged by my mother's bad experience she had with driving. When my mother took my father to work one evening she took the wrong turn on her way back home. She ended up in a very dangerous place and could not even get out of the car to ask for directions in fear that something might happen to the car or to her. Since then my mother sticks to routes she is familiar with and where she can maintain a sense of safety. Due to the fact that my mother displays this behaviour, I fear that something bad might happen to me should I dare to drive in unfamiliar routes.
(Jo-Anne)

This example is one of many that reflects how Jo-Anne's socialisation in her family impedes the way she faces threatening situations. Because I encouraged her to drive to a mall she has never driven to before, she said she would think about it, but later that night called me to ask if I would accompany her. This was the first time she drove outside of the area where she stays. Although she decided to drive to the Mall, she asked to be accompanied.

Jo Anne had heard stories about potential danger and had been exposed to it. She is aware of tactics to stay safe and actually behaved in a very calculated way when she was confronted by thieves, but she generally responds in a more 'feminine' way in terms of safety tactics – she tries to avoid danger by staying in safe spaces or by looking for the company of people she knows and trusts.

Everyday I walk down that road I am very anxious because of the robbery before and I would rather have my mother pick me up from campus after work and wait an extra hour than walk home. Otherwise my brother would wait in front of the house and watch that I walk safely. But that road to campus is very dangerous because it is isolated and surrounded by bushes.

Subsequently, you cannot see when someone is hiding behind these bushes. Even though there are security guards, one hardly sees them as they tend to focus more on the students walking towards the Belhar residence. I feel safer on campus because there are other people around. Walking down that road with anxiety may be a bad thing because the robbers will sense the fear and will prey on that, is what my brother told me. If one walks boldly they will wonder why the person is so bold and assume that the person is carrying a weapon. And when my mother informs me that she will not be able to pick me up from campus I worry about getting home that whole day and have butterflies in my stomach. If I were a man I would have felt confident in my ability to protect myself. Men usually have some or other experience with violence either on school or elsewhere which enables them to protect themselves. Women on the other hand, usually do not get into fights and I am one who stays in the house most of the time and therefore do not feel confident in protecting myself.
(Jo-Anne)

Women like Jo-Anne mostly follow passive tactics, especially when dominant figures in their lives like mothers or brothers reinforce their understanding of themselves as potentially 'acted-upon' females. According to Lindegaard and Henriksen (2005) staying inside the home is a female tactic of safety, and is often explained as being a result of women's weaker physique lack of ability to defend themselves. This tactic reinforces gendered behaviour – Jo Ann does not move around by herself because she feels vulnerable while this tactic also confirms that she is a female. What is also evident in Jo-Anne's story is that she would value being a man because she would have more confidence than - similar to the women's responses in the workshop discussed previously. Such notions aid passivity and perpetuate the idea of women being the weaker sex. Lindiwe, however, because of exposure to stories that counter notions of women as passive and complacent, responds differently to the threat of violence.

Someone in Bellville asked me if I had a cellphone and someone else wanted it, what I would do. I said that I would tell him to buy his own. He then asked me what I would do if the guy had a gun and wanted my cellphone. I said that I would let it fall to the ground so that neither of them could have one. The guy told me I'm crazy. It is not as if I am not afraid of violence, but I feared it for a long time. When people tell me that they had been robbed, I tell them to be glad their life was not taken away from them. Some people would count their possessions more valuable than their lives.
(Lindiwe)

Lindiwe had been exposed to potential violence in her home for many years. She eventually decided that she has lived in fear for too long and needed to have a sense

of control in her environment. Lindiwe had a friend who defended herself in a near-rape situation. Being surrounded by people who confront threats, I suggest can empower women to do the same. Daring the attacker was used by Lindiwe's friend to reduce the power the attacker had over her as a potential victim and can be a tactic to stay safe.

If someone should try to rape me I would tell him to go ahead and rape me. My friend did this and they [the assailants] wondered why she said so, and walked off thinking that maybe she had HIV and would pass it on to them.
(Lindiwe)

In Lindegaard and Henriksen's (2005) scheme of possible tactics to stay safe, this would be a more masculine strategy, although used by a woman.

Men and violence

As noted earlier, men feel responsible for women in areas of unsafety, take on roles of protectors and will more often than not fight in situations of danger. The following incident illustrates how men respond in ways similar to the tactic used by Lindiwe's friend, thereby reducing the power they feel potential attackers might exert over them.

As I neared Unibell Station I saw a guy rushing across the bridge to say something to another guy on the other side of the station, while looking in my direction. I then walked to one guy of really big build and stood in front of him chest-to-chest looking him four-square in the eyes. The guy then greeted me. I told the guy "You're crazy." and walked away.
(Collin)



Figure 4.3. Unibell Station which is the train station between UWC and Belhar. This was where Collin confronted one of the men he suspected was conspiring to rob him.

Women on the other hand will not necessarily fight but will try a different tactic to avoid dangerous situations by either waiting for another to walk with, or turning back. In addition, women might also say something to their potential attacker to keep him from attacking, like screaming or speaking aggressively to hold on to their possessions, as in Phumzile's case.

What happened in Collin's instance (previous page) was that he could see the two men on both sides of the station planning something against him. It was December vacation and the area around the station was deserted. The two men obviously communicated with each other and the big man smiled at the other as he crossed the bridge towards Collin. This was Collin's clue. He faced the bigger man and because of his boldness the two men were caught off-guard. One of the stories circulated among students and people who have experienced violence is that robbers detect their potential victim's fear and capitalise on that - this was also what Jo-Anne's brother told her. Behaving boldly is accordingly seen as a good defence mechanism. Collin comes from Nigeria and from a university where violent student uprisings are rife and causes of many fatalities (Bammeke, 2000). He had been in the army and was trained to sense and act on any suspicious behaviour of people who pose threats. Being socialised and trained to be aware of his environment thus helps keep him safe, while it also masculinises him (Lindegaard and Henriksen 2005: 49).

According to one of my participants, women become distraught in situations of danger and therefore are easy targets. "...women tend to be overtaken by their emotions more than men. Therefore, men would be able to separate themselves from the situation and will act swiftly" (Graham). Without neglecting to mention that

masculinities are fluid over time and in different places (Barker and Ricardo, 2005), men tend to grow up in environments where they need to be able to defend themselves. Boys tend to play roughly in school grounds and are expected to pick fights with other boys as part of learning to be a man. Exactly because of discourses about what it means to be a man, police tend to laugh at men when they report sexual assault. Examining the views men have of women has implications for gender-based violence (Barker and Ricardo, 2005: 19).

Like men, some women also behave in a confrontational manner or will resist when threatened. When two men tried to grab Phumzile's bag from her, she screamed and held to it tightly. One of the men ran off while she continued to fight to keep her bag from the other. He managed to thrust the bag under his armpit while she held onto the sling, but eventually he tore it out of her grip.



Man or moffie?: hierarchical masculinities

As discussed earlier, men are often seen as protectors against or initiators of violence. *Moffie* is a derogatory term referring to gay men, but is a term also used to refer to males who display 'feminine' traits either by talking in a feminine voice, moving in feminine ways or in who, relation to danger, would run away instead of fight. A *moffie* would not be able to defend himself when in a confrontational situation with another man. When a man is referred to as a *moffie* it is very insulting because it constructs him as a lesser man. This might happen, for example, when mothers

pamper boys too much - they are told that the boy will grow up to be a *moffie*. Such boys are teased at school. Khaya would be referred to as a *moffie* among coloured men, or *isyoyo* among Xhosa-speakers. His safety tactic is not necessarily to stay inside or to avoid unsafe spaces, but to run away when he senses or sees a threat.

At one big fight in front of Chris Hani Residence I was told that I am a betrayer, but I went to call for help while they fought. Fighting is something I avoid at all costs. I am short-tempered and would just throw something at a person.
(Khaya)

Tactics to stay safe (in this case running away from danger and calling for help) communicates what kind of a man Khaya is. Challenging the ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ tactics for safety therefore makes a person less of a woman or man (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: vi). Gender discourses inform tactics of safety. Men are socialised to respond to threats of violence with anger; no signs of vulnerability must be seen when men are on their own, walk to campus, to Symphony Way and so forth. Men are protectors and potentially violent, when they speak people listen. Men deal with violence either in protective or aggressive ways (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 58). In the words of Simpiwe, *Violence makes me feel very responsible to people who are vulnerable in such (violent) situations*, the ‘people’ being women and children. However, as we have seen in this chapter, these engendered tactics for safety are sometimes contested, as when a woman resists robbers, outwits them and calculates safe escape.

In contexts of South African prisons and labour compounds where masculinity is renegotiated, the ‘weaker’ male inmates are claimed as ‘wives’ of stronger male prisoners. The dominance of the stronger man is sustained through fear evoked by violence (Niehaus, 2000: 81; Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 61). These roles as ‘husbands’ exaggerate men’s masculinity enabling them to be ‘real’ men (Niehaus,

2000: 85). Masculinity is not the only factor to consider in understanding how men deal with perceived threats. Issues of connectedness and race further compound spatiality.

The space around the university campus is different from the spaces occupied by the adolescents in Lindegaard and Henriksen's research. Since students staying in residences may not originally be from Cape Town or South Africa even, there is no sense of belonging to the area among particularly men. There is no attachment to a place as there would be when one lives there. These students like Simpiwe come from other parts of the world, and when they walk into 'danger zones' Belhar or Bellville²⁰, they 'know' they 'should not be there' in the first place.

Bellville is kind of scary especially the coloureds. I have nothing against coloureds but there are strange characters around there. There is just a feeling that tells me that I have to be alert. If I need directions, I would rather find the place on my own. The taxi rank area is especially unsafe.
(Simpiwe)

At the same time Simpiwe's statement seems to refer to homogenisation of coloureds. Jensen (2001: 4) explains that the homogenisation of coloured men is so forceful that each and every coloured man on the Cape Flats is under persistent suspicion of being a gangster. Even men coming from townships (both coloured and black) in Cape Town are 'aware' of the racial boundaries between coloured and black townships. This means that blame is not only directed at gender when treading in 'wrong' places, but people of 'other' races too. In addition blacks cross these racialised boundaries more often than the other races to go shopping, or to university – basically due to economic inequities.

4.7 STORYTELLING

Knowing the power of a story heard is that the story occurs within the listener.
(Simms, 2001)

As indicated earlier, people's experiences of violence are informed by the exchange of stories about violence. Storytelling informs tactics of safety and makes people aware instead of conscious of violence. Tactics are in other words people's means to avoid, escape or confront danger which they do not necessarily consciously reflect on (Lindegaard and Henriksen, 2004: 46.

Storytelling also creates a feeling of solidarity among group members and may not necessarily be based on actual events that occurred in a specific place. It might have the purpose of reinforcing feelings of mutuality - a group feeling. Stories of danger may also be based on what might possibly happen to a person. Such feelings are then associated with preconceived ideas of a violent situation someone else was in, and, based on these feelings, we employ tactics to keep safe. We do not know if walking in a 'dangerous place' at a specific moment will result in our belongings being snatched from us or being held at gunpoint. But it is stories that inform us not to walk in certain places at certain times of the day - when such places are deserted, we have valuable things with us, or when we are alone. This does not, however, make danger less real or less likely to happen.

When foreigners come to South Africa they are unable to distinguish between the safe and unsafe because they are not informed through stories or witnessing people being held at gun point, for example, apart from the stories they read in the news media. They are not a part of the formation of a symbolic order. This might make foreigners

easier targets. In addition, foreigners are perceived as having money on them and are therefore targeted for robbery.

4.8 RECOGNISING ‘SHADY CHARACTERS’ – TACTICS FOR STAYING SAFE

One should also always listen to one’s instincts as Oprah Winfrey says, because in those situations they are women’s best bet! (Melanie)

As argued previously, storytelling, in person or via the mass media, about violence informs our tactics of safety. These stories could also inform foreign and/or first-year campus residents to distinguish between the safe and unsafe, and also help them to recognise ‘signs’ of people and places that are potentially unsafe. Although I discussed this awareness briefly through Collin’s experience at the train station, this section tries to unravel how participants ‘recognised’ “shady” characters and used tactics to escape dangerous situations. The characteristics described by the participants are not safe for determining who is dangerous or not, but nevertheless aided them in creating feelings of safety.

I waited at the bus stop not far from the residence. I saw two guys approaching the bus stop and they looked very suspicious. What makes them look suspicious is the way they walk, their behaviour and especially the way they look at a person – intimidatingly! A woman walking in front of them crossed the road to walk to the garage. A year ago the garage did not exist. Then I planned that if they come too close to me I would run across the street to the garage as well and I moved toward the pedestrian crossing. The guys then saw my plan and stopped in their tracks. They started telling her things like “Do you think we want to rob you?” They tried talking to me saying all sorts of things and then the one guy tried to get closer to me. I said “Don’t you dare get closer!” The guy saw I outwitted them and then started walking away from the bus stop in the direction they were walking and I returned to the bus stop. The other woman who crossed the road then walked to the bus stop when the guys had left and the woman told me “They would have robbed you now!” I said I knew what their intentions were but was prepared for them. But they also saw that I did not have valuable things on me otherwise they would have made the effort to rob me. I only had my bus fare and bank card on me, but they could have taken my cellphone which is what they often target. Another woman approached the bus stop with an expensive gold watch which is foolish in that area.
(Melanie)

The bus stop in *Figure 4.4* where Melanie was nearly robbed falls directly on the threshold between Hector Peterson Residence and the Belhar community. Robbers regularly dwell there. They also disguise themselves as school pupils since a school is nearby, but sometimes wear balaclavas.



Figure 4.4. Bus stop on Erica Drive opposite the Sasol Garage and close to Hector Peterson Residence.

According to Melanie, who grew up in Belhar, suspicious characters look at their victims intimidatingly, as if to make them docile. Robbers also stare at their potential victims thoroughly - looking for possessions on their bodies before they strike. The woman who walked in front of them apparently perceived the same danger and crossed over to the other side of the road. Melanie instead moved to a place where she could more easily escape if the men came too close to her. The men noticed what was happening and remarked that she was wrong - but because they had been outwitted, they walked away.

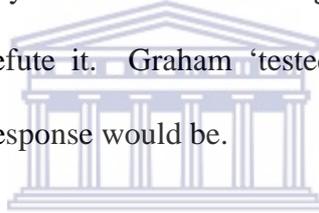
Awareness of a suspicious person is evidently important in staying safe. Due to students' awareness through stories and exposure, many are able to outwit their 'predators' and escape.

Two Fridays after my first arrival in Cape Town in 2003, I walked from campus around 5pm. When I left the station's side, 6 students walked in front of me but I overtook them because I walked fast. The field was very bushy and as I approached the intersection to the main path that leads to the hostel, I considered which route I should take. As I contemplated this, two guys appeared from behind a bush where they were hiding. I then weighed up the situation and thought it would be best if I walked back in the direction of campus and fortunately there

were guys coming from campus walking my way and the two guys ran off into the bushes. They ran off because I told the group of students what I suspected the two guys were up to and pointed at them.
(Graham)

Two men who hid behind bushes on the field in *Figure 4.2C* are immediately viewed with suspicion. After many complaints from students about the height of the bushes, they are now regularly mowed. Graham's case emphasises the point that awareness of suspicious behaviour is a tactic of safety. Following 'instinct', as Melanie stated, is viewed as a reliable way to stay safe. This was what Graham relied on although he was new to the area. When he told others about the men they disappeared.

In situations where students are uncertain of whether or not a suspicious-looking person may pose a threat, they tend to look for a sign from the oncomer to either confirm their suspicion or refute it. Graham 'tested' his suspicious oncomer by greeting him to see what the response would be.



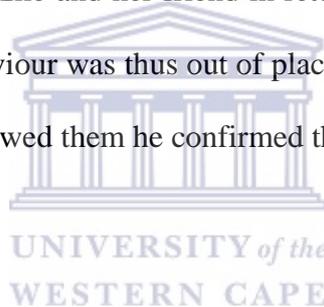
One Saturday evening walking from campus, I was about to swipe myself out of the gate and saw someone sitting close to the entrance with a cellphone. The person looked suspicious and I felt uncomfortable. Weighing up the situation I wanted to stay inside campus, but then just swiped myself out and greeted the guy. The guy returned my greeting and I just walked by. Other times in situations like that I would just start up a conversation with a security guard at the gate until things are settled for me to pass.
(Graham)

Because the oncomer responded by greeting, Graham felt assured that it was fine to proceed, and thus continued walking. Graham generally greets passers-by because it gives him a feeling of control in environments which make him feel unsafe - such as crossing the field or using taxis. His sunglasses also help him scrutinise oncomers without them realising it.

To Phumzile, oncomers who do or do not greet her also served to confirm or refute her suspicions – this is in addition to the type of clothes the person wears. However, other types of behaviour also serve this purpose.

As we walked, a guy walked behind us. He wore tekkies, ¾ shorts, a t-shirt and a jacket. We slowed down allowing him to pass. As he passed, I greeted him because people usually greet in return, but this guy did not. So when he was in front of us, he continuously turned back to look at us, and this made him very suspicious. We then walked in such a way as to see if we could get rid of him and walked to Sasol garage. When we came out of the garage, we saw him standing where we had to pass to walk to the hostel. Then some other students who walked with suitcases came and he followed them closely. It was as if he was trying to see what they had on them. I then went to tell someone inside the shop about this guy and they called the police. After that I accepted a lift to the hostel.
(Phumzile)

The clothes someone wears are not a determining factor of present danger. In this case, what was more prominent as an indicator of danger was the man's strange behaviour: not greeting Phumzile and her friend in return and turning back to look at them continuously. His behaviour was thus out of place for someone not interested in harming them. When he followed them he confirmed their suspicions.



4.9 DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SAFE AND UNSAFE SPACES

Although some of the participants felt safer when in the confines of the campus, Phillip experienced being on campus with some ambivalence.

Being on campus does not even feel safe because a friend of mine was stabbed on campus one night. There was even a joke that I heard once, that anybody who walks around late at night is a foreigner and will be killed. This implies then that the locals do not work until late. Even at the gates on campus, people who are not students are let in so easily, while students who occasionally forget their student cards are harassed, even if security staff know the student passed by for years. This makes campus a very unsafe place.
(Phillip)

Being on campus does not necessarily make Phillip safe despite the security staff that patrol regularly. The stabbing of a friend heightened Phillip's feelings of unsafety.

His status as a foreigner and experience of xenophobia strengthens this sense of being unsafe. Furthermore, easy access allowed to outsiders onto the campus increases the risk of the presence of violent people who come to The Barn and Condom Square (Figures 4.5), which often results in fights.

A



B



Figure 4.5 **A.** This is The Barn where students go for drinks and to dance. Fights are known to occur outside after people vacated The Barn. **B.** Condom Square which is adjacent to The Barn. According to rumours, a woman student was nearly raped here.

Walking past Condom Square on a Friday night is particularly dangerous because people smoke dagga, get drunk there and loud music is always heard playing there. If anything should happen to me there and I scream, nobody would be able to hear because the music will muffle the sound. One day I even saw condoms and a pair of panties lying there.
(Catherine)

To the stranger's eye, The Barn and Condom Square may look like places of relaxation which offer extra-mural activities to students. On weekends one might get a different picture due to rowdiness, loud music, the smell of alcohol and marijuana and poor lighting at night all coming from the direction of those two places. As a result of this, students feel unsafe, especially when fights break out. Catherine's fear that, if something happens to her nobody will hear, makes her feel unsafe whenever she passed by en route to campus. The sight of a pair of panties and condoms gave her the feeling that forced sex had happened and that she might be in danger. A reported instance of attempted rape also took place on Condom Square when a number of men jumped from the trees and tried to rape a woman student. She managed to free herself. Stories about Condom Square, although not corresponding

with what Campus Protection Services report, may also make students feel unsafe.

Avoiding such a space is a safety tactic.

The place on campus which seems unsafe to me is the area in front of The Barn, that whole area is unsafe. Last year a lady was raped there by guys who jumped out of the tree (Catherine).

Students also feel unsafe in the area of Condom Square because people get drunk there and become aggressive. Because 'outsiders' come into The Barn, students feel unsafe. Women also get drunk and once they leave The Barn, men follow them to their rooms and may 'take advantage of them'.

I mean you can see people, even if we go there (The Barn) now. Those type of people who, they there are those people who do not have cards to go to the tavern, so you don't know. You can just feel that this people they might do something to me (fieldwork interview)

Coming from Gauteng Province, being in the Western Cape makes Bulelwa feel uncomfortable, especially in the townships.

It is very rough here in Western Cape and there are skollies²¹. When one goes to the townships one cannot talk on the [cell]phone during the day outside in the streets. People cannot wear Levi or expensive clothes. This life was never dreamed of. People rob with a knife. People put steel pipes on their faces probably because something happened to them. I usually go to Guguletu to braai²² there with her friends. (Bulelwa, Gauteng).

Additionally, Bulelwa feels that being asked on a date may pose danger to her as well as the fact that Xhosa-speakers in the Western Cape ask women out on dates for sex as their motive. Aware of what happened to her friend when she consented to a date with a man, Bulelwa declines going on dates outside of her sphere of safety.

Men around here (Western Cape), when they take a woman out especially the Xhosas, they expect sex. They wanted to do this with her but she refused. If men take women out they want to chow them. One friend went to Century City with a man and she did not want to go home with him so he left her there. He then came to fetch her the next day, slapped her and broke her phone. The guys back home will take women out and take them home without chowing them. But a lot of women want to be chowed. If a man wants to get a woman for the night he must take her to the pub and then chow them. This is how men see girls now. (Bulelwa)

Bulelwa's tactic for safety is to be extra careful when asked out on dates. What happened to her friend refines her ability to distinguish between safety and unsafety.

CONCLUSION

This chapter addressed various issues around living in a violent environment. Its main argument was that being aware of dangerous spaces and people who may pose threats aid in maintaining safety. The idea that there is safety in numbers was also investigated especially since evidence suggests that group dynamics often influence whether or not bystanders of violence will intervene to help the victim. I found that it is the imaginary of safety when in a crowd that creates feelings of safety among students. Awareness of dangerous places such as travelling by train which poses danger to its commuters often forces students to survive through drastic measures, but prior information help reduce chances of fatality. Students would, for example, stay away from broken windows in trains and stories spread which help students identify potential danger. Of course gender roles and stereotypes influence how people respond to violence since they cause them to behave in certain ways in relation to them. I argue that the environments women grow up in and absence of messages that counter 'weakness' of women, perpetuate and may exacerbate violence toward them since it reduces the risk of perpetrators of violence. Women tend to favour the value of male characteristics above their own which certainly has implications when dealing with violence. Stories people hear about violence also aid in awareness of danger and inform the tactics people use to stay safe. Finally, recognising 'shady' characters alerts students to oncoming danger and allows them to use tactics for escape or retreat to a safe space. The markers of potentially dangerous characters include strange

behaviours, when someone continuously turns back and looks at you, or does not greet in return. Recognising those clues helps students escape from potential dangers. While this chapter focused primarily on the tactics students use to stay safe in the vicinity of the university, the following chapter addresses the university's contribution to a safe environment for students.



CHAPTER 5

Institutional responses to violence

INTRODUCTION

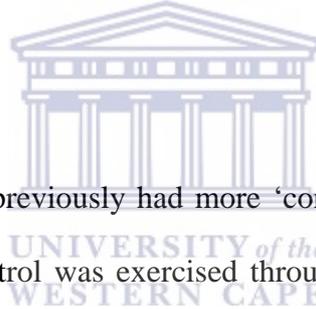
A resident from Hector Peterson Residence and I walked to campus one day. His girlfriend walked quite a distance ahead of us. As we were talking, a man came and grabbed his girlfriend's handbag and ran. That was when my friend started running after him. The security watching at the unfinished structure, instead of letting the dog loose or making some attempt to stop the guy since he saw what happened, simply gave way along with other bystanders. They only watched. He ran after the male for quite a distance along the fence that runs parallel to the railway line. The guy then jumped over the fence and onto campus. (Fieldwork interview)

The competence and efficiency of UWC security staff on and off campus are often questioned by students because of incidents such as the one above. As indicated before, security staff let 'outsiders' enter campus without 'interrogating' them. Lack of confidence in the university's security system can affect the safety of students and staff. It is, however, also necessary to situate the state of security in the context of changes that have taken place in the focus of security in South Africa. In addition, factors that influence the smooth flow of security processes on campus should also be elucidated and contextualised since they contribute to the experiences students have of safety. This chapter will explore the evolution of security at the University of the Western Cape and will focus on the responses of the university to different forms of violence. I also argue that there is more focus on intervention in relation to HIV/AIDS on campus than to heightening awareness of sexual violence. HIV/AIDS intervention measures are more present and visible than the prevention of sexual violence, despite the circulation of stories concerning the latter. The emphasis on HIV/AIDS on campus correlates with discourses in wider society, where sexual

violence is still often regarded as domestic and personal –this is reflected in the university’s silence on the issue.

5.1 THE EVOLUTION OF SECURITY AT UWC

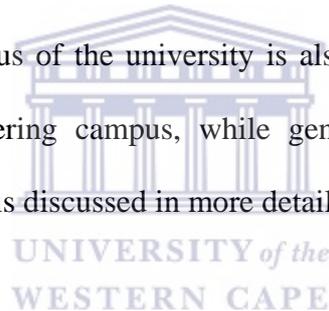
Prior to 1999, the University of the Western Cape was enclosed with ordinary fences to secure the campus against intruders and theft. Theft of cars was particularly prevalent and the campus was used as a base for syndicates, rendering the wire fencing weak. Vulnerability to crimes in the area is a consequence of the apartheid era’s policy to place a coloured campus in the ‘bush’, further contributing to poverty and crime in the vicinity of the university. This places students in situations of potential danger.



Campus Protection Services previously had more ‘control’ over students on campus with 70 employees. This control was exercised through corporal punishment which resembled the state’s strategy for exercising control over the ‘ungovernables’, that is, blacks and coloureds. This practice was abolished and now the role of Security Services is to guard and usher at UWC’s social events. Because of high incidences of crime the university embarked on a project in 1999 to secure the campus with electric fencing, enclosing three-quarters of the entire campus. Ordinary fences can still be seen along the railway line at the train station exit. In addition, during this shift to more sophisticated security systems, access control was restricted to only students and staff with activated cards for entrance at the various drive-in and walk-in entrances. Visitors are expected to sign their names in a visitors’ book. As indicated previously,

people can sign in invalid names and so additional means of identification would be necessary to avoid making residents feel hopeless at the weak security structures.

These sophisticated security interventions coincided with the period of heightened vandalism of schools, intimidation of teachers and gangsterism at schools in the Western Cape generally, leading to the introduction of electric fences at various other schools to keep ‘dangerous’ elements out. These measures reflected the approach of the state - that zones of poverty and social integration are threatening (Jensen, 2005: 561). Viewing the townships in such a light led to the adoption of more sophisticated security measures. Although electric fences symbolise material separation between the university and the surrounding areas, the safety of students staying on campus remains precarious. The focus of the university is also mostly directed at targeting ‘outside’ violence from entering campus, while generally ignoring violence that occurs on the ‘inside’, which is discussed in more detail later.



Jensen relates this focus on security with the preoccupation with security in broader society and explains that with the political centrality of security in South Africa, violence and crime appear to fundamentally threaten the fragile transition to democracy. Undoubtedly the preoccupation with security relates to extremely high levels of violence. Although the incidence of crime is unacceptably high, since 1994 it has remained relatively stable (Jensen, 2005: 551 – 2).

Explanations for the increased attention paid to security lean towards the surfacing of neo-liberal global trends. A shift took place from viewing violence and conflict as indicators of social transformation in many Third World countries, to policy-makers

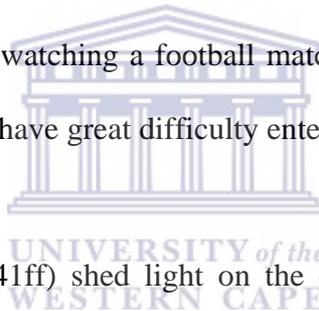
and observers viewing violence as indicating danger, social dysfunction and anomie. Duffield (2001 cited in Jensen, 2005: 252) contends that inequality is overlooked as a reason for conflict and has become something from which the wealthy part of the world must protect itself by means of increased surveillance and security interventions. The neo-liberal convention on security, originating in American think-tanks and spreading to the rest of the world, aims to criminalise poverty while consequently normalising uncertain wage labour in the sphere of “Justice” (Wacquant 1998 cited in Jensen, 2005: 252). Jensen holds that these explanations appear to have merit, although tending towards reductionism and ignoring or downplaying the contextual appropriation of these global discourses (Jensen, 2005: 252). Although the discourses, as mentioned above, seemed to become more prominent in the 90s - along with the embarkation on a project toward neo-liberal security interventions on campus - security in South Africa was reconfigured by this global movement and did not shift univocally. Jensen argues that historically security and development were always merged. This brings me to supposedly stricter security interventions on campus which, although they have benefits, tend to ignore other aspects in the process of producing safety.

Surveillance on campus under scrutiny

More recently surveillance cameras were placed at various places on campus with the idea to be omnipresent and combat crime. After the implementation of the new security measures on campus, car theft syndicates were dismantled and car theft plummeted remarkably from 10 – 12 cars per month to 1 -2 per month. Access control to campus, however, does not manage to keep the targeted ‘outside’ dangers from entering. At a recent Student Representative Council event, which was open to

other institutions, a person was stabbed. The victim (a Pentech student) bled profusely. Witnesses at the scene refused to identify the perpetrator, who was also from Pentech. In other instances of fights on campus I also heard of involvement of students from another campus. In addition, theft of computers in certain departments raises questions about surveillance.

Recognisably, other factors play a role in the inefficiency of interventions, such as the interaction between the security staff and the surveillance, as well as the assumption that the physical presence of security staff will keep students safe. The necessary procedures to keep intruders out are not always followed. One Sunday afternoon two men tried to run off with the watchdogs kept at the front of Hector Peterson Residence while the security guard was watching a football match in the television room. Yet residence students sometimes have great difficulty entering the hostel.



Moran and Skeggs (2004: 141ff) shed light on the concept of ‘making strangers’ which helps us understand the process by which security staff verify and select who enters campus without questions asked and who is allowed ‘inside’ only after thorough checks and procedures are followed. The making of strangers, it is argued, produces the opposition of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, in other words those who are students and staff in residences, and those who are not. On the flip side of the coin, Bauman (1991) contends that the stranger, being neither friend nor enemy, conflates opposites. The stranger personifies truth and falsity, good and evil, propriety and impropriety. Although I am a resident in the hostel and have been for years, my ‘closeness’ and ‘goodness’ is questioned when I do not have any form of identification with me. With regard to the spatial dimension of the stranger: the

stranger is both remote and close. The stranger thus represents a sharp contrast to the dichotomy of friend/enemy “in which opposites are managed by way of a clear and relatively stable distribution of the positive (friend) and the negative (enemy)” (cited in Moran and Skeggs, 2004: 142). This presents the stranger as a troubling and persistently ambivalent figure, creating an image of the world as an unreadable place of doubt and uncertainty. It is with this same consistently doubtful and ambivalent selection process by which entrance into residences is obtained. If a person is, for example, persuasive or seems to have authority, she can convince a security guard that she is in fact only an ‘unknown’ friend.

The following discussion of sexual violence on campus relates to the determination of ‘stranger’ and ‘friend’ in student perceptions of sexual violence. One of these perceptions views sexual offenders as strangers, and ignores the potential danger of ‘the familiar’. Such perceptions impact on the approach to sexual violence on campus. Perceptions of sexual violence and sexual practices on campus influence the exposure to HIV/AIDS – another potential danger students have to negotiate and from which to keep safe. The tactics students use to stay safe, based on their perceptions and practices, may place them in the potentially dangerous situations from which they would wish to stay safe.

5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS

Discussion of sexual violence is generally ‘muted’ on campus, but given the high attention paid to sexual violence in the media, some women in this study feared sexual violence. The issue is silenced because rape is perceived to happen ‘out there’, away from campus, to ‘other’ people. Most stories that circulate among students in

regard to the campus, concern robberies and assault. While women use the 'everyday' tactics of safety, the fear of rape and possibly being exposed to HIV adds another layer to it.

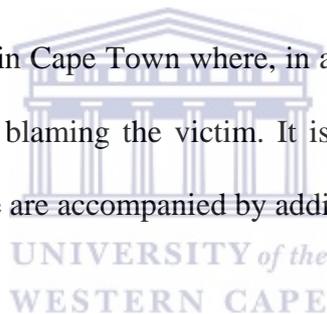
Being a young woman I feel that I am not safe because violence has something to do with rape. There is a high rate of rape and one cannot feel safe. This is worrisome. To protect myself I avoid places that are overcrowded, parties and where they do things that are not expected. In one's room one should keep a condom and walk with a condom on campus. This is not to do it (have sex), but to protect myself from contracting AIDS or HIV. This is how I keep myself safe. I keep a condom at night and keep myself safe in that way. My mother advised me about the condom because she is a nurse. I don't know what I would do if I give the condom to a potential rapist and don't know the number to call. If the person wants to overpower me I will try to overpower him. If I do not succeed I will just give up.
(Bukiwe, first-year student)

Firstly, Bukiwe confirms the idea that sexual violence occurs in overcrowded places such as parties and she thus needs to be alone in her room to be safe from rape. This is in line with the notion that sexual violence is perpetrated by a stranger in a strange place, and occurs 'out there'. Rapes only occur at night. Although she hints at the possibility that rape can take place in one's room, as long as a condom is there, women are safe. Women should also keep condoms handy when they go to campus to protect themselves from contracting HIV. The assumption is made that if a man is about to rape her, she will be able to negotiate condom use. Her physical strength may also match that of the perpetrator. Once she produces the condom, he will heed to her request (use the condom) and wear it before raping her. If the man does not do what she hopes for, she states, she does not know what she will do.

Other women feel very unsafe on campus because of rumours that are spread about sexual violence. One particular rumour involved a woman who was raped in the vicinity of Condom Square. Men jumped out of the trees onto the woman. A staff member from Campus Protection Services, however, argued that it was an attempted rape, not a 'real' one. The student's mother wrote a letter to the university in which she made clear that it was an attempted rape case. According to Campus Protection Services, the woman was on her way from The Barn during the early hours of the

morning. She regularly walked with her boyfriend to his room and returned to her room alone when a group of men attempted to rape her. She kicked and screamed and managed to break free and escape.

In subsequent retellings a degree of blame was directed at the woman, because she 'knew' she was not supposed to walk around late at night by herself. She could have prevented the attempt by using female tactics of safety, such as behaving like a woman, being demure, careful and behaving passively. She was 'looking for trouble' by walking alone. This attention to the attempted rape focused on the woman's 'negligence' instead of the perpetrator's offence, which is generally how women victims are viewed in relation to violence. This is similar to the findings of Gibson (2005: 28) in relation to rape in Cape Town where, in addition to making fun of rape, its effects were downplayed, blaming the victim. It is a form of **violence** since the harrowing experiences of rape are accompanied by additional blame from society.



The way a woman dresses is seen as contributing to sexual violence, because it implies that a woman is 'available'. One participant said he never heard of someone with a long skirt being raped. This perception is underlined when women are blamed for 'attracting' violence by 'wearing the wrong clothes'. 'Girls' may also contribute to sexual violence because they 'tease' men and then 'drop' them. Men then find this embarrassing and take revenge on them by sexually assaulting them (see Gibson, 2005: 28).

Most of the cases of rape reported are withdrawn, according to an investigator at Campus Protection Services. He explained that women usually withdraw complaints

because their boyfriends were the perpetrators. In other cases women said they withdrew complaints out of fear that the perpetrator might hurt them, or because the perpetrator is from the same 'culture' (Xhosa). Reporting sexual violence would hence not be something to do against your 'brother'. Further explanations suggest that women are reluctant to label their experiences as rape, or are concerned that their claims may not be regarded as legitimate by campus administration or the police (Choate, 2003: 166). One participant said that a student had reported her boyfriend for raping her, but because they had an intimate relationship and had had a child together, the case was rejected. This represents the ambiguities related to sexual violence. In addition, a woman is usually blamed when reporting sexual violence because she 'probably did not make herself clear'. To deal with similar issues, college counsellors and other professionals in the United States embarked on all-male date and acquaintance rape prevention projects on American campuses to reduce rape myths among men (Choate, 2003: 167). When addressing sexual violence, it is these perceptions and dynamics that need to be considered, but this is often not the case. This is particularly important for discussion since it can inform the ways in which students can stay safe from sexual violence.

5.3 DEALING (OR NOT) WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT

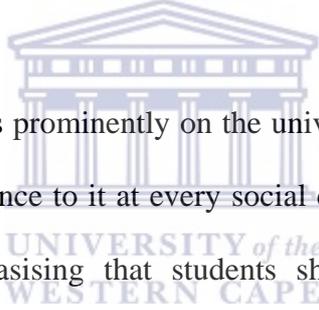
In South Africa, notions about keeping 'safe' can also extend to sexual relations. Although learners are educated about sex before they reach university, women are very naive when it comes to the dangers of promiscuity, hence the urgency for address. According to literature there is a trend towards promiscuity on campuses throughout South Africa (Rosenberg, 2005) with female students using sex to extract money or other benefits from men or who fall into stereotypical gendered roles in

relation to sexual relations (Twohey, 2004; Gibson, 2005: 25). In Hector Peterson Residence students refer to HIV-infected students as "soldiers who are wounded, but still fighting the battle." Although being infected with HIV, they continue to have sex without protection. This culture among students it is argued, is what spreads HIV/AIDS (Rosenberg, 2005). Although explanations of a higher infection rate of HIV/AIDS among women (70%, cited in Rosenberg, 2005) focuses on gender inequality which renders women less powerless and passive in negotiating contraception and condom use, countless stories are told in residences about women who solicit sex from men. One man asked me what men are supposed to do when women come to their rooms wearing skimpy, transparent sleepwear. Collin, of whom I spoke in Chapter 4, experienced similar incidents when a woman came to his room wrapped only in a bath towel. She squatted on the floor and exposed her genitals to him. In another situation, the same woman came to his room and asked his opinion about where she should have a tattoo done on her breasts. While discussing this, she casually exposed her breasts to him. Although strictly speaking this is a kind of harassment, Collin, as a male, was not expected to feel affronted by it. As a man he was supposed to enjoy it or feel flattered (Gibson, 2005: 25). The way men deal with this kind of violation is by either ignoring it or by telling stories that warn each other about this kind of behaviour.

I now turn to sexual violence and relationship dynamics in relation to HIV/AIDS. This link between context and HIV/AIDS is largely overlooked in dealing with HIV/AIDS on campus.

5.4 “THE SOLDIERS ARE WOUNDED, BUT STILL THEY’RE FIGHTING”: SEXUAL VIOLENCE, HIV/AIDS AND RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

HIV strategies on campus are generally based on the assumption that everyone is equal and free to make empowered choices, and can choose to refrain from sex, stay faithful to one’s partner or use condoms consistently. This assumption does not consider that women and girls face a range of HIV-related risk factors and vulnerabilities that men and boys do not have to deal with. Many of these factors are embedded in the social relations and economic realities of their societies. Until these factors are dislodged or changed, efforts to restrain and undo the AIDS epidemic are unlikely to achieve sustained success (UNAIDS, 2004).



HIV/AIDS intervention serves prominently on the university’s agenda. This is made evident by the Rector’s reference to it at every social event on campus, the visibility of HIV/AIDS posters emphasising that students should get tested and a peer-facilitated HIV/AIDS programme for first-year students. In addition, a support group was put in place for students infected with HIV.

On the other hand, no support groups exist for sexual violence victims on campus. Absence of posters or lack of information regarding sexual violence is another indicator of its minimal visibility. When questioned about the absence of a sexual violence support group, a HIV/AIDS counsellor explained that women would rather live openly with the infection than have people know they have been sexually violated. The Gender Equity Officer on campus, in turn, argued that students should

stop being ignorant of the 'fact' that sexual violence is taking place in the hostel rooms of our neighbours.

Although students keep mute about sexual violence on campus, they know that it occurs. This silence is endorsed by the university's overall lack of voice regarding it, although students are made aware of it during orientation programmes at the beginning of the academic year. Yet minimal attention is paid to sexual violence intervention, despite its link to potential HIV/AIDS infection. Since HIV is an international problem and receives significant attention in the mass media and is perhaps more of a 'public' concern, sexual violence is viewed as more of a personal matter, falling in the category of private violence. The problems 'out there' are therefore greater than the problems 'in here'. Since sexual violence may be experienced as shameful and something to be silent about especially given ridicule directed at victims, it might explain the general muteness on the topic. People also fear that the perpetrator may turn on them.

The nature of the relationship between men and women is important in exploring why women tend to stay quiet about instances of sexual violence, especially since women are biologically more vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS. This vulnerability is exacerbated in relationships where women do not feel freedom to confront their boyfriends who have other girlfriends (Jewkes *et al.*, 2001). It is also necessary to add that women fear telling their boyfriends when they, themselves, become interested in someone else. As discussed previously, promiscuity scores highly on campus encouraging the spread of the HI-virus; the 'wounded soldiers continue fighting'. Wood and Jewkes (1998 cited in Jewkes, 2001: 733) argue that in the

South African context, men especially are socially encouraged toward sexual freedom and experimentation. It was found in this research, however, that both women and men are prone to sexual promiscuity. In sexual violence discussions, one of the participants explained that it is culturally 'permissible' especially after men's return from initiation rites. The man then has to prove his 'manliness' through sexual violence, it is implied.

In one incident in Hector Peterson Residence, where a female student was beaten by her fiancée in her room, a male said she had been beaten because she had been unfaithful. The two of them are still engaged - he was paying *lobola*²³. The risk factors discussed in this section are largely ignored. Staying in such a relationship keeps a woman safe since the outcome of ending the relationship is unknown. In a recent incident on campus, it was rumoured that a man found his fiancé with another man. He beat the woman and allegedly chopped the other man's hand. Out of fear for this, women tend to stay in such relationships to stay safe.

5.5 EMERGENCY CALL 2100! DEALING WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Standardised guidelines for the management of survivors of rape or sexual assault were accepted by the Provincial Department of Health in the Western Cape in 2000. This was part of a wider and more comprehensive protocol set up in conjunction with the Justice Department in an effort to deal with the high levels of sexual violence present in the province. In response to the increased emphasis on, and efforts put into, the prevention of, as well as the possibility of, successful prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence, the University of the Western Cape, as an independent tertiary

institution, subsequently developed its own rape protocol to dovetail with the provincial initiative, as well as address this issue on campus.

Like any policy document, the provincial rape protocol is embedded in the local history and socio-cultural perceptions of gender violence not only in the Western Cape but also in South Africa as a whole. Similarly, the rape protocol of UWC, the ways in which it is implemented by the institutional authorities as well as the way in which it is given meaning by students and staff (campus community) has to be contextualised. The protocol was set up by representatives of different constituencies on campus and was general and supposedly neutral in the sense that it had to incorporate the different voices including that of the Gender Equity Unit, the HIV/AIDS Unit, the Health Clinic, Counselling Services and so forth. When looking at the process of developing the protocol it is obvious that it comes from different schools of thought but also trends within the broader society. Protocols are thus a cultural product embedded in political understanding of what sexual violence is and how it must be dealt with.

Although this protocol exists on campus, most students I spoke with were not aware of its existence. Staff members from whom I requested the protocol needed to call around to get it. The purpose of my request was to get an indication of staff's familiarity with the procedures, since I already had a copy of the protocol. I got the impression that staff on campus would not know what to do if someone reports sexual violence. One participant, who was aware of procedures stipulated in the rape protocol, heard about it *outside* campus. Whether students were aware of the protocol, or not, had nothing to do with the length of time spent at the university. I,

for instance, only got to know about the protocol because of this research project. This indicates that the rape protocol might be more of a formality and that the dissemination of the information included in it is not viewed as particularly relevant to students but rather for ‘circulation’ among those constituencies who were part of its development. This is further supported by the fact that the university’s HIV/AIDS protocol can be viewed on the university’s website, but not the rape protocol.

In a conversation with the Gender Equity Officer, she spoke of the seriousness of sexual violence on campus. When I asked for statistics she told me that she had none, but people regularly come to the unit about it. She expressed her astonishment at my ‘ignorance’ of the seriousness of sexual violence in residences since I stay on campus, and said that we (the hostelites) live in residences but are unaware of our neighbours being battered and even locked up by their boyfriends in their own rooms for days. This seemed to imply that female students will reveal to others when they are sexually abused. I nevertheless wondered why a ‘very prevalent’ issue received so little attention and why so few people were aware of protocols to follow when it happened. This may be explained by sexual violence being perceived as a woman’s issue, something women should deal with. Photographs I have taken of the main noticeboards on campus illustrated this. HIV/AIDS posters are quite visible on campus which basically encourages the testing for HIV/AIDS and also indicates portraying it as a ‘more serious problem’.

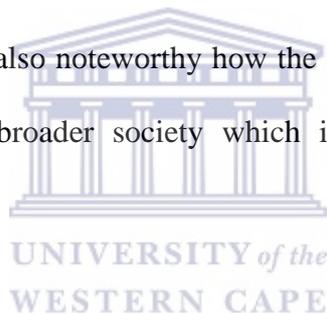
The Equity Officer was also quite negative about unisex hostels on campus and how women do not have freedom to use the lavatory with an open door and talk freely with someone taking a shower. She stressed, and the participants in the study felt that

women have to use ablution areas with anxiety. The ablution areas, particularly the ones with toilets, showers and bathrooms partly enclosed, pose potential dangers. Students, especially women, fear someone jumping over and raping them. She further expressed her dissatisfaction with the poor lighting in the area of Condom Square since it poses dangers. Her persistence to have the university illuminate the area more, has been without success since gender inequity on campus mute her voice. She explained that with the dominance of men governing the university, issues relating to women's safety are not given priority. The issue of poor lighting in the area of Condom Square remains unaddressed and students continue to feel unsafe there.

When posters containing emergency numbers were placed behind the doors of hostel rooms, no communication accompanied them, despite the myths students hold about sexual violence as indicated previously. These posters seem to serve as evidence that students were given numbers and listed procedures for instances of fire, bomb scares, medical emergencies, rape and theft. Listing rape among emergency numbers, especially in the context of little discussion about sexual violence on campus, encourages the myth that sexual violence is perpetrated by 'outsiders'. It does not acknowledge that sexual offenders are more often than not familiar to the victims and does not recognise the relationship dynamics and gender inequities in relationships that contribute to underreporting of sexual violence. This is similar to the placing of security staff at entrances, where the mere presence of the posters is supposed to put students at ease.

CONCLUSION

The university plays a pertinent role in producing safety on campus. As illustrated in this chapter and in Chapter 3, the efficiency and competence of security staff on and around campus are often questioned by students. When lack of confidence in security staff exists, it affects the sense of safety of students because they feel that nobody is able to deal with potential danger when it takes place or even *as* it takes place on campus or in residences. I found it helpful to situate the current state of security on campus in the history of security in South Africa. The evolution of security in South Africa explains the changes that have taken place in security interventions to more sophisticated forms, although miscommunication exists between the intervention and the people operating it. It is also noteworthy how the security interventions coincide with social occurrences in broader society which involved the state's need for protection from 'criminals'.



The security interventions contributed to a reduction of theft of cars on campus, although theft in residences remains high. Skeggs also helps understand the selection process security staff use to allow access to campus and residences. This selection process blurs the recognition of 'outsiders' and 'insiders'. The institution's security interventions consequently tend to overlook other forms of danger on campus, seeing danger as coming from outside, while the contributing factors to danger 'inside' are largely ignored. HIV/AIDS is a major threat given the promiscuity of students on campuses in South Africa, coupled with weakness on the part of women to negotiate safe sex. The myths and perceptions women and men have concerning sexual violence remain unaddressed when the institution views sexual violence as an

emergency and remains silent on the dynamics involved. Viewing sexual violence as a private issue correlates with the silence of women and men being sexually violated.



CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Ambivalence of ‘home away from home’

In this thesis I explored how students at the University of the Western Cape, particularly those staying in residences on and off campus stay safe from potential violence. While the university commits to providing students with “home away from home”, as stereotypically stated in the mission statement of the residential constituency, it belies the everyday experiences of students who feel unsafe. Whenever they go to ablution areas which are not structured to maintain the dignity and personhood of the students, as related to in meanings of privacy, they feel anxious. While ‘home’ means more than physical structures that shelter us, the idea of home in this case tends to focus on it as a place of safety and comfort. Home is romanticised as such, while in practice students’ valuables are stolen from their hostel rooms and they live in fear that someone might enter their room and hurt them. Ambivalence thus exists between home and safety and creating an idea of residences as home away from home may produce a politics of nostalgia. Encouraging home as a location of safety may expose the already vulnerable to further danger since it fails to recognise the ambivalence involved in making boundaries (high walls, electric fences, visibility of security staff, turnstiles, and so on) (Moran and Skeggs, 2004: 171).

It must be noted that boundaries both divide and join. The boundaries the university draws with its electric fences, high walls, turnstiles, padlocks and security staff are

associated with the possibility of boundary-crossing (Moran and Skeggs, 2004: 171). This is expressed through ‘outsiders’ coming into residences and stealing students’ valuables from their rooms, even large items, and who manage to get away. This is an indicator of boundaries crossed. In addition the selection process of people allowed access onto campus and into residences in itself makes security staff, as a boundary, precarious.

Furthermore, the rape protocol of the university as well as the posters behind hostel room doors, depict a tactic for students to use to stay safe from sexual violence. As indicated previously, the rape protocol seems to mean that the university has procedures to deal with sexual violence and that these procedures are formalized, although poorly known. Most of the participants in this study were not aware of the protocol’s existence. The protocol’s existence is perhaps indirectly imparted to students via the emergency list of numbers behind hostel room doors, which places sexual violence among other emergency numbers. The notion is held that students know about sexual violence taking place in residences and therefore are able to deal with it. This process needs to be evaluated in terms of its ambiguities.

Avoiding/escaping/confronting (potential) violence

In the climate of an ambivalent order of safety, students find ways to stay safe. Violence is often divided into public/private, visible/invisible, legitimate/illegitimate (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004). But the power of violence according to Lindegaard and Henriksen (2004) lies in its disturbing effect on witnesses’ ability to stay safe. This study has looked at not only how people avoid violence (although that may be a form of violence in itself, see Lindegaard and Henriksen 2004: 105), but

also what they do in confrontational violent situations. We met Phumzile who responded very confrontationally when her bag was snatched at Symphony Way. This is a good example of refusal to be 'beaten' by violence in which Phumzile refused to give in until she realised that she could not catch up with the bag snatcher. She also challenges the notions held about women as passive in violent situations. Even when Jo-Anne was robbed on her way home from campus, she still negotiated with the robbers and later managed to successfully make an escape. As opposed to Phumzile, Jo-Anne was not confrontational which is demonstrative of different ways in which people deal with violence. The experiences also differ in that today Phumzile still seeks the robbers for justice, while Jo-Anne cannot bear walking home from campus after being robbed. Still in other instances we saw how people confront potential danger based on the suspicious behaviours they see – recognising 'shady' characters. Collin, for instance, confronted potential danger based on suspicious behaviours. This is to 'take charge' of the situation, to obtain a sense of control in potentially violent spaces, before violence strikes.

Staying safe in a violent social context characterised by high crime statistics is particularly pertinent for South Africa. Other research conducted in South Africa including the work of Jensen (2001) shows how people deal with violence by creating systems of 'symbolic order' (Feldman, 1991) based on storytelling about violent incidents, where they happened and who was involved. These stories allow people to predict where violence might take place, when, under which circumstances, and how it may be avoided. This thesis explored these issues and found that anxiety students experience in and outside residences are based on stories they heard about violence, even before arriving in South Africa. Their tactics of safety are informed by these

stories. Stories thus help foreigners who are not aware of potentially dangerous spaces stay safe.

This research ultimately aims to raise awareness among students of potential danger in the vicinity of campus. In addition, being aware and recognising the wider societal and even institutional structures that indirectly, and sometimes directly, contribute to violence in everyday life outside and inside residences help challenge the ‘powers’ that cause students to feel fear, anxiety and make them retreat to silence. The university’s role in breaking the silence of sexual violence is also questioned since silence on the issue may encourage the distinctions made between public and private violence. Breaking the silence involves more than merely speaking about violence, but also involves addressing the dynamics involved in its perceptions and practices.



Notes

¹ I explore this in more detail in Chapter 4.

² Bellville South is a coloured area close to the university.

³ Cape Flats refers the flat land with long stretches of sand dunes designated to house coloureds in Cape Town.

⁴ The N1 is a highway that runs through Cape Town. Students in residences humourously named that main path after it, since it connects the residences to main campus.

⁵ This is the student (of UWC) number of the author who posted a message on the electronic Thetha General Community Noticeboard. On this noticeboard any student or staff member may raise issues or simply advertise.

⁶ Although students from Hector Peterson Residence may come from any part of the world, the students I interviewed in this residence are all from Sub-Saharan Africa.

⁷ I use hostel and residence interchangeably.

⁸ The names of all the participants are replaced with pseudonyms to protect their identities.

⁹ Although the coordinator of Hector Peterson Residence is male, there are women coordinators as well.

¹⁰ Hector Peterson Residence is named after Hector Peterson who was the first student to be felled by the apartheid government forces during student riots of 1976. Youth Day is therefore spent commemorating youth like the late Hector Peterson. All the residences are named after prominent political figures from Africa.

¹¹ It is necessary to state here that during the writing up of this thesis, positive changes have started to take place to improve residential organisation.

¹² Constantia is a very affluent area in the Cape Peninsula.

¹³ The guard in public taxis is the person who basically collects fares from passengers.

¹⁴ Spar is a franchise, part of a shopping complex at Belhar train station.

¹⁵ MAP is a program in South Africa which involves men for the reduction of gender-based violence, and to encourage men's constructive role in sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS (Peacock and Levack, 2004).

¹⁶ The term moffie is derogatory and is either used in contexts of homophobia or in belittling a man's sense of manhood.

¹⁷ It is noted that a stronger presence of women in parliament does not necessarily filter down to grass root level (see Vetten, 2005).

¹⁸ Nyanga meaning 'the moon' is one of the oldest black townships in Cape Town. It was established in 1955 as a result of labour migration from the Eastern Cape and was a site of protests against the 'pass laws' in apartheid in the 1960's and 1970's. Black-in-black fighting allegedly perpetrated by corrupt police in the early 80's made Nyanga well-known.

¹⁹ Tekkies is Afrikaans slang for sport shoes..

²⁰ When students speak of Bellville, they refer to the shopping area around Bellville's taxi rank..

²¹ A skollie is Afrikaans slang and is an offensive term for a young man, usually black (tsotsi) or coloured, who is involved in petty crime and violence and seen as belonging to a gang.

²² Afrikaans word for barbeque

²³ Lobola is the bride price (either in the form of cattle or money) paid to the bride's family before the wedding.



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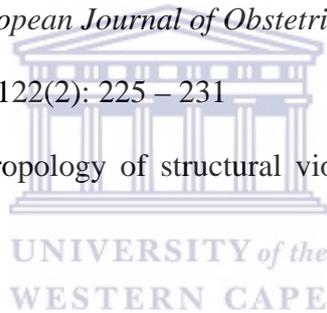
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