

THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON THE YOUTH  
OF MFULENI

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts

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**Louis Mosake Njomo**

**2653364**

**Supervisor: Professor Marion Keim**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that, the thesis: The Effects of Conflict on the Youth of Mfuleni 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.

Signed .....

Date.....

Louis Mosake Njomo



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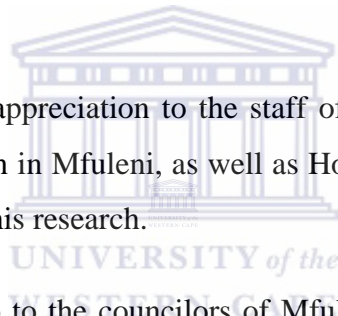
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>AC</b>	Area Committee
<b>CPF</b>	Community Police Forum
<b>CSO</b>	Community Service Order
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>EI</b>	Educational Intervention
<b>GAA</b>	Group Area Act
<b>Hope</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>IPS</b>	Itsaka Primary School
<b>ISD</b>	Institute for Social Development
<b>IT</b>	Intermediate Treatment
<b>LLA</b>	Liquor Amendment Act
<b>MHS</b>	Manzomthombo High School
<b>MHS</b>	Mfuleni High School
<b>MPS</b>	Mfuleni Primary School
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>NP</b>	National Party
<b>PAC</b>	Pan Africanist Congress
<b>PL</b>	Pass Law
<b>PMMA</b>	Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act
<b>PRA</b>	Population Registration Act
<b>PTSA</b>	Parent Teacher Student Association
<b>RSA</b>	Republic of South Africa
<b>SANYP</b>	South African National Youth Policy
<b>SAPS</b>	South African Police Service
<b>SC</b>	Sakhumza Centre
<b>SCD</b>	Social Crime Department
<b>SRC</b>	Student Representative Council.
<b>STD</b>	Sexually Transmissible Disease
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>TDA</b>	Taxi Drivers Association

<b>UBCC</b>	Ubhle Banbatwana Care Centre
<b>WCRSC</b>	Western Cape Regional Service Council
<b>UDM</b>	United Democratic Party
<b>UWC</b>	University of the Western Cape



## ABSTRACT

Since the abolition of apartheid, levels of political violence in South Africa have dropped dramatically. However, violent conflicts in the communities are at high levels and are of grave concern. This development is far from the expectations of South Africans in the fading days of apartheid. Democracy was embraced as a cure to the conflicts that plagued South African communities in the apartheid era. Yet events after twelve years of democracy have proved this optimism premature. The purpose of this study is to examine why conflicts are increasing instead of decreasing in the democratic era of South Africa. It also examines the effects of conflicts on youth and the community as a whole. There is a lot of controversy on the issue of conflicts in South African communities. Some writers strongly argue that the apartheid government is the root cause of conflicts in the communities, others hold that blacks are by nature violent while many attribute the increasing conflicts to the tolerance of the legal system of the new government as compared to that of the former government of South Africa. However, the prevalence, nature, extent, frequency and impact of conflicts in South African communities varies from one another. In this regard this study is restricted to examining the nature, causes and impacts of conflicts on the community of Mfuleni with special emphasis on the youth.

In order to achieve these goals, quantitative and qualitative methods of research have been applied throughout the investigation. Accordingly, observation, in depth interviews, focus group discussions and structured questionnaires were used to gather information. Questionnaires were administered mainly to the literate while interviews were conducted with community members in the various areas with the assistance of an interpreter. Focus group discussions were held at organizations like Women for Peace (Nobantu Centre), the Police, Hope and educational institutions.

The findings reveal that there is a high rate of conflict in the community predominantly interpersonal conflicts. In other words, conflicts such as murder, theft (burglary, armed robbery and shoplifting) assault, arson, rape, marital disputes, police-community conflicts, scramble over resources, taxi drivers' violence and political party conflicts are the common conflicts in the community. This study gathered that these conflicts are caused by factors such as poverty, poor parental

supervision, culture of violence instituted by apartheid, and urbanization. They are exacerbated by factors such as fragile homes, the prevalence of shebeens, alcohol and drug abuse, illicit income generating activities, darkness, the mass media, jealousy, possession of illegal firearms and weapons, poor community policing, gender inequality, lack of recreational facilities and activities, the dark figure of reporting and weekend dance parties. In addition, it was discovered that, conflicts have led to the death and imprisonment of many youth. Others have dropped out of school while some are disabled. To the community, many innocent people have died; others are disabled while some have lost valuable possessions because of the high rate of conflict. Also, an atmosphere of distrust and distaste reigns in the community. Due to the prevalence of conflicts in Mfuleni, there is need for urgent measures to improve the situation. In this regard, this study suggests a partnership between the government, the civil society and the community to address issues such as the crisis within the ANC in the community, improve community-police relations, apply alternative measures to imprisonment like community sentencing and immediate treatment, poverty alleviation and improve parental control in the community.

This study is one of the few in South Africa on community conflict focused on a specific geographical area. It will serve as a working document for organizations working in the community, it may enable policy makers to know which policy goals are meaningful for the community and it may also serve as a point of departure for future researchers in the community.

## **Introduction**

Hocker and Wilmot, (1995:20) define conflict as “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure, or eliminate the rivals”. Few people would deny that conflicts have reached critical proportions in South Africa today. Often these conflicts express themselves in riots, sniper attacks, gang wars, rape, assault, school unrest, murder and domestic violence. The fear and perception of victimization are two of the gravest problems facing ordinary South African citizens especially in the townships as well as policy makers. The quality of life of the public in general is negatively affected. The increase in violent conflicts since the birth of the new South Africa has generated a wide range of explanations about the causes of, and the protagonists in the ongoing ‘conflicts wave’. It is no hidden truth that the youth are the protagonists and the most affected by this crisis (Ganz, 1991: 124). Though very little research has been conducted on black conflict, literature surrounding this issue is filled with conflicting findings. Amoo (1997:4) strongly asserts that the direct source of conflicts in African communities is poverty and poverty alleviation is therefore the panacea. Defending this argument, Graeme (1991) points out that poverty, unemployment and the struggle over scarce resources dominate conflicts in South African communities. Recent studies by Mistry (1997) and Van Zyl Smit (2004) argue that the legacy of apartheid has bequeathed to South Africa a "culture of conflict" because violence was a legitimate means to resolve disputes in the apartheid era. Others like Retief (1975:50) and Ndabandaba (1987:16) strongly put the blame on the urbanization of the blacks and the rapid industrialization of the Republic of South Africa.

Despite the high rate of conflict in South Africa, it is significant to mention that the causes, nature and impacts of conflicts varies from one community to another. Very little is known about the perceptions of and reactions to conflict by the public in the respective communities in South Africa. Only few explanations are drawn from attitudes and experiences of people living in the most conflict-ridden areas in the country. As a result, there is need for remedial actions. The causes, nature and impacts of conflicts in Mfuleni with special focus on youth is the subject matter of this research. This study appears to be one of the few studies on conflict in South Africa to focus solely on a small, geographically defined community. The advantage of a local

community based conflict survey is that it has the potential for providing empirical results to inform the development of the human policies about peoples' needs and how they can be met effectively and efficiently. This study contains excerpts from interviews with residents, Police Officials, health workers, education officials and the administrators of the community to profile how violent conflicts affect the daily lives of the people in the community. Despite the wide range of opinions, indeed, there seemed to be a remarkable accuracy in the respondent's perception of the nature or causes and impacts of conflicts in Mfuleni, with the official statistics in the register at the local Police Station.

The author argues that a variety of factors including poverty, urbanization, South Africa's history of violence, poor parental control, peer pressure coupled with factors like the illegal sale of liquor (shebeens), poor community policing, poor prison services, drug and alcohol abuse, gender inequality, lack of recreational facilities and activities, possession of illegal firearms, fragile homes, darkness in the community, the Mass Media, weekend parties, the dark figure (low rate of reporting crime) and gang culture profitably explain the high rate of conflict in the community of Mfuleni. Nevertheless, it is safe to ascertain that, though the above causes and factors combined have been identified as the reasons behind the prominence of conflicts in the community, the remote causes are the effects of Dutch and British colonisation of South Africa and the former governments' political economy of inequality where wealth and power was the preserve of a racially defined minority. However, the way forward for a better South Africa is to address the imbalances of the past. In this regard, this study recommends a partnership between the government of South Africa, the civil society and the community to address issues such as the factional dispute within the ANC in the community, improve the relation between the Police and the community, apply alternatives to imprisonment, improve the quality of education and improve parental control in the community. This approach aims to empower the community with professional expertise in conflict prevention and resolution from the various agencies. This, combined with indigenous skills, knowledge and resources will enable the people of Mfuleni to be capable of managing the different types of conflicts in the community themselves.

This work has been structured into four chapters. Chapter one examines the historical background of Mfuleni. Chapter two examines the conceptual and theoretical framework and a review of secondary sources used in the study. After going through the chapter the reader will be able to understand the concepts of youth, community and conflict as used in the research. It will also give the reader an insight of the different theories of conflict used in the work as well as the different versions by different authors in explaining the concept of community conflicts. Chapter three is an analysis of the data gathered during the field survey. It gives the reader a picture of the causes, nature and impacts of conflicts on the youth and the community as a whole. Finally chapter four provides recommendations and a conclusion of the study.

### **Background of the Study**

South Africa has been the scene of many conflicts for hundreds of years. More recently, during the National Party's (NP) rule from 1948-1994 a system of racial segregation, referred to as 'apartheid', was legalized, implemented, and enforced with notorious legislations such as the Population Registration Act (PRA) of 1950, Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (PMMA) and the Group Areas Act (GAA), which created separate residential areas for people of differing ethnic backgrounds (Seedat, 2001:58). Homelands were allocated to particular ethnic groups. The land allocated in this way was for the most part extremely poor agricultural land and far removed from the cities and industrial centres of the country. The indigenous people of South Africa had become aliens on their own land. The establishment of homelands marked the most oppressive period of South Africa's history. Houses and communities were destroyed and many people were forcibly moved to other parts of the country. Land and property taken in this way was in most cases given to white farmers or white controlled industries (Schrire, 1991:47-75).

Meaningful political decision-making in South Africa meant white decision-making. Parliamentary democracy was an exclusively white concern. The most profound issue in South African life- the moral justification of white supremacy was kept out of serious political debate. For the Afrikaners, white supremacy was a historical principle as well as policy.

Capital white investors were supplied with the economic advantages of a great reservoir of cheap docile black labour. For whites in the lower economic echelons, the system guaranteed economic security in the form of preference in the reservation of skilled jobs in industry, commerce, and the civil service. Schooling for white children was free and compulsory at any level. In housing, urban whites were provided with subsidized government built houses, luxurious compared to what the blacks lived in (Michelman, 1975: 2-6).

While whites lived in affluence and luxury, by 1980 millions of blacks were forcibly moved to the townships (Anstey, 1993:40). Life in the township was extremely difficult. It was a place where poverty was the household word exacerbated by unemployment, low wages, lack of food, clothes, health care and shelter. The township was a place where people walked long distances and queued for hours to fetch drinking water and diseases like typhoid, cholera and bilharzias were very common. Toilets were often blocked and the drains leaked. The bucket system was totally inadequate resulting in sewage flowing in the streets. Ntoane and Mokoale (1994: 9) argue that, “if a slum is defined as an overcrowded, unhygienic, disorganized residential area, with poor sanitary conditions and an uninviting bad odour then it was the situation in the townships in South Africa”. Education was seen as luxury unlike a necessity for children in these disadvantaged areas. The few existing schools were often overcrowded and as a result many children could not go to school. Those who could not go to school resorted to crime and the consumption of substances like alcohol and drugs (Ntoane and Mokoale, 1994: 13-15).

Opposition to the policies of the apartheid regime took many forms nationally and internationally. Nationally, the government seriously crushed violent and non-violent protests, and the regime’s response to political opposition became more and more brutal. Security forces enjoyed enormous powers, including detention without trial, entry, search and seizure without warrant; restriction and banning of persons, organizations, campaigns, gatherings, and publications; the imposition of curfews and immunity from prosecution (Seedat 2001: 25-26). Anstey (1993: 40) points out that, 25% of the detainees were children and young people while 10% were women. In all, about 19 million people were criminally convicted under the Pass Laws (PL).



The atmosphere in South Africa between 1970 and the 80s was marked by intensified resistance from different sectors in civil society. In June 1976, school children in Soweto, a large township in Johannesburg, marched against the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction. This march ended according to police figures at the time with 25 pupils and residents of Soweto dead and 200 injured. The real totals may have been much higher claims Ellis et al. (1992:81). Then came the historic February 2, 1990 speech of President F. W. de Klerk that lifted the ban on the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations. Shortly afterwards, he released Nelson Mandela, “the ANC leader who during 27 years of imprisonment had become the symbol of black South Africans’ struggle for political rights” (Ottaway, 1993:1). The year 1990 marked a turning point in South Africa. The lifting of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC) gave hope that the new government of F.W. de Klerk would abandon the policy of apartheid and that South Africa would move quickly toward a peaceful transition to a more democratic system. To Nelson Mandela, he was not free unless the black majority was free. Thus events that followed revealed that the ANC sought a transfer of power to the majority, hence to the blacks. However, the government remained determined to engineer a complicated political system in which the power of the majority in the end would not be any greater than that of the minorities- particularly the white leaders at the time (Slabbert, 1991: 2).

On 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994, all South Africans went to the polls for the first time ever to vote for the president of the Republic. On the night of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1994, the provisional results of the elections were announced in favour of the ANC. In a delighted speech delivered at Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg that evening, Mr. Mandela said, “to the people of South Africa and the world who are watching: this is a joyous night for the human spirit. This is your victory too. You helped to end apartheid; you stood with us through the transition. I watched, along with all of you, as the tens of thousands of our people stood patiently in long queues for many hours, some sleeping on the open ground overnight to cast this momentous vote”. And at his Inauguration as president on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1994 Mandela declared, “Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of the country and the world, confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long must be born a society of which all human will be proud” (Albie, 2003:63-68).

In a nutshell, more than anything else, “apartheid bequeathed on South Africans a culture of violence and deep rooted fear- based on a series of hostile, racially based stereotypes within largely based segregated, defensive, yet volatile communities. For decades, the state demonstrated its legitimacy of violence as a means of maintaining political power” (Graeme, 1991:1). The most affected population were the youth. In the words of Higson (2002: 4), “life in the township was made up of teargas, bullets, whippings, detention, and death on the streets. It was an experience of military operations and night raids, of roadblocks and body searches. It was a place where parents either disappeared or were assassinated and homes bombed”. Violence became a socially sanctioned mechanism for resolving conflict and for attaining change (Graeme, 1993).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Undeniably, from inception to demolition, the apartheid regime was characterised by violent conflicts. To the youth it was a means to make their plights heard nationally and internationally and to the ruling government it was a means to keep the flames of policies burning. “The people who are experiencing the violence are the youth because the youth are the ones who are in the location full time. They can see every thing that is happening, but their parents are not there, they work. The youth must defend their properties,” said Xolie - a comrade (Marks, 2001:123).

Violent conflicts were not only for and against the policies of apartheid, the deplorable social and economic conditions made social conflicts of armed robbery, theft, assault, rape and murder very common occurrences in the townships. Mob justice was greatly institutionalised. “Killing someone meant that person would not be able to harm others again. It was also a warning to others as to what to expect from the comrades for ‘wrong doings’” (Marks, 2001:124).

In the fading days of apartheid, the expectations of South Africans and the international community with regards to a reduction in the level of violent conflicts that characterised the apartheid regime were extremely high. However, the increasing rate of violent conflicts since the birth of democracy has proven the expectations of millions of people premature. While political conflicts have drastically reduced in contemporary South Africa, interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts have increased remarkably. Conflicts like riots, sniper attacks, gang wars, rape, assault,

school unrest, murder and domestic violence are daily occurrences in South Africa. President Thabo Mbeki stated in his budget speech to the National Assembly this year that, “ there is a minority that believes it has the right to do as it pleases with impunity and outside the parameters of our democratic order and sought to drag the country back to the killing fields that marked the dying days of apartheid.....I must make this very clear to everybody involved in this criminal acts intended to undermine our democracy, that they will not succeed to intimidate and terrorise into submission either the masses of our people or the organised formations of our democratic state” (Cape Times, Thursday June 8, 2006:1). Violent conflicts are among the most vexing problems and key issues facing the present government of South Africa. Why are conflicts in contemporary South African communities increasing instead of decreasing after twelve years of the collapse of the apartheid regime? What are the effects on South African youth? These are the questions this research seeks to address.

In *Crime in South Africa* (1993:42) Glanz points out that “we do not know precisely how much conflict takes place in South Africa, or anywhere else for that matter. Many conflicts are not reported and the rate of reporting varies considerably according to the type of conflict”. In other words, the nature, impacts, frequency and extent of conflicts in South Africa differs from one community to another. It is against this background that this research seeks to examine the nature, causes and impacts of conflicts on the youth of Mfuleni and the community as a whole. It will also recommend some measures to improve on the situation.

### **Motivation of Study**

Often I have been asked by my friends how I happened to have become involved in the study of conflict. My interest began from a personal experience. Early last year I was robbed of my cell phone and some cash while on a visit to a friend in Khayelitsha. In fact the problem was not the cell phone and the money but how the robbers threatened me with a gun pointing at my neck.

The researcher’s desire to examine the nature, causes and impacts of conflicts on Mfuleni was heightened by conflicting views by different authors explaining the high rate of conflict in South Africa in an epoch of democracy theoretically believed to be ‘conflict free’. Most recent studies (Van Zyl Smit, 2004 and Van Der Spuy 2004) see

the apartheid regime as the root cause of conflicts in South African communities; others like Ndabandaba (1987) relate the violence to the urbanization of the blacks, some authors like Serfontien (1993) argue that naturally the black race is violent, that is, even before the advent of apartheid black South Africans had taken part in a series of colonial and ethnic conflicts. Others like Kock (1997) suggest that the leniency of the new legal system unlike that of the former government is the cause while some put the blame on ineffective community policing. Thus considering the complexity of conflicts in South African communities examined by historical and contemporary theories, heightened by the fact that the degree of conflicts vary from one community to the next, the scope of this research has been limited to Mfuleni for a systematic survey of the causes, nature and impacts of conflicts in the locality with special focus on the youth as the pilots. It will also provide recommendations to reduce the level of conflicts in the community.

### **Aims of the Study**

They include:

1. To examine if conflicts are increasing or decreasing in Mfuleni.
2. If conflicts are increasing, what are the reasons for the increase in an atmosphere of democracy perceived as a cure of the violence that characterised the former government of South Africa?
3. To explore the impacts of conflicts on the youth and the community as a whole.
4. To provide recommendations to reduce conflicts in the community.

### **Significance of the Study**

1. To sensitize the youth on the causes and effects of conflicts.
2. To serve as a working tool for NGO's working with youth in Mfuleni.
3. To promote research and publication on conflicts and their effects on youth in South African communities.
4. To assist the communities with knowledge that will enable them to campaign effectively for the development and protection of the children.

## **Research Design and Methods**

In this study, the researcher carefully examined many sources of information to explore the nature, causes and impacts of conflicts on the youth of Mfuleni. The research methods used were interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions as well as a review of secondary sources.

Questionnaires were used to assess and explore the understanding of the literate in the community on the availability of services, the level, types and impacts of conflicts in the community, the nature of offenders and the available measures to resolve conflicts in the community. On the other hand, interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide drafted by the researcher. Interviews were based on specific open-ended questions for the purpose of the study. The researcher's style of interview was to remain quiet and let the respondent describe his or her experiences on the issue addressed. Respondents interviewed were regarded as being knowledgeable, skilled and able to express their views explicitly on conflicts and their impact on the community. Also, focus group discussions were used to enable the researcher to explore in more details, issues concerning the subject matter that could not be easily obtained by questionnaires and interviews. A lot of information was gathered during discussions with those that have been affected directly or indirectly by the high rate of conflict in the community. Hence this method provided the researcher with a package of wealthy data for the study. Finally, a review of secondary information was conducted to provide the theoretical framework and background information for the study. In this study, the literature review gave the researcher a vivid understanding of the violence in the days of apartheid in South Africa and an insight of community conflicts in other countries notably the United States of America.

Hence the main research questions are:

1. Why are conflicts increasing in the new South Africa and
2. What are the impacts on the youth of Mfuleni.

These questions were investigated as follows:

- 1) By secondary analysis, which is a systematic discussion of theories and knowledge obtained from relevant documented sources.

- 2) By empirical fieldwork carried out in the community through interviews, distribution of questionnaires and focus group discussions.

Thus the core assumption of this study argues that despite the numerous historical and contemporary causes and factors that explain the high rate of conflict in Mfuleni, the underlying causes are the policies of the former governments of South Africa. Thus, this work contributes to a more holistic understanding of the dynamics of community conflicts in South Africa. It will also form a basis for a series of articles on community conflicts and their impacts especially on youth. Several sectors were used to gather data for the research-the Police, educational institutions, the Mfuleni Community Clinic, NGOs, the Municipal Council, business operators, and the general public.

It is important to mention that the foundation of this research was laid by a situation assessment of the area conducted by seven students of the Institute for Social Development (ISD) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in April 2006. The community assessment was headed by the author of this study. It served as part of the assessment of the Development Management module at ISD. The methods used were basically interviews and questionnaires. Most interviews were conducted with those who could not read and write while questionnaires were given to those who could read and write English language. Though the survey was not intensive enough, it provided the researcher with the basis for setting the guidelines for questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions for the research.

Empirical research started in July 2006. It took place in four stages. The first stage of the research was conducted at the police station in the community. After a brief meeting with the assistant station commander, who expressed great interest in such a very sensitive and emotional issue in the community, the researcher proceeded to a one-hour discussion with 6 Police Officers (2 Captains and 4 Constables) to discuss the subject of the research. After the meeting, a questionnaire and interview exercise was conducted. The researcher's second visit at the station was to respond to an appointment made with the head of the Social Crime Department (SCD) to discuss the activities of the Community Police Forum (CPF) of Mfuleni. Due to the confidentiality of Police Records, very little statistical data was exposed to the researcher. Many Police Officers said they were too busy for an interview or to spend

time to answer the questions in the questionnaire. Others declared that they were not the right people to be contacted for such an important issue. However, the researcher strongly appreciates the effort of the few who sacrificed their time and activities to provide data for the research.

The second phase of the field survey was conducted at institutions of learning notably Manzomthombo and Mfuleni High Schools and Mfuleni Primary School. The methods used were questionnaires and detailed face to face interviews. The target population was the administration of the schools specifically the principals and their assistants. The researchers' first stop was at Itsaka Primary School (IPS), then Mfuleni High school(MHS), Manzomthombo High School (MHS) and Mfuleni Primary School (MPS).

The third phase of the research was conducted at various community organizations and associations notably Women for Peace (Nobantu Centre), Hope, Mfuleni Community Clinic, and the Taxi Drivers Association (TDA). This was the second longest stage of the study. At organizations like Women for Peace (Nobantu Centre) and Hope, the research method was a combination of questionnaires, interviews and discussions. At the clinic it was specifically face to face interviews while at the secretariat of the Taxi Drivers Association, a one hour discussion was held with 8 drivers to discuss the rate of violence in the community. This meeting brought to light the conflicts between the drivers and the Police.

In the last stage of the survey, the researcher visited many sub-areas in the community especially those identified at prior interviews and discussions as conflict ridden. Many youth were interviewed on the streets in these areas. Households were also visited. In some households parents could not hide their feelings about the reigning level of conflicts in the community. The general impression was that conflicts in the community have reached a stage the inhabitants can no longer bear and that an urgent solution to crisis is of absolute necessity. The researcher discovered that most people in the community can not understand and express themselves in English. The researcher was therefore obliged to seek the assistance of a Matric graduate who could speak Xhosa and English languages very fluently to help at the interviews. He served as the author's interpreter as well as an interpreter to the interviewees. At the discussion with the members of the Taxi Drivers Association only one of the

members (the secretary) could understand and speak English language. In this case he served as an interpreter to both parties (his colleagues and the researcher). During most interviews the researcher interrupted and asked about the content when discussions seemed to be taking an interesting turn, and the interpreter would then translate. This last phase of the work also included visits to businesses to find out how conflicts in the community affect the business sector.

### Sample Population

Though the focus of this work is on youth, the adult population played a very significant role in providing data for the study. Due to the bitterness about the high rate of violent conflicts caused by the youth in the community, this group of people overwhelmed the researcher with a relevant amount of data on the issue in question. In the eyes of the elderly, the researcher was viewed as a solution to the crisis which has rendered the community as a place of distaste and distrust. In all, 156 people (Children, youth and adults) took part in the research.

### Questionnaire

Questionnaires were given only to the literate in the community basically to members in organizations like Nobantu Centre, the Police and the municipality. A substantial amount of data was gathered from this source especially from the Police Officers and the workers at Nobantu Centre.

Table 1. Distribution of participants in the study.

Organization/ Institution/sub areas	Interview	Questionnaire	Focus group discussion	Total	Percentage
Police	3	4	6	13	.013%
Mfuleni Community Clinic	4			4	.004%
Mfuleni library	2			2	.002%
Nobantu Centre	2	4	4	10	.01%
Hope	4		4	8	.008%
Taxi-Drivers Association	1		8	9	.009%



Municipality	4	3	7	14	.014%
Schools	15		9	24	.024%
Businesses	20			20	.02%
Sub Areas	48		4	52	.052%
Total	106	14	31	156	0.156%

Source: Respondents.

### **Instruments used in data collection**

Data was collected using a pen and a notebook during interviews and focus group discussions. At the end of every meeting, the researcher made sure information gathered was immediately stored on his computer for safety and security reasons.

### **Data analysis**

All the data from questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were coded, processed, and analysed using Microsoft Word for Windows Explorer.

### **Ethical Statement**

The field survey for this study was conducted after permission from the relevant authorities. These included the Faculty of Arts and the Institute for Development Studies at the University of the Western Cape, the councillors of the municipality and the Police in Mfuleni.

Before conducting interviews, focus group discussions and distribution of questionnaires, respondents were briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the research and that it was part of the requirements of a Master's degree. They were also informed that participation was voluntary and they were free to leave or stop at any point and time. Throughout the survey, the researcher made sure that respondents were not asked questions that caused embarrassment or uncomfortable feelings. In this report the researcher has also made sure that those whose names or identity have been disclosed are those who showed no hesitation when asked by the researcher if he could do so.

In sum, basically three methods were used throughout the field research- interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. In some cases only one method was used.

In others a combination of two or all three were used. The equipments used to capture data were a pen and a notebook. At the end of the research captured data was coded, processed analysed and a report written.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MFULENI IN THE OLD AND NEW DISPENSATIONS**

Mfuleni is one of the many townships in the city of Cape Town created in the apartheid era. Before embarking on a thorough examination of the background of Mfuleni, it is of absolute importance to briefly look at the City of Cape Town in the context of the contemporary dispensation. The purpose is to give the reader an insight of life in Cape Town for a better understanding of the research questions and the findings of the survey.

#### **1.1 Overview of Cape Town**

Cape Town is the oldest city in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). It is a large urban area with a high population density, an intense movement of people, goods and services, extensive development and multiple business districts and industrial areas. The City of Cape Town comprises of the Cape Metropolitan Council, Blauwberg, Cape Town CBD, Helderberg, Oostenberg, South Peninsula and Tygerberg. Cape Town provides one of the most vivid examples of urban crisis attributed to late modern capitalism. “Moulded by the policies of apartheid and maintained by the dynamics of a marketised economy, it is a city of stark contrast and social fragmentation” (Standing, 2004:32). Its dense population of blacks, coloureds and whites is greatly stratified economically, socially, racially, and spatially. While the white minority live in affluence in designated areas like the foot of the Table Mountain and around the coastal fringe, the vast majority of the blacks and coloured population lives in sprawling suburbs established as a result of forced removals during the apartheid era (Andile, 2005: 35-40). “The forced uprooting of well over three million and a half people since the early 1960s has drastically exacerbated the effects of the migrant labour and rapid urbanization” (Manganyi et al. 1990: 37).

Spread out across a wide coastal hinterland to the North East of the Cape of Good Hope, its topography has led to the area becoming known as the Cape Flats. Though the standard of living varies from one community to another, generally, the Cape Flats are profoundly an impoverished area with an employment rate of more than 40%. More than 70% of the employed population is gravely affected by uncertain, intermittent and very low wages inflamed by the degradation of the social

infrastructure especially in the townships. The acute degradation of the social infrastructure on the Cape Flats is an evidence of the legacy of an apartheid regime that channelled the lion's share of state funds into white areas. As a result, most of the social features of ghettos in the world are greatly evident on the Cape Flats. These includes: high levels of violent interpersonal conflicts, ill health, stress, drug dependency, family fragmentation, and school truancy (Boyden et al. 1991:36-37). For instance, "between 1999-2000, the homicide rate for the Western Cape (the province in which the Cape Flats and the rest of the greater Cape Town area are located) was 91 per 100,000 people, while in the first five months of 2001 alone, no fewer than 103 people were reported dead in the course of an upsurge of gang violence on the Cape Flats. In May 2002, ongoing gang violence claimed the lives of 37 gang members and in March 2003, stray bullets from separate gang fights hit 6 children, 5 of whom died from injuries. The high rate of interpersonal conflicts in the suburbs of Cape Town have given rise to an atmosphere of insecurity and fear in these areas" (Standing, 2004:33).



## **1.2 The Origin of Mfuleni**

Mfuleni is a suburb of Blue Downs, close to the sprawling township of Khayelitsha. The community covers an area of 391 hectares, 8km from Blackheath, 24.5km from Stellenbosch, 10km from Kuilsriver, 30km from Cape Town and 10 km from the Cape International Airport. It is situated on the Cape Flats. The area consists of many dunes covered with bush. Mfuleni is divided into the following sub areas: Extension Four, Five, Six, Hostels and Flats, Shukushukuma, Garden City, Burundi, Eden, Polar Park one & two, Zwelitsha, Fairdale, Driftsands Green Park and Brentwood Park. The township was created in 1974 as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950. It got its name from a Xhosa word 'Mfuleni' which means 'by the river'. Though a location designed strictly for hostel dwellers, it also served as a transit zone for migrant labourers from Transkei and Ciskei. The township of Mfuleni was started with 114 block hostels that housed about 2218 male workers. None workers were strictly forbidden to live in the area. In order to control or check the legitimacy of the residents in the area, the government issued permits to recognised inhabitants. Regular checks were a constant activity aimed at evicting illegal residents in the township. In addition, workers were also not allowed to live with their families in the

area. However, relatives were allowed to pay short visits (Report by ISD students, 2006). Respondents revealed that, by 1976, the first residential houses were constructed for permanent occupation by families and in 1997, the hostels were changed to dwellings to accommodate family members. Today, the hostels form part of Old Location and Extension Four. Respondents also remarked that, absolute calm reigned in Mfuleni in the early years after its creation. “This location was very calm. There were no criminals. You could sleep with the door of your house open. I can remember spending a night outside during summer because the evening was very hot. Conflicts were very minimal because everybody knew each other in the community” (Interview with Mr. Zenle a resident in Extension Six on August 15, 2006).

In 1976, Mfuleni got its first primary school. There were no economic activities in the community, not even a taxi rank. The nearest shopping centre was in Kuilsriver. Transport was a serious problem because of the absence of regular taxis. Taxis were seen only in the morning transporting people to the railway station at Blackheath and in the evening bringing people back from work. Most people travelled by foot to neighbouring locations because taxis were not readily available and also because the cost of transportation was very high compared to what was the minimum wage at the time. Mfuleni was like a small village. Shebeens were the only places where people socialized with one another. “I came from a place called Alexandre Location. This was in 1975. During that time there was no electricity, in this community. We had only a store and a butchery. There was no Police Station, no clinic, and play grounds. Mfuleni was safe and quiet. It was administered by Stellenbosch Municipality. No roads were tarred and there was only one way to get in and out of Mfuleni” (interview with Mr. Tim Williams of Old Location on August 15, 2006).

Between 1991 and 1992, frequent taxi wars in Khayelitsha and Ikapa, faction fighting in Old Crossroads, floods and fires in Philippi, Nyanga and Khayelitsha forced many families to migrate to Mfuleni. This marked the beginning of the current mixed nature of the community. Thus, by the end of 1993 over 30,000 people were permanently residing in the community and over 1500 informal structures were erected to accommodate more than half of the population. The absence of basic facilities like water, electricity, good housing and health made life very miserable for the new migrants. However, according to these migrants, despite the difficulties, Mfuleni was

a safe haven compared to where they came from. In addition to the calm that reigned in Mfuleni there was ample space for the construction of shack structures. As the population increased daily, housing became a serious problem. In 1988 Garden Cities and Communicare concluded an agreement with the Council of Mfuleni to develop all vacant land in Mfuleni. By 1990, 80 houses were constructed and sold to those who qualified for a bond. However, due to the loan redemption boycott, financial institutions were not prepared to grant further loans. Construction was forced to come to a halt. Between 1992 and 1994, with a grant from the former Western Cape Regional Service Council (WCRSC), 280 family houses were constructed to accommodate 1669 families. By this time, electricity was supplied only to the 14 houses that accommodated employees of Haw and Inglis. One of the major problems in the community today is good accommodation. More than half of the population still occupy shack houses void of electricity and water supply.

### 1.3 Population Distribution

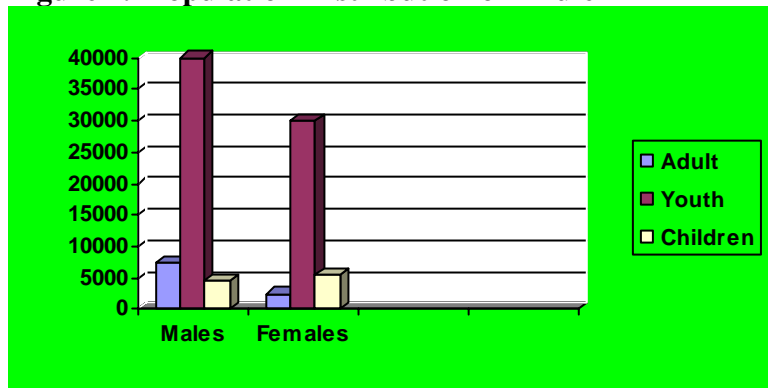
According to Police Reports, questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions, Mfuleni has a population of approximately 100.000 people, predominantly youth. The adult age group is the second largest and it is made up of those above 35 years old. This age group makes up 20% of the population of which 12.5% are females and 7.5% are males. The largest age group is the youth. It is made up of those between 14-35 years old. The youth make up 70% of the population with the total number of males amounting to 30% and females 40%. Finally, the children, ranked between 0-14 years make up 10% of the population. 5.5% of the children in Mfuleni are females while 4.5% are males. Thus from the above statistics females are more than males in the community

Table 2. Population distribution of Mfuleni

Age group	Sex	Number	%
Adult: above 35	Males	7500	7.5%
	Females	12,500	12.5%
Youth: between 14-35	Males	40.000	40%
	Females	30,000	30%
Children	Males	4,500	4.5%
	Females	5, 500	5.5%
Total		100,000	100%

Sources: Respondents- interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions.

**Figure 1. Population Distribution of Mfuleni**



Source: Respondents- interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions.

#### **1.4 Administration**

Mfuleni is administered by a Municipal Council headed by two councillors. The two councillors Mr. Jama and Mr. Fundile took over office on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2006, two weeks after the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2006 Municipal Elections. In the elections, the African National Congress (ANC) had a sweeping victory in the Community. Thus, both councillors are candidates of the ANC in the community. The Local Council is made of a staff of 22 people both councillors inclusive. The councillors ensure that the basic needs of the people (services) are delivered. This includes necessities such as water, electricity, employment, safety, sanitation and health. Also, both councillors have separate areas of jurisdiction within the community. Councillor Jama administers Old Location and Extension Three while Mr. Fundile looks after Extension Four, Five, Six, Hostels and Flats, Shukushukuma , Garden City, Burundi, Eden, Polar Park One & Two, Zwelitsha, Fairdale, Driftsands, Green Park, Brentwood Park and Garden City (interview with Mr Jama August 21, 2006).

#### **1.5 Area Committees (AC)**

An Area Committee is an arm of administration in the community. It is represented in each sub area in the community. Each Area Committee is made of fifteen members headed by a chairman who is assisted by a team of five advisers to ensure the smooth administration of the area. An Area Committee is the ears and eyes of the councillors. They have direct contact with the people and as such report happenings in their areas

to the councillors. It also keeps the inhabitants of the area up to date with Council decisions concerning its area of control. Area Committees also resolve minor conflicts between members of the community while serious and complex ones are reported to the councillor or the police. They also look after issues like sanitation, the environment, health, crime as well as the smooth running of any elections organised by the state. It is also a medium for community members to make their grievances reach the ears of the councillors. This is done in public meetings organised by the committee (interview with Mr Fundile, August 21, 2006)

### **1.6 Decision Making**

Both councillors also declared that decision making in the community is strictly participatory. In other words the voice of the public plays a very important role in arriving at decisions that affect the community. Before a decision is taken and implemented, the councillors hold preliminary meeting(s) with all the Area Committees to discuss the issue in question. If the decision to be taken concerns only a specific area in the community, the councillor meets with the Area Committee of that area to discuss the matter. After the preliminary meeting(s) a public meeting is held in the respective areas of the community to enlighten the people on the matter. In this public forum, community members have the freedom to voice out their impressions on the issue in question. After the public meetings, the councillor calls for another meeting of head of Area Committees to discuss the implementation of the decision.

This study also gathered that the new councillors have held two public meetings since the beginning of their mandate. The first was to formally introduce themselves as the new custodians of the community. The second meeting examined and restructured the activities of the Area Committees. However, smaller meetings have been held with the Area Committees on issues like water leakage, the construction of a second clinic and the provision of 5000 new houses in the community ( interview with Mr Tim Williams of Old Location, August 15, 2006). Both councillors declared their determination to make the current administration of the community more participatory than preceding ones. In this regard, a 'fifteen man committee' has been formed to coordinate the formation of Street Committees (SC) in the community before the end of the year. According to the councillors, Street Committees will ensure that the



streets are clean, have sufficient lights and free from crime and destruction of public utilities. The Street Committee will be answerable to the Area Committee in its area.

### **1.7 Political Representation**

According to Police Reports, three political parties are well represented in the community- the African Nation Congress (ANC) the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM). Of all three, the ANC has the highest following. This explains why it had a land slide victory in the last municipal elections. Next on the ladder is UDM closely followed by PAC.

### **1.8 Languages**

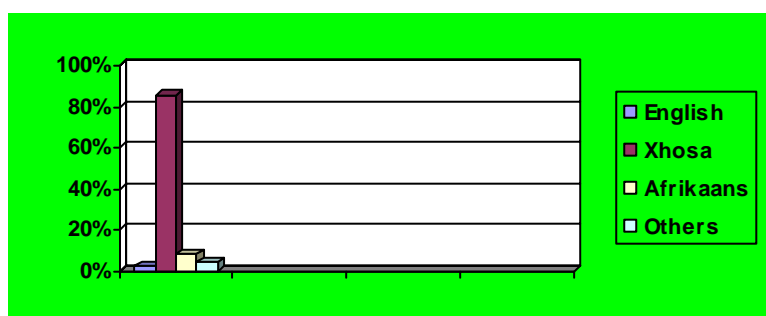
Interviews, questionnaires and group discussions revealed that the community of Mfuleni is predominantly Xhosa speaking. More than 86% of the population speaks Xhosa. Just about 2% of the population understand and speak English language. Many children as young as three are very fluent in Xhosa language but are unable to say a word in English. Respondents also revealed that, there is a small community of Afrikaans speakers (mostly coloured) estimated at 8% while those who speak other South African languages and foreign language speakers make up 4% of the inhabitants.

Table 3. Distribution of the different languages spoken in the community

<b>Language</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	2%
Xhosa	86%
Afrikaans	8%
Others	4%

Sources: Interviews and Questionnaires

**Figure 2. Distribution of the different languages spoken in the community.**



Source: Interviews and Questionnaires.

## **1.9 Economic Activities**

Apart from the transport industry, the main economic activity in the community is trading. The commercial centre harbours the only supermarket known as Score. A few other shops such as Elkana Butchery, Mfuleni Cash and Carry and Rainbow Wholesaler are also found around this area. Sandwiched between these shops is the Mfuleni taxi rank. There are also petty businesses such as barber shops, hair dressing saloons, shoe repairs, cell phone repairs and accessories, fridge repairs, community telephone shops and fruit and vegetable stands. Traders in dresses, bags, shoes and electronic appliances (imported mainly from China) are also spotted around this area. It is important to mention that most of these businesses are either housed in containers (tin structures) or very fragile structures made of wood. Another very prominent economic activity in the area is the operation of shebeens. Answers in questionnaires revealed that an estimated number of about 150 shebeens operate in the community. Also seen along the road sides between Shukushukuma and the hostels are motor repair shops and women roasting beef for sale (Braai business).

## **1.10 Services**

### **1.10 .1 Transport**

All the main roads in the community are tarred. There are, however, unpaved paths within the shack areas. This makes movement within the informal areas very difficult especially when it rains. The common form of transport is by taxi. The nearest railway

station is in Blackheath, eight kilometres from the community. The absence of rail transport makes life very difficult for those who are unable to pay the high taxi fares. As a result, many are forced to cover the 8 km distance to the railway station by foot. The absence of rail transport is a serious problem in the community. Respondents revealed that in some cases, those who can neither walk to Blackheath Railway Station nor afford the taxi fares are deprived from moving from one place to another. Taxis in Mfuleni cover areas such as Kuilsriver, Bellville, Nyanga, Guguletu, Ersteriver, and Khayelisha. Most of the vehicles are in very poor conditions and very untidy especially those that transport passengers between Mfuleni and Khayelitsha. The taxi industry in Mfuleni is administered by an executive committee consisting of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

### **1.10.2 The Police**

According to Police Reports, until January 2005, the community of Mfuleni was without a Police Station. Peace and order was ensured by the Eersteriver Police Station. However, safety and security greatly depended on how far and how much the Police in Eersteriver could offer. As the population of Mfuleni swelled daily, so too was the level of conflicts and insecurity. Murder, rape assault, arson, theft and burglary were very frequent activities. Consequently, it was discovered that the Police Station in Eersteriver was unable to combat conflicts in both communities. Thus, the creation of a Police Station in Mfuleni became a matter of absolute necessity. In January 2005, the government of the Republic of South Africa gave the people of Mfuleni a Police Station. The Police Station is headed by a Commissioner with a staff of 180 Police Officers under his supervision. The station consists of departments such as Education, Communication, Social Crime, Administration and Crime Statistics and Analysis.

### **1.10.3 Electricity**

The community is not fully electrified. Like most townships in South Africa, more than half of the population lives in darkness. Those in the formal areas are the only beneficiaries of this utility. Interestingly, many in these areas (formal areas) still stay in darkness because they cannot afford the high electricity cost. According to Municipal Reports, residents pay as much as R600 monthly on electricity. The

councillors remarked that, it is not only difficult but also impossible for a household that survives on a monthly salary of less than R1500 which is the pay packet of more than half of the labour force in the community. The situation in the informal areas is worse. In these areas, there is no legal electricity supply. Those who have electricity in their homes are illegal consumers connecting directly to the main supply poles. Very often this results to blackouts. However, those who can neither buy, beg or steal electricity use candles or paraffin lamps to light their homes (Report by ISD students, 2006).

#### **1.10.4 Water**

There is free access to running water either through communal taps or private taps. The taps in the informal areas are very far from homes. Most people cover a distance of between 200 and 300 metres to fetch water. The taps are often very overcrowded because one tap serves a very large portion of the community. However, many people in the formal areas have water in their homes.

#### **1.10.5 Housing**

As earlier mentioned, two types of housing are clearly distinguished in the community-formal and informal houses. Informal houses commonly known as shacks are constructed with wood and metal. Some are covered with plastic paper. These structures are mostly found in the sub areas of Shukushukuma, Congo and Burundi. They can also be spotted in the formal areas. Shack houses in Mfuleni are constantly affected by fire outbreaks especially in summer. Respondents argue that fire outbreaks often occur as a result of illegal electricity connections or the misuse of candles. The occupants of these structures are also often exposed to electric shocks. Formal houses are seen in areas such as Extension Three, Extension Four and Old Location. These houses comprise of a room, a kitchen sink, a toilet and bathroom. However, there are also flats to rent. These flats have more than a room, with a toilet and a shower.

### **1.10.6 Telephone**

Mfuleni is highly connected telephonically. Community telephone shops of VODACOM, MTN and CELL 'C' communication networks are seen on all the main streets in the community. However, very few people make use of these services because of the cost attached. Also, many youth in the community own mobile phones not for its purpose but as a source of pride or show-off. This accounts for a very high rate of mobile phone theft in the community. It was discovered that because of the difficulty in buying call units most people use their phones only to receive calls. Airtime is bought to make only absolute necessary calls like searching for a job.

### **1.10.7 Health**

Mfuleni has no hospital. However, there was a clinic created in 1976 which is still operating. The clinic is divided into two sections. One of the sections looks after children while the other takes care of adults. Common illnesses treated at the children's section include HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), Papsmears for females, Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STDs), immunization for children, curative service for children, mother to child transmission, underweight and nutrition. At the adult section of the clinic, hypertension, diabetes, STDs, Papsmears, HIV/AIDS are the diseases mostly treated.

The staff at the Mfuleni Community Clinic consists of a medical doctor, 9 professional nurses, 2 enrolled nurses, 1 assistant nurse, 1 clerk, 4 general workers and a facility manager. The clinic operates only eight hours daily. Patients in need of medical attention after five o'clock in the evening are taken to the hospital in Delft. The size, facilities, and staff are far too inadequate to serve the more than 150 patients who visit the hospital daily. Respondents strongly want the clinic to function for 24 hours daily. According to them, transporting an emergency case to the hospital in Delft does not only entail cost but can also lead to the death of a patient who needs urgent medical attention. However, a second clinic is under construction. It will only go operational in April 2007.

### **1.10.8 Sanitation**

Despite measures taken by the Municipality to dispose waste, some areas of the community especially the informal areas are very dirty. Mounds of dirt are spotted in almost every corner in the community exacerbated by excreta from the many stray dogs and cattle. These stray animals are a serious health threat to the inhabitants especially children. Also, many people still use the surrounding bush as toilets. Poor sanitation has given rise to the prevalence of diseases such as scabies, chicken pox and sometimes diarrhoea.

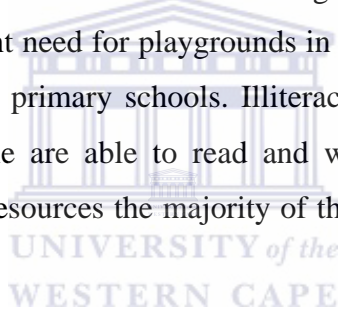
### **1.10.9 Education**

Until the advent of democracy, there was only one primary school in the community of Mfuleni. It is Mfuleni Primary School which was created in 1974. It is the oldest educational institution in the community with 28 teachers responsible for shaping the future of 1058 learners. Of this great number, 499 are boys while 599 are girls. Thanks to the advent of democracy, today, the community has 4 primary schools, 2 high schools and 8 crèches. The most recent is Itsatsa Primary School created in January 2006. It has 475 learners, 12 teachers, 4 assistant teachers and 2 grade 'R' teachers. The first high school in the community is Manzomthombo High School created in 1988. Until January 2006, Manzomthombo High School was the only high school in the community. Due to the increasing number of learners and the resulting lack of space, in January 2006, the government created the Mfuleni High School. Thus learners in grades 8 and 9 of Manzomthombo were moved to Mfuleni High School while Manzomthombo High School was left with learners of grades 10, 11 and 12. Today, Manzomthombo High School has 1277 learners of which 558 are boys and 619 are girls. It has a staff of 39 teachers, a principal and 2 vice principals. In 2005 Manzomthombo High School scored 86% (from 44% in 2004) in the Senior Certificate Examination. This achievement won for the school the 2005 award of one of the best-improved schools in the Western Cape. On the other hand, Mfuleni High School of grades 8 and 9 is made up of 959 students with 400 boys and 559 girls.

Generally a crèche prepares a child for primary education. But this is far from what crèches in Mfuleni do. They are more of day-care homes than crèches in the real sense. Heads of the different primary schools revealed that children who graduate

from crèches in Mfuleni are admitted into primary schools with empty brains. Most of them spend time sleeping in class due to lack of proper education. This allegation is not far from what the researcher witnessed at a visit to Malindi creche. Besides the porous wooden structure that accommodates the kids, many were seen playing in the cold in the swampy and slippery surrounding unattended. However, the academic institutions in Mfuleni are in urgent need of more teachers as due to the lack of teachers many are forced to teach more than a class.

Secondly the striking poverty has made many parents unable to pay fees for their children. “Only 10% of the learners have paid fees for this year. We have sent out letters to remind parents of the need to pay their children’s school fees but the response is very low. We have asked those who are not employed to submit a declaration from the Police stating that they are not employed” (interview with Mr Kuze one of the vice principals of Manzonthombo High School on 18 August, 2006). Furthermore there is an urgent need for playgrounds in all the schools in Mfuleni and a computer laboratory in the primary schools. Illiteracy is a serious problem in the community. Very few people are able to read and write. Though the community library is without sufficient resources the majority of the people are yet to realize the importance of a library.



#### **1.10.10 Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

A few non-governmental organizations have branches in the community. The most established is Women for Peace (Nobantu Centre). It began operating in Mfuleni in 1998. The branch in Mfuleni is one of the 4 branches of the organization in the Western Cape. Nobantu Centre focuses on projects such as Food Gardening, Bakery, Waistcoat, and the ‘wonderbox’ project to assist members of the community to help themselves. In other words, it aims to enable people to be self-reliant through the transfer of skills, knowledge and other resources. Since its inception in Mfuleni, the organization has transformed the lives of more than 200 hundred people in the community especially women. It also campaigns against HIV/AIDS and assists kids in its after school programmes. Another important organization in the community is Hope. Hope was created in the community in September 2000. It aims at reducing the level of HIV/AIDS which is said to have increased to 75%. The organization works in association with the clinic in Mfuleni to provide education and treatment on

HIV/AIDS. Hope community health workers help to monitor each treatment situation and act as “compliance officers” in cases that necessitate triple therapy. They also provide assistance to those affected by the diseases especially children. In addition, they also regularly conduct, on the request of schools, workshops covering issues such as prevention, de-stigmatisation, medication and compliance. The goal is not only to give proper information but also to change the attitude and behaviour of people.

#### **1.10.11 Community Based Organisations (CBOs)**

There are a few Community Based Organisations in Mfuleni. Ubuhle Banbatwana Care Centre (UBCC) is the one of the oldest CBOs in the community. This centre looks after 72 lively orphaned or street children in a 4-roomed tin shack. At the beginning of this years winter season, Clover S.A (pty) Ltd, donated blankets for the little ones. Clover is a South African company that produces dairy products. There is also Sakhumzi Centre (SC). Sakhumzi means “building a shelter”. It also looks after street children in the community. It is managed by Mama Amelia -a widow with 4 children. In 1994, the value of her project to the community inspired Murray and Roberts, (employer of contract labour in Mfuleni) to donate accommodation for the kids. The Town Council also donated the land on which the structure was constructed. Apart from accommodating the children, Sakhumzi Centre also serves as a crèche for 40 children. Sakhumzi Centre lives on donations from friends who appreciate the work Mama Amelia is doing for the children. In the last years Sakhumzi has received several donations from companies and institutions in Cape Town such as the Round Table of Rondebosch, a charity organisation that donated school needs and beds to the centre. Companies such as Woolworth also provide regular food supply for the children (<http://www.csu.edu.au/special/strawbale/dparam.htm>).

In sum, Mfuleni, created in 1974 with 114 hostel rooms to accommodate a population of 2218 male workers has rapidly evolved to a community of about 100.000 people. At inception there was a desperate need for basic necessities like water, electricity, employment and health. Though some say the situation is a bit better today as compared to the past, this study gathered that more than 70% of the population is in urgent need of basic services. Poverty is the household cry. The majority of the population is unemployed and many of those employed barely survive on an income



of less than R1500 monthly. Consequently, interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts have taken the lead as daily activities of its inhabitants especially the youth. This has given rise to a climate of insecurity in the community. As a result, many youth have been injured, imprisoned, disabled or died.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONCEPTS, THEORIES, AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The variety of concepts and theories discussed in this chapter served as the foundation of the study and the way forward for the research. The first part of the chapter presents a conceptual framework for understanding Conflict, Youth and Community as used in the study while the second part is a discussion of various theories of conflict by different authors for a better understanding of community conflicts and its effects on youth. The chapter ends with a review of the different secondary sources used in the study.

#### **2.1 Concepts**

##### **2.1.1 The Concept of Conflict**

Conflict can be described as a serious disagreement, struggle, and a fight arising out of differences of opinions, wishes, needs, values, and interests between and among individuals or groups. The objective of the individuals or groups engaged in conflict is to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals so that they can enjoy the scarce resources, the status symbols, and power bases (Hocker and Wilmot, 1995:20). Conflict is prevalent within and between social relations such as families, ethnic groups, social institutions and organizations, political parties and states. In other words, it is prevalent in situations where the goals, aspirations, interests, and needs of the social groups cannot be achieved simultaneously and the value systems of such groups are at variance. Invariably, the social parties purposely employ their power to fight for their position with a view to defeat, neutralize or eliminate one another (Anstey, 2006:7-12).

Nathan (2001: 3) argues that conflict is inevitable in any community or organization because people will always have different viewpoints, ideas, and opinions. He adds that “if we consider conflict to be inherently destructive, then our efforts are bound to be directed towards suppressing or eliminating it. Such efforts are more likely to heighten than lower the level of tension. On the other hand if we view conflict as normal and inescapable, then the challenge lies in managing it constructively.”

Most writers of conflict ( Mehler, et al, 2000: 73, Anstey, 1991: 14) seem to agree that the causes of conflict emanates from socio-economic inequalities, ethnicity, absence of opportunities for political participation, differences in religious inclinations, fragile government structures, inadequate civic structures, differences in political ideologies, and competition over scarce resources. According to these authors the different types of conflicts are intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, interstate and intrastate. This study is an examination of conflicts in a small community, thus special focus is on interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts within the area.

Like any other concept, conflict has its characteristics which include blaming, insensitivity to different cultures and values, disempowerment, relationships which are positional, rigid and defensive; various forms of aggression, prejudice and stereotyping, breakdown in communication, and domination (Taylor& Marais, 1999:64). In addition, conflicts also vary in sizes and seriousness, in their characteristics, and in the parties concerned. Sometimes all of these aspects of conflict are obvious. Sometimes, they are not; and sometimes, what appears to be a serious conflict is not one at all (Litterer et al. 1985:45). Conflicts have undermined and devastated the lives of individuals, destroyed groups and organizations, and impoverished and traumatised entire communities.

On the other hand, Taylor & Marais (1999, 60-61) see conflict as a positive vehicle for progressive social change. According to these theorists conflict plays a crucial role in the development or modification of rules, laws, policies and procedures which are required to sustain the further development of groups, organizations or larger institutions. The crucial issue is how to prevent, reduce and manage conflicts in the communities. According to IPA/OAU (1996:6) report, managing conflict is the responsibility of the civil society through:

1. "Expanding the use of the media to provide objective information, counter destructive propaganda, and influence attitudes and behaviour of people affected by conflict.
2. Advocating norms, values and standards- from individual to governmental levels- that will temper the recourse to violence and establish a code of behaviour during violent conflict.

3. Building local and national capacity to settle disputes and prevent conflict, for example, through good governance programmes.
4. Promoting dialogue and co-operation through mediation and negotiation.
5. Encouraging protection of the rights of minority groups.
6. Encourage participation in socio-economic activities aimed at mitigating disparities that may lead to conflicts.
7. Promoting dispensation of justice at the local levels.”

In sum, there is a potential for conflict in all communities and relationships between groups of all sizes, between individuals, within individuals and states. Though Taylor & Marais (1999, 60-61) argue that conflict has positive effects, the negative effects of conflict out weigh the benefits especially with regard to youth. In the context of this report, the term conflict can be substituted with either ‘crime’ or ‘violence’.

### **2.1.2 The Concept of Youth**

Generally youth is understood as a time of transition to adulthood. Children and youth are united by the experience of marginality, and although youth are not subjected to such extreme silencing and denial of parenthood as younger children, their agency has received little attention. Youth have had much less prominence internationally than children. In this regard, President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya argues that “Youth cannot be ignored or kept waiting. Youth is ambitious, and energetic, yet frustrated because its talents are being wasted. When ambitions are thwarted by society which denies youth the opportunity to develop its potential a serious and explosive situation can arise. Potentially, therefore, this is our most acute social problem and the greatest source of instability in the nation” (Ansell, 2006: 32). Thus youth require guidance and expert attention (from professionals) to ensure that the process of becoming adult is conducted correctly.

The United Nations General Assembly defined ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive. Ansell (2005:13) argues that children and youth are understood in very different ways in different societies and at different times. For the purpose of this study and according to the South African National Youth Policy (SANYP), youth are those aged between 14 and 35 years old. They make up 39% of the population of South Africa. This age bracket is defined by the fact that a

significant number of young women and men were deprived of the opportunity to develop their full potential by the former government of South Africa. For example a person aged 35 years in 1997 was born in 1962 – she or he lived during a period of high political conflicts, much of which was expressed in schools. Whilst a young person aged 14 years in 1997, was born in 1983, growing up when many new reforms and achievements of the struggle were being realised (SA National Youth Policy Section 2.3, 1997). Thus the definition of ‘Youth’ in South African society encompasses historical, political and contemporary issues. These issues are acknowledged each year on 16 June – the National Youth Day. This is a day when the contributions of young people to the struggle for freedom are acknowledged and the loss of many young lives commemorated.

#### **2.1.2.1 Youth Culture**

The predominant view over the last 150 years has been of ‘youth as trouble’, with repeated moral panics. This may relate in part to the fact that ‘youth remains a major point of symbolic investment for society as a whole. Newspaper articles on youth are inevitably about young people who are seen as a threat to the assumed values of the community because of their style of dress, their violent behaviour, their drugtaking behaviour, or because of their attitudes towards employment, schooling or political processes. In addition to being portrayed as a threat, youth are represented in the media as both symbols and victims of modern society (Howard, 1976:29-30). One of the most significant challenges facing South Africa today is the reduction of crime and violence committed by and toward young men and women. Young people are becoming more involved in these issues both as perpetrators and as victims. However, it is assumed that not all young people are a problem, only a group who are not growing up in the way that they should.

#### **2.1.2.2 Youth Development**

Youth development is the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, as well as build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives (Bhorat et al, 2005: 5-9). Positive youth development approaches seek to promote healthy

development to foster positive youth outcomes with focus on education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, conflict prevention, leisure- time activities and participation in the life of society and in decision making, Youth development does not occur in isolation from family, community and country. Young people’s maturation process is influenced by their surroundings and affected by relationships with key people, such as parents, teachers and peers. Thus without a supportive and caring community, the opportunities for youth development can not be nurtured or sustained (Partnership in Action, January 2004, Mbambo, 2004:149). Therefore, the youth development approach goes further than the reduction of perceived risky and problem behaviours, it encompass opportunities and experiences for young people encouraging them to contribute in a meaningful way to their community and to believe that their contribution is respected and valued.

### **2.1.3 The Concept of Community**

The term “Community” is not a new phenomenon in human existence. From the days of the hunter gatherer culture individual human have formed communities. A community is defined as an aggregate of persons with common characteristics such as geographic, professional, cultural, racial, religious, or socio-economic. (Fonseca et al. 2002: 67). The kinds of associations that express and create community take several forms. Many of them are relatively formal, with names and with officers elected by the members while others are not so formal. These associations represent the community from which most labelled people are excluded, and into which they need to be incorporated if they are to become active citizens. “Life in a community is, by definition, interdependent – filled with trusting relationships and empowered by the collective wisdom in a way that the unique creativity of each person is a contribution to the other”(McKnight, 1995:123). A township community is defined in this research as “underclass and lower –class, awash in crime and drugs” (Shamieg (2000:14).

### **2.1.3.1 Community Development**

Community development connotes the process by which the “efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the social and economic conditions of communities and to enable them to contribute more fully to national progress” (Lund & Van Harte, 1981:9). To make community development a learning process, people should be guided and helped to take the initiative. Every opportunity should be given them to take the initiative even if they must be coaxed into doing it. The learning process is therefore made viable through participation, initiative, and evaluating. Without these three ingredients community development cannot be learning. Because community development is born out of a need, it is obvious that it must be oriented towards an objective that will address that specific need (Swanepoel, 1997: 4).

It is the responsibility of the community development worker in South Africa to help people understand and assess their situation, consider the findings, plan how to keep what they like and change what they do not like (Swil, 1982:14). Mbambo (2004, :145) argues that “community based services and programmes which respond to the special needs, problems, interests and concerns of young persons, and which offer appropriate counselling and guidance to young persons and their families, should be developed, or strengthened where they exist”. Therefore, the core assumption of the research derived from the explanation of the above concepts is that the study is an examination of the nature, causes and impacts of interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts in a predominantly black community called Mfuleni. It also assumes that the youth who are the protagonists of conflicts in the community are those aged between 14-35 years. In providing a solution to the ravaging effects of conflicts in the community, the study adopts a community development approach whereby the community members are taught how to manage conflicts themselves.

## 2.2 Theories

Conflict is a pervasive social problem that has altered the lives of many in the community of Mfuleni. It frequently affects the way in which people travel, the extent in which they go out at night and the ways in which they perceive their neighbours. Because of the complexity in investigating the causes, nature and impacts of conflicts in South African communities, no single theory can adequately explain the situation. In this regard this study has used six theories to arrive at a systematic approach to adequately explain the alarming rate of conflicts in Mfuleni.

### 2.2.1 The Culture of Conflict Theory

According to this theory, countries with a history of mass political mobilization for conflict are likely to be more susceptible to new eruptions of different types of conflicts. Citizens adapt to a certain acceptable level of conflicts through cultural experience of conflicts especially violent conflicts. Conflict cultures vary from one country to the next and have been shaped by history. “Most contemporary conflicts are between peoples and races, only a few are between nations and ideologies. None of these conflicts can be understood without knowledge of the historical background” (Brogan, 1992: xii). Intensity of past conflicts as initiated by a large number of casualties indicates that violence is not atypical for a conflict nature. For example, during *La Violence* 1946-57 in Columbia some 300.000 people were killed in the fighting between partisans of the conservative and liberal parties. In 1988, when the country was not involved in active warfare, it experienced about 20,000 murders—about 6 times the murder rate in the US (Auvinen,1997).

“We can hardly understand contemporary conflicts merely by starting with the obvious—our disapproval of it. Nor, perhaps, can we cut it off from other phenomena with which it is associated. Every act of violence has a history that precedes it. South Africans should look beyond televised images and photos to understand the prevailing conflicts” (Jansen, 1998:1). The violence that characterised the apartheid era has bequeathed to South Africa a "culture of violence". This has been rooted in the notion that violence in South Africa has become normative rather than deviant and it has come to be regarded as an appropriate means of resolving social, political and even domestic conflict. Post apartheid South Africa is one of the most violent countries in



the world with one of the highest murder rates. This is testimony enough that something like a tradition of conflict does exist in South Africa (Graeme, 1991). However, Dahl (1989:218) and Auvinen (1997) argue that democracy is no guarantee for the absence of conflicts. According to these authors, the more democratic a regime the greater the extent of chronic low level conflicts.

### **2.2.2 The Social Learning Theory**

In almost every society, the family has the most intense and consistent contact with children from infantile dependence through at least the pre-adolescent stage of life. The role of the family as a basic social unit and fundamental source of instruction is one of the most important factors ensuring discipline and stability in tribal life. The home is a model for socialization where through strict parental control and discipline, obedience, dutifulness, refined manners and respectful submission are stressed (Gibbons, 1982:43). One of the most important ways in which a family socializes its young members is through the process of role modelling (Retief 1975:47). Social learning theorists argue that an important part of the process of learning social role expectations occurs through observation and subsequent identification with and imitation of those who already fill those roles. Consequently, a significant part of the socialization of children consists of them observing their parents and older siblings in everyday interaction. While parents verbally instruct their children in regard to “do’s” and “don’ts” of social behaviour, the children also learn simply by watching their parents and older siblings. A substantial amount of the delinquency literature indicates that juveniles whose parents and/or older siblings violate the law or commit other forms of deviance are more likely to become involved in illegal and deviant behaviour (Kandel et al. 1972:75-79).

Gibbons (1982:43) remarks that delinquents tend to come from homes characterized by one or more of the following conditions: other members of the family are criminal, delinquent, or alcoholic, one or both parents are absent from the home through divorce, desertion or death, the home is marked by lack of parental control, economic pressure stemming from unemployment or insufficient income. He also adds that delinquent and criminal behaviour is said to occur when families cannot or fail to,

exercise sufficient control of the behaviours of their children. This failure of family related social control is strengthened by peer support for misbehaviour.

### **2.2.3 The Theory of Differential Association**

The child's first peer group is usually not chosen freely, but is determined by the parents' choice of friends. Quite often, the first playgroup of most children consists of the children of their parents' adult friends and neighbours. Once children venture outside the home their initial peer group is largely determined by the geographic boundaries of the immediate neighbourhood (Glanz, 1994: 42). Theorists of differential association -Edwin Sutherland and Donald Cressey argue that most criminal behaviour is learned through contact with criminal elements and patterns which are present, acceptable, and rewarded in one's physical and social environment. This explains why juvenile delinquency rates vary among social groups and neighbourhoods. In more stable and prosperous neighbourhoods, the socialization of the young is largely dominated by values that stress conformity to middle class standards and respect for law enforcement agencies. On the other hand, in a high delinquent area, delinquent behaviour may be an integral part of the area culture. Therefore in the presence of a "criminalistic tradition," youths have the opportunity to associate with those who can teach them alternative and illegal behaviours. The element of Sutherland's differential association theory as stated in 1947 and in subsequent editions of criminology is that criminal behaviour is not inherited. This means it is learned through interaction with other persons through communication. This communication is verbal in many respects but includes also, "the communication of gestures" (Gibbons 1982:196).

### **2.2.4 The Cultural Transmission Theory**

Studies of the cultural background of a people are very important in the understanding of conflicts. Cati (2005:6) defines culture as, "encompassing the everyday, habitual practices of people, including practices of schooling and Western ways". In other words it refers to the organization of experience shared by members of a community including their standards for perceiving, predicting, judging and acting. Three aspects of the culture concept combine to make it a great idea in the analysis of social phenomena, including conflicts. They are: all men have cultures and this helps to

define their common humanity; all cultures show coherence and structure and each culture is a collective product of human effort, feeling and thought (Ndabandaba, 1987:16).

The tribal African believes that obedience or disobedience to the ancestral spirits directly affects his immediate future, determines his well being, success and good fortune on the one hand or his catastrophes, reverses and misfortunes on the other. Apart from the informal social controls, taboos and other prohibitions which restrain the individual from deviating from the tribal customs, there is a formal system of tribal justice which must also be considered (Ndabandaba,1987: 16, Retief, 1975: 50).

“Contact with white culture and white institutions have exposed black society to changes which no society can resist. Through such contact black society has emerged from a homogenous and integrated one to a heterogeneous and disintegrated one. The changes mean that individuals are cut off and separated from corporate morality, customs and traditional solidarity. Individuals have eventually become alien both to traditional life and to the new life brought about by modern change” (Retief 1975:49). Quoting from Robert Faries, Gibbons, (1982:120) suggests that “the essential feature in the social disorganization that underlies criminality appears to be the partial failure of the normal mechanisms of social control. In a modern secular civilization this control is not as strong as in isolated and homogenous primitive or peasant societies. In cities, and particularly in urban slums, the weakening of family and neighbourhood controls may be so extreme as to constitute complete failure. In such a situation children who have not already acquired life organizations based on habits of conventional behaviour are, though not inevitably delinquent, at least easily subject to the positive influences of the boy gangs”. According to Clinard et al. (1969: 8-11) the absence of the traditional family and its hierarchy of discipline and care in urban areas has made promiscuity, delinquency, teenage pregnancies and violent conflicts common characteristics in the social structure.

### **2.2.5 The Anomie Theory**

Most contemporary views regarding conflict represent elaborations upon the pioneering works of Emile Durkheim. He was the first to insist on the normality of conflicts. According to Durkheim, the social needs or desires of humans are

potentially insatiable, so collective order (social organization) is necessary as an external regulating force to define and control the goal seeking of men. If the collective order is disrupted or disturbed, human aspirations may increase to the point of outdistancing all possibilities of fulfilment. At this point when traditional rules have lost their authority over behaviour, a state of deregulation normlessness, or anomie is said to exist (Bill & Van der Spuy 2004, xxvi). American sociologist Robert K. Merton later developed a rich body of elaboration on Durkheim's original notions regarding the breakdown of regulatory norms and deviant behaviour. In his analysis, Merton distinguished between two major elements of social and cultural structures: the commonly defined goals human beings are enjoined to pursue, and the social structure that regulates the acceptable modes or means for the pursuit of goals and interests. Merton argues that society encourages all citizens to strive for success goals by means of certain normatively regulated or approved forms of behaviour. Yet, at the same time, opportunities to reach these goals through socially approved means are unequally distributed. For example, persons at the lower end of the income scale are often precluded from attending college and are thereby shut off from access to socially desirable and well paying jobs. According to Merton, because the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these goals, for a considerable part of the same population, deviant behaviour ensues on a large scale (Doug, 2002:22).

The theory of anomie was further developed by Richard A. Cloward. He directed attention to differentials in illegitimate opportunities as well as in legitimate opportunity structures. He pointed out that the forms of deviant behaviour are conditioned both on the goals and means, disjunction and on the opportunities to engage in deviant conduct. Just as the prospects for achievement of cultural goals through institutionalized means are unequally distributed, so are the opportunities for various kinds of careers in deviant conduct. For example, the use of drugs depends in part on contacts with suppliers of illicit narcotics. Similarly, development of a career as a professional criminal is particularly contingent on contact with individuals who will induct the youth into this kind of deviant pattern (Gibbons, 1982: 116).

### 2.2.6 The Needs Theory

Humans need a number of essentials to survive. According to the renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow and the conflict scholar John Burton, these essentials go beyond just food, water, and shelter. They include both physical and non-physical elements needed for human growth and development, as well as all those things humans are innately driven to attain (Carter, 1982:74-80). According to Soper (1981:10-13) human needs are a powerful source of explanation of human behavior and social interaction. All individuals have needs that they strive to satisfy, either by using the system, acting on the fringes or acting as a reformist or revolutionary. Given this condition, social systems must be responsive to individual needs, or be subject to instability and forced change (possibly through violence or conflict). Burton and other needs theorists who have adopted Maslow's ideas to conflict theory, argue that "if these needs are not fulfilled or fulfilled in an unsatisfactory way, individual development is distorted and mutilated and the personality becomes crippled. If this happens on a large scale, society becomes conflict ridden. Conflicts marks relationships among individuals, groups, within nations and between nations.....in order therefore to purge conflicts from society, needs theories emphasize the absolute necessity of satisfying basic human needs"(Bremner, 1993:4).

Human needs theorists offer a new dimension to conflict theory. Their approach provides an important conceptual tool that not only connects and addresses human needs on all levels but supports collaborative and multifaceted problem-solving models and related techniques, such as problem-solving workshops or an analytical problem-solving process (Carter, 1982:76). These models take into account the complexity of human life and the insistent nature of human needs. Problem-solving approaches also analyse the fundamental sources of conflict, while maintaining a focus on fulfilling peoples' unmet needs. In addition, they involve the interested parties in finding and developing acceptable ways to meet the needs of all concerned (Vos, 1988, 125-126). Thus needs theorists understand that needs, unlike interests, cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for.

As mentioned earlier, the complexity in analysing the high rate of conflict in Mfuleni and South Africa as a whole explains why this study has used a variety of theories for a systematic and better understanding of conflicts and its impacts on the youth and the

community as a whole. Though more than half of the respondents declared that poverty is the main cause of most conflicts in the community and poverty alleviation the cure, therefore, this study suggests that Needs and Anomie theories best explain the high rate of conflict in Mfuleni. However, this does not in any circumstance undermine the importance of other theories of conflict discussed in this chapter to explain why conflicts are increasing in the community.

### **2.3 Literature Review**

Conflicts have reached endemic proportions in South Africa. The dramatic increase in violent conflicts since 1980s has generated a wide range of explanations about the causes of and the protagonists (Stavrou, 1993:57). The question of community is of great importance here. The term 'community' is often used in the South African context to describe the general population, or racially separate sectors of the citizenry (Glanz, 1993:123). The fact that conflict threatens the daily existence of township residence is a wake up call for steps to be taken to reduce the impact of conflicts on the quality of life of township residents. In *managing Crime in the New South Africa*, Glanz (1993:xv) argues that, despite the grossly inadequate living conditions in the townships, residents perceive conflicts to be one of the main problems in their communities. A core element of the high rate of conflict in South Africa is that youth are the protagonists and at the same time the most affected by conflict (Standing, 2004: 35-45)

#### **2.3.1 Theoretical Framework**

Due to the complexity of conflicts in South Africa, this research has adopted a number of theories to serve as the framework for the examination of conflicts in Mfuleni. Gibbons (1982:133-155) points out that, most contemporary views regarding conflicts represent an elaboration of the theory of anomie by French sociologist Emile Durkheim. His theory was later richly elaborated by Robert Merton and Richard Cloward. For Bremner (1993:4), John Burton's needs theory and deep rooted conflicts greatly explains the prevalence of conflicts in South Africa. Berman (1993:22-24) and Serfontien (1993:33) focus on the culture of violence theory while Ndabanda (1987:16) argues that the cultural transmission, social learning and differential

association theories play very significant roles in the prevalence of conflicts in South Africa.

### **2.3.2 Causes of Conflicts**

There are good many rigorous disagreements among scholars of conflict over issues of causation especially in South Africa. According to NICRO (1990:3) and Skinner, (1998:133), there is strong evidence to suggest that the roots of conflicts in South African communities lie in the apartheid system, which the transition had to dismantle. Mullagee, (2000:1) and Minaar et al. (1997:5-31) argue that unemployment, sharp competition over meagre resources, lack of services, low wages, high population growth, loss of subsistence economy and competition for limited job opportunities by illegal immigrants have rendered millions in the townships to extreme poverty as a result many have resorted to crimes in order to survive. In addition, Bill and Van der Spuy (2004: xxvi) strongly assert that the “institutional violence of apartheid combined with the liberation movements’ strategy of ungovernability, have led to the development of a deeply entrenched culture of violence in South Africa. As a result, South Africans see violence as first rather than a last resort in resolving disputes at home, at work and at play”. Doug (2002: 4) adds that, the brutality of the apartheid system is a perfect example of how conflicts are influenced by society. Serfontien (1993: 33) argues that, South Africa’s culture of conflicts originates long before the advent of apartheid. That is, South Africa has a history over centuries of political conflict such as those against colonial powers and conflicts along race, ethnic and even class lines. He adds that, the assumption that violence has its origin in apartheid and the apparatus used to enforce its policies is an over simplification of the situation of contemporary conflicts in South Africa. Retief (1975: 47), Slabbert et al (1985: 9), Clinard et al. (1973 :1) emphasize that movement towards cities and the urbanization of the blacks should not be left aside. These scholars argue that, the movement to the cities and the subsequent process of urbanization modifies the behaviour of millions of migrants. Almost as often their expectations of better living conditions are frustrated consequently these economic migrants resort to illegal means to survive. Urbanization has greatly changed and influenced the black social structure. In the absence of the traditional family and its hierarchy of discipline and care, promiscuity, delinquency, teenage pregnancies and

violent conflicts have become common place in the social structure of these migrants. According to Howard (1981:57) these developments have resulted in the collapse or, at the very least, the change of binding and regulating elements in communal life.

### **2.3.3 Types and Nature of Conflicts**

The works of scholars like Stevens et al. (2003:11-25) and Ndabandaba (1987:1-4) reveal that taxi and hostel violence, domestic violence, assault, murder, burglaries, theft from cars, faction fighting, rape, malicious injury to property and motor vehicles, non payment of loans, school unrests and prostitution related conflicts are the common conflicts in South African communities. Glanz (1993:42-43) points out that, these conflicts have reached unacceptable levels in recent years. As a result, the existence of inhabitants in the communities is continuously threatened. According to the South African Police service between April 2003 and March 2004, 19.824 cases of murder, 52.733 cases of rape, 133,658 incidents of aggravated robbery and 260.082 cases of assaults were recorded ([http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/pubs/public\\_info/C/86878/1](http://www.capegateway.gov.za/eng/pubs/public_info/C/86878/1)).

In his *A Snake gives birth to a Snake*, Graeme (2004: 11) adds that witchcraft killing is also one of the most devastating conflicts in the black communities of South Africa.

### **2.3.4 Factors that Influence Conflicts**

The international recognition of contemporary South Africa as one of the World's zones of incessant violent conflicts, is as a result of a combination of many factors. Primarily, Scharf (1985:45) strongly suggests that the illegal sale of liquor popularly known as shebeen is a significant factor responsible for the high rate of conflicts in the communities. Shebeens are a cause of unhappiness in the life of most South Africans especially those in the townships. A number of lives have been lost, many have sustained injuries resulting to disabilities and the future of many children has been wrecked by the operation of shebeens in many households in the townships. In addition, Standing (2004: 34) argues that illicit income generating activities such as prostitution, and dealing with drugs, arms and stolen property are very significant factors that generate conflicts in the communities of South Africa. Further more, Franchi and Norman (2003 : 99-109), Nell and Williamson (1993 :9-14) and Gulbenkian Foundation's (1995:180) argue that lack of or inadequate recreational facilities and activities for children and youth result in a disinvested, frustrated and



bored population, predisposed to crime and substance abuse. Though not denying the impact of the apartheid regime on black communities in South Africa, Kock (1997: 34) points out that, the tolerance of the post apartheid government plays a significant role in inflaming conflicts in the communities. For example, the justice system does not provide sufficient deterrent value relative to the justice system of the apartheid era. This includes easy granting of bail, insufficient sentences, reduced sentences and a dwindling success rate in prosecution. Defending this claim Van Zyl Smit (2004:227-232) demonstrates that South Africa's crime control and preventive measures have operated to a large extent reactively with its primary agents having traditionally been the Police force, the courts, and the prisons. In this regard Todd & O'Leary (1983:11-12) and Ndabandaba (1987: 44) argue that, far from correcting or rehabilitating the first offender, a prison is in fact inclined to encourage further criminality. Those not inclined to violence before entering prison are forced to use it in order to survive (Gulbenkian Foundation, 1995: 174, Trudy 1996:10). Mistry, (1997: 47) and Mohamed (2003:19-20) put the blame on inefficient community policing. According to these scholars the Police still have to become accustomed to community policing, avoid corruption, crime and learn how to use their discretion to find alternative solution to problems. Quoting from Shaw and Shearing (1998), Van der Spuy in (2004: 193) demonstrates that "the central feature of the policing reform process in South Africa is that it has abandoned the frame work established to guide it and in so doing has lost sight of the fact that a fundamental premise of reform was to reduce the insecurity of poor communities through creating local networks in which the Police were not the centre. Policing Reform designed to improve the security of the whole community has become a Police Reform process that has business and the middle classes as its principal focus". Ndabandaba (1987:36) states that, the way the Mass Media describes and portrays violence in newspapers, magazines, cinema and on television, instead of deterring conflicts assists considerably in exacerbating conflicts in the communities. McCue in her *Domestic Violence* (1995:111) maintains that drug and alcohol abuse, availability of illegal firearms and higher levels of security (e.g. steering wheels, gear locks, alarm systems and immobilisers in cars) which tempt criminals to use more violent means are very helpful in making a life of crime very attractive to marginalized youth. Also, alcohol and drug intoxication leads to the degradation of personality accompanied by a decline in moral and ethical standards, and finding expression, ultimately, in diverse forms of criminal behaviour

such as robbery, common assault, suicide and murder (Freed 1978:47). Examining the causes of school unrest in the communities, Steinegger (1997:85) points out that, in addition to drug abuse and the possession of illegal firearms and sharp weapons like knives, poor management by governing bodies and legalising Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSA), unskilled teachers and sexual harassment of female students by teachers and male students are very significant contributory factors. More so, Slabbert (1985: 17) reveals that, studies in community conflicts especially those involving case analysis are difficult to undertake as many victims (especially rape victims) do not report offences. This does not only hinder the effectiveness of the Police to apprehend criminals but serves as an encouragement for criminals to continue terrorizing communities.

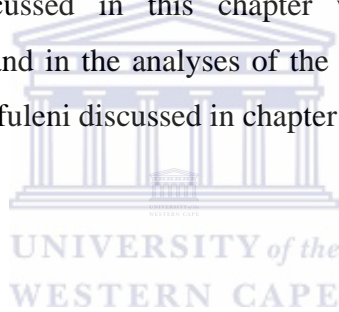
### **2.3.5 The Impacts of Conflicts**

Conflicts have diverse positive and adverse impacts on the youth, community and the state at large. However, Glanz (1994: 21) argues that the negative impacts greatly outweigh the positive ones. The works of Braude et al (1993:201-210), Roy (1998:59-87) and McCue (1995: 96-105) demonstrate that, conflicts have led to educational neglect, unplanned teenage pregnancy, imprisonment, injury, disability, trauma and death of many youth either as protagonists or victims. With regard to the community, Stavrou (1993: 69), Conlin (1975: 5-7), Glanz (1994: 21-34) argue that, conflicts have generated a climate of absolute fear in the communities of South Africa. Consequently, inhabitants have been forced to change their style of living by adopting methods such as 'not going out at night' especially to certain areas of the community. Many have put additional locks and installed alarm systems in their homes. Also, there is complete distrust for neighbours and strangers. Conlin (1975:5) adds that, it is also very costly to the state to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. On the other hand Taylor & Marais: (60-61) argue that, conflict can play a crucial role in the development or modification of rules, laws, policies and procedures which are required to sustain the further development of groups, organizations or larger institutions.

### 2.3.6 Possible Interventions

Diverse methods of intervention have been recommended by researchers of conflicts as a solution to the crisis in South African communities. While Bremner (1993:14) calls for the satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the communities, Franchi et al (2003:16) advocate a public health and community development approach. According to Franchi et al, the public health approach - the use of principles that are utilized with communicable and non-communicable diseases to control and prevent conflicts in the community must work together with community development that is, attempts to harness organic knowledge, resources, skills and assets in the process of re-empowering disempowered communities. A study conducted by Mnnyani (1997: 1) on correctional services in South Africa calls for a partnership between the community and the prisons for meaningful ways to solve conflicts and the reintegration of offenders in the community. Cartwright (2005: 4) argues that, the creation of a peace committee of 5-20 people in charge of resolving disputes in the community could do much help. The purpose is to create an ongoing structure that people in the community, the government and others can relate to. The committee will operate according to a code and will have an agreed set of procedures to be followed. With regard to children and youth affected by conflicts, Motshekga et al (1993: 54) emphasizes that long-term individual and group counselling to help children and families deal with the psychological trauma of violence is a necessary tool to deal with conflicts. More so, children and adults can be helped through group work activities to develop skills of dealing with conflicts in a more constructive way. Apart from that, the whole community has to become involved in attempts to minimise the effects of conflicts. Volunteers within the community could be trained to teach the inhabitants skills on how to cope with violence and to empower them to demand for social welfare programs to meet their needs and to minimise the effects of violence. Similarly, Odekunle (1993: 398-402) advocates “a just and egalitarian society; minimisation of existing inequalities in wealth; income and consumption standards; spreading the benefits of economic development equitably; reduction in the level of unemployment; increased participation by citizens in the level of unemployment and underemployment; reorientation and reorganisation of policing and law enforcement and a reduction in the use of prisons as the modal correction instrument.” In addition, Wessels (1993: 355) declares that a Neighbourhood Watch, instituted by an area’s

residents in conjunction with the local law enforcement, is one anti crime programme that has marked success. In *Helping Young Children Develop Social Skills*, King and Kirschenbaum (1992:5) strongly admit that the high crime rate among youths is as a result of social adjustment problems which can be cured by social learning, development and individual difference perspectives. Hugo Van der Merwe and Twigg (1997:171) recommend conflict resolution in the communities by conciliatory processes, by a community justice system created to work together with the present formal system that resolves disputes on an adjudicative approach. Seedat et al. (2001:32-33) argue that no matter what mode of interventions adopted to resolve conflicts in the communities, success can not be realized without the active participation of the beneficiaries. This will lead to the development of individual capacity within the community to understand their life situation, and development of their own potential to take action to improve their quality of life. Therefore, the concepts and theories discussed in this chapter were adequately taken into consideration in the survey and in the analyses of the findings of the nature, causes and impacts of conflicts in Mfuleni discussed in chapter three.



## CHAPTER THREE

### MFULENI- A PLACE OF CONFLICT

Since the abolition of the Influx Control Act that permitted ‘non-workers’ to live in Mfuleni, coupled with the immigration of thousands of people from Kayelitha, Delft, Nyanga, Philippi and IKapa in search for living space and safety, the level of conflict in the community has been very high. Three types of conflicts are prevalent in the community of Mfuleni. -Interpersonal, intergroup and intragroup conflicts. Of all three, interpersonal conflicts are the most prevalent followed by intergroup and intragroup conflicts. According to Police Reports, most conflicts in the community are caused by youth older than 14 years of age. Respondents also added that conflicts take place every day, anytime and anywhere in the community but mostly on weekends at night. Prominent conflict areas according to respondents include Westbank, Happyvalley, Burundi, Shukushukuma, Driftsand and Silversands. These areas also accommodate all the gangs in the community. This section examines the distribution of the rate of conflict according to age groups, causes, types, impacts and current strategies to reduce conflicts in the community.

#### 3.1 Distribution of the Level of Conflict by Age Group

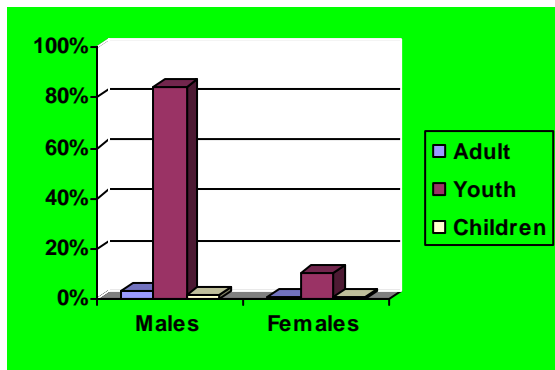
This study discovered that about 94% of conflicts in the community are committed by youth. While female youth take part in just 10% of the conflicts, males are responsible for 84 % of the level of conflicts in Mfuleni. It was also revealed that, the adult population is responsible for 4% of the conflicts in the community with male adults taking part in 3% and females 1%. Finally, children from 5-14 years account for 2% of the level of conflicts in Mfuleni. While male kids are responsible for 1.5%, female kids contribute 0.5% in the level of conflicts in the community.

Table 4. Distribution of the level of conflicts by gender and age groups

Age Group	Male	Female
Adult: above 35 years	3%	1%
Youth: 14-35 years old	84%	10%
Children: 5-14	1.5%	0.5%

Source: Interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions

Figure3. Distribution of the level of conflicts by gender and age groups



Source: Interviews and questionnaires and focus group discussions

### 3.2 Causes of conflicts in Mfuleni

Numerous causes are responsible for conflicts in Mfuleni notably:

#### 3.2.1 Poverty

Since the collapse of the apartheid regime one of the major challenges facing the new government of South Africa is to improve the living standards of the people with special emphasis on the disadvantaged black population. (Batho Pele White Paper, 1997). Twelve years after the collapse of apartheid, hard-core poverty seems as stubborn as ever in the community of Mfuleni. According to Municipal Reports, the average household has become 15% poorer since 1994 (Municipal Reports, 2005). Acute poverty in Mfuleni is heightened by high rate of unemployment. According to respondents, more than 50% of those aged below 35 years old are unemployed. Nevertheless, the few who are employed are faced with uncertain, intermittent and insufficient earnings. More than 50% of the working population earn below R1500 monthly of which 40% is spent on food and groceries and 25% on fuel. Respondents also remarked that, apart from the lack of jobs, poverty in Mfuleni is exacerbated by a high rate of illegitimate births and the increasing cost of living in South Africa as a whole.

Though Clinard et al (1970:180) argue that unemployment is not an absolute condition and therefore has little reaction to conflicts, NICRO, (1990:4) asserts that, because it is so difficult to get a job, people feel like being failures and their self esteem decreases. As a result, many youth drift into conflicts. This actually explains

the situation in Mfuleni. More than 90% of the respondents revealed that, poverty caused by increasing unemployment, low wages and high standards of living is the major reason for conflicts in the community.

### **3.2.2 Urbanization**

The high rate of conflicts in Mfuleni is also greatly associated with South Africa's rapid industrialization and consequent urbanization. Since the days of apartheid, black South Africans from the rural areas notably in the Eastern Cape have relentlessly flooded the community in search for better living conditions in the city (Ndabandaba, 1987 16-24). Very distant from their expectations, these migrants are confronted with problems like acute poverty, unemployment, lack of accommodation and high cost of living. According to Police Reports, frustrated South Africans who mostly occupy the slum areas of Burundi, Shukushukuma and Congo have no option than to commit themselves to illegal activities like prostitution, sale of illicit goods, drug and alcohol abuse, armed robbery and burglary to earn a living. Thereby inflaming the level of conflicts in the community. Furthermore, respondents reported that urbanization has seriously eroded communal life in Mfuleni characterised by a loss of family functions, broken homes and illegitimacy. In a discussion with some members of staff at Hope, it was remarked that, erosion of natural rules of order and conduct due to urbanization, implies that youth are no longer regulated by laws and customs of earlier pre-urban stage of life. Sanctions have lost their force as a result conflicts (mostly interpersonal) have become the activities of many youth in the community.

### **3.2.3 History of Violence**

It is an undisputable fact that the violence that characterised the apartheid government has very drastic effects on the youth of today's South Africa and Mfuleni in particular. According to respondents, repressions by the apartheid state were met with fierce resistance by the youth in strategies to force business, the government, the media, and the international community to pay attention to the aspirations of the people. This greatly undermined respect for the elderly and the authority of the extended family network. The youth, alienated, angry and left with few or no role models, eventually drifted into gangs. Gangs appeared to be more organized, exciting and attractive than other youth groups. Today, youth in South Africa (Mfuleni

inclusive) see violence as the first rather than the last measure to resolve disputes either at home, work, school and on the streets. Thus a culture of disputes rather than negotiation to get things done is deeply entrenched on the minds of many youth in Mfuleni thereby maintaining a high rate of conflict in the community.

### **3.2.4 Poor Parental Supervision**

Lack of family or parental supervision is also one of the major causes of conflicts in Mfuleni. This is greatly caused by poverty. Respondents argue that, the fact that more than half of the homes are managed by mothers, the absence of a father implies that a mother is faced with the dual functions of providing food and controlling the behaviours of her children. In most homes, mothers pay very little attention in regulating the behaviour of their children. As result, they grow up to become a problem in the community. In a discussion with some Police Officers, It was revealed that in many homes parents are unable to provide food for their children because of the reigning poverty. Consequently, these children as young as 6 years old are forced to go out and struggle for themselves. Heaps of rubbish are common sites where this children look for decayed bread and other foods. Many are also seen around the taxi rank begging and assisting passengers and taxi drivers in one way or the other. Respondents strongly revealed that most of these children grow up to be no good members of the community but rather learn to become criminals. It was also discovered that, because of the search for food, these kids steal in homes and in shops making life uncomfortable for innocent citizens. Respondents added that gang culture among youth starts at this stage.

### **3.2.5 Peer Relations**

Polk (1969:384) argues that the failure of family related social control is strengthened by peer support for misbehaviour. In a discussion with the ladies at Nobantu Centre, it was revealed that, in Mfuleni, youth from broken homes; homes with domestic conflicts and homes managed by poverty injured unmarried mothers, find solace spending their spare time with friends most often at the shebeens. In these forums youth learn patterns of rebellion against adults, how to consume substances like drugs and alcohol, how to bully other youths especially girls, how to steal from their



parents, shops and other members of the community and how to rape girls. In Extension Four, a 19 year old male said he learnt how to smoke dagga as early as 7 years old because of contact with friends who were a little older than him. He was often told to leave the group if he refused to take part in smoking. He was called all sorts of derogatory names such as 'sisi (meaning a lady) and a 'child' (meaning he was not strong enough). Ironically they were all children. This adds to the fact that young children consume substances to be bold to commit acts like adults. However, the 7 year old had no option but to join the gang in their smoking culture and other illicit acts like rape, shoplifting, burglary, assault and armed robbery. Therefore, peer pressure plays a significant role in exasperating the level of conflict in Mfuleni.

### **3.2.6 Gender Inequality**

Mfuleni is a typical African community where the custom of male dominance is deeply entrenched. This social system defines the male partner as the dominant, strong, authoritarian, aggressive, and rational provider for the family, while the female has traditionally been assigned to a dependent, passive, submissive and soft role. Thus, any threat to the man's authority can trigger an unexpected act of violence to bring the situation back to 'normal' with him regaining what he sees as his rightful place as the head of the family. What the youth of Mfuleni have learnt from this value of physical domination is that the bigger and stronger one is, the more control one can exert over another person. They have also learned to respect violence and to employ it when ever their own situation gives them the upper hand. Thus, according to the ladies at Nobantu Centre, most dating and marital violence in the community are partly a result of the culture of male dominance.

### **3.2.7 Lack of Recreational Facilities and Activities**

The absence of recreational facilities in Mfuleni plays a tremendous role in fuelling conflicts in the community. With a teeming population, Mfuleni has only one soccer pitch. A discussion with some heads of academic institutions and some Police officials revealed that, lack of recreational facilities and activities strongly encourage many youth to constantly visit shebeens where they play the pool game. These officials added that, their presence at the shebeens is very adverse to their upbringing. According to many respondents, at shebeens, youth are forced to learn illicit acts like

drug taking, alcohol abuse, assault and other acts considered detrimental to the security of the inhabitants of the community.

### **3.3 Factors that influence conflicts in Mfuleni.**

This study argues that, the rate of conflicts in Mfuleni should have not attained its contemporary magnitude without the strong influence of factors such as:

#### **3.3.1 Shebeens**

Since the Liquor Amendment Act (LAA) of 1961, that allowed Africans to consume the “white man’s liquor”, the illegal sale of liquor (operation of shebeens) has been a significant source of income to many households. This institutionalised way of earning a living or of supplementing one’s income has led to the proliferation of shebeens in almost every corner in the community of Mfuleni, leading to a very high rate of alcohol abuse. It was also gathered that, most people spend their lives at the shebeens in order to escape from societal problems. Police Reports, answers in two thirds of the questionnaires as well as interviews and focus group discussions strongly attest that illegal sale of liquor (operation of shebeens) strongly underpin the alarming rate of conflicts in Mfuleni. Thus, according to the Police, most cases of domestic violence, street fighting, rape and assault in the community are strongly connected to drunkenness. That is, either one of the parties is drunk or all involved are drunk.

#### **3.3.2 Poor Community Policing**

Historically, the South African Police Service (SAPS) have not had a tradition of a people-centred outlook. In the wake of the new era, the South African Police force took a different dimension. It allows the Police and the community residents to work closely together in new ways to solve the problems of conflict, fear of conflict, physical and social disorder, and neighbourhood decay (Cawtha, 1994:184-185).

Does community policing do a better job in reducing conflicts in Mfuleni? More than 80% of the respondents declared dissatisfaction with the work of the Police in the community. According to these citizens, the Police are far from protecting them from the horrors of conflicts inflicted on them by delinquent youth in the community. The proprietress of Elkana Buchery, regrettably mentioned that, though the Police Station

is only about 10 meters away from her shop, the Police are unable to stop the incessant burglaries on her shop that is almost sending her out of business. Many youth decried varied forms of harassment, verbal abuse and threats by the Police. “It is very difficult to have a complaint against a Police Officer accepted. Said a disgruntled resident. Though no Police Officer revealed any act of harassment, pain or threats on members of the community, some admitted that, the ineffectiveness of the Police to fight against conflicts in the community is the lack of resources especially human. Thus the inadequacy of officers has forced the Police to concentrate only on notorious conflict areas in the community with less attention paid to other areas which are considered not conflict ridden. Paradoxically, some youth take advantage of the absence of the Police in these sections of the community to make life uncomfortable for innocent citizens.

### **3.3.3 The Prison**

In the new South Africa, the system of resolving disputes is predominantly adjudicative (Van Der Merwe, 1997:171). Minaar and Hough (1997:34) argue that the system does not provide sufficient deterrent value relative to the penal system of the apartheid era. Respondents added that easy granting of bail, insufficient sentences, reduced sentences and a dwindling success rate in prosecution contributes greatly in increasing conflicts in the community. In a discussion with a group of youth in Drift Sand it was revealed that in prison, violence is the medium of survival. Those entering prison are forced to use violence if they have to survive till the end of their term. Thus it is not uncommon that many youth of Mfuleni graduate from prison with additional knowledge and skills to take part in more acts of deviance. Respondents and Police Reports agree that many youth arrested in the community for varied acts of violence are ex- inmates.

### **3.3.4 Drug abuse**

Drug use in the community of Mfuleni is widespread. It is a common practice among youth as young as 7 years old. According to respondents, youth take drugs (mostly dagga) to achieve euphoria, or to get high. It is also a source of prestige and self respect with peers. It also enables them to face violence among friends or other groups. “Children in this community take drugs and alcohol because they are

available and inexpensive to buy” said a parent in Old Location. Drug and alcohol consumption are responsible for almost 75% per cent of the level of conflict in the community. It was gathered that drug intoxication leads to deterioration of personality accompanied by a decline in moral and ethical standards, and finding expression, ultimately, in diverse forms of criminal behaviour such as robbery, common assault suicide and murder. According to Police Reports, 105 drug related conflicts took place in Mfuleni in July 2005.

### **3.3.5 Illicit Generating Income Activities**

Apart from illegal sale of liquor, there are other prominent illicit generating income activities that greatly contribute to the increasing rate of conflicts in Mfuleni. Of tremendous significance is the illegal sale of drugs especially dagga. In a discussion with some Police Officers, it was gathered that drug dealers in Cape Town and other parts of South Africa constantly supply the community with large quantities of drugs thereby giving the trade a strong influence in the economy of the community. It was gathered that Drug Lords supply to their employees who sell for them; to retailers as well as gangsters in the community. Bensusan (1978:39-40) argues that besides other factors that encourage the drug business in South Africa, good climatic and geographic conditions in South Africa greatly favours large scale growth of the plant.

Prostitution is another well entrenched illicit business in the community. Caused by poverty and fanned by unemployment and illegitimate births, young girls in Mfuleni prostitute to earn a living and to take care of their children. According to a few staff members at Hope, most prostitutes in the community have legitimate male partners who also strongly take part in the business. The legitimate male partner often hides whenever his girlfriend is involved in sex with a client. In most cases the girl ends up stealing items like jewellery, cell phone and even cash from the client. Any attempt to force the girl to give back the items brings her partner out of his hiding for rescue. Most often a fight escalates leading to serious injury inflicted on the client. In some cases the client is stabbed to death. Furthermore, the sale of stolen property is almost becoming a legitimate business in Mfuleni. Youth steal from shops and members of the community to make quick money mostly used to buy drugs and liquor. Stolen mobile phones, jewelleryes and items from motor vehicles are commonly traded items

by delinquent youth in Mfuleni. This business has greatly increased attacks on the streets especially in very dark areas.

### **3.3.6 Possession Illegal Weapons**

Possession of weapons like knives and guns is a very common practice by youth in the community. According to some Neighbourhood Watch Workers and Police Officers, these weapons, especially knives, do not only inspire many youth to commit acts of deviance but are used in most conflicts in the community. Usually, detection of illegal firearms arises from Police action around another firearm-related conflict in the community. According to respondents, knives are mostly used to attack citizens on the street for money, mobile phones, jewellery and dresses. The author saw with pity wounds and scars from knife stabs and gunshots showed to him by respondents during interviews.

### **3.3.7 Fragile Homes**

Most residents in Mfuleni live in shack buildings especially in the informal areas. Many of these informal structures are very fragile and can be blown down by the slightest storm. To the criminals in the community it is an advantage for easy access to the possessions of the owners of these structures. Respondents remarked that most burglaries in the community take place in the informal areas. This is as a result of the fragile nature of the houses.

### **3.3.8 Gangs**

Poverty, poor quality education, unemployment and disjointed family life have prompted some male youth in Mfuleni to form groups aimed at sharing a common identity. These groups are known as gangs. Gangs are a well known feature in Mfuleni. This study gathered that, because the community has created an image of “gangs” that is negative and pejorative, gangs in Mfuleni call themselves by another label. Police Reports revealed that there are three prominent gangs in Mfuleni- the Americans, the Twenty Six’s and the Twenty Eight’s. These gangs are well established in the Westbank and Burundi sub areas. Inspired by the quest for material

goods these gangs commit atrocities like armed robbery and burglary that often results in shootouts with the Police. They are also actively involved in the drug trade.

### **3.3.9 Weekend Dance**

It is a norm in the community that youth organise dance parties every weekend. These parties instead of serving as a source of recreation contribute drastically to exacerbating conflicts in the community. Respondents (mostly parents and some Police Officers) pointed out that it is a forum where drug trafficking takes place at its peak. They added that excessive cigarette, alcohol and drug consumption, which are the predominant characteristics of the gatherings often grease disagreement over a girl or a bottle of beer resulting to fist fighting, stabbing and assault. Police Reports also revealed that during dance parties, some girls are either raped when they are drunk or beaten because they refuse to have sex with a boy. However, for prostitutes in the community, it is a high market event because they are sure of making plenty of money by dawn.

### **3.3.10 Darkness**

This is a very remarkable factor that contributes to conflicts in the community. Most of the areas especially the informal areas are void of electricity not to mention streetlights. Criminals take advantage of the darkness in these areas at night to attack members of the community-mostly girls. According to the Police, more than 70% of rape and other attacks take place in the dark corners of the streets especially in areas like Shukushukuma and Burundi.

### **3.3.11 The Dark Figure**

Another very important factor that exacerbates conflicts in the community of Mfuleni is “crime hiding”. According to some Police Officers, many parents protect their children from the Police after committing an offence. Also many members of the community do not report criminals to the Police because of personal relations with the offender. It was also exposed during interviews that many residents do not report criminals to the Police because of lack of confidence in the Police. These respondents argue that, it takes very few days for a criminal to be seen again on the streets after an

arrest by the police. According to the respondents interviewed, these criminals continue to threaten their victims.

### **3.3.12 The Mass Media**

The mass media (movies, television, advertisements, etc) in South Africa plays an important role in popularizing conflicts in Mfuleni and the country at large. Respondents argue that facts that were never known to the public or were treated briefly in newspapers are now reported swiftly on television and radio, in daily newspapers, and in weekly magazines. Also, newspapers sometimes try to increase circulation through front-page stories about sensational crimes. According to the principal of Mfuleni High School, South African newspapers have typically paid somewhat more attention to ‘conflict’ news than the press in other nations. Murder, rape, robbery, fraud and family violence constitutes each evening’s television viewing. As a result unemployed, poorly-schooled, bored and frustrated, youth in Mfuleni learn to use illegal and abusive methods portrayed by the media to become powerful and to satisfy their needs. For example, the amount of violence portrayed on South African television and in newspapers during the security guards’ strike has greatly instilled on the youth of Mfuleni and South Africa as a whole the impression that violence and not dialogue is a significant means to get things done. However, this does not undermine the importance of the media in South Africa. According to respondents, the media should focus more on preventing rather than portraying violence.

## **3.4 Types of Conflicts in Mfuleni**

The different types of conflicts in Mfuleni have been grouped under three headings – interpersonal, intergroup and intergroup conflicts.

### **3.4.1 Interpersonal Conflicts**

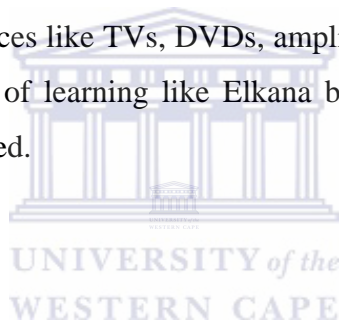
If present day Mfuleni is reputed for a high rate of insecurity, it is as a result of the increase in interpersonal conflicts. Interpersonal conflicts of murder, burglary, theft, assault, fighting, marital violence, rape and robbery are daily activities of many especially the youth in the informal areas of the community.

### **3.4.1.1 Theft**

Theft is the illegal taking of someone else's property without that person's freely given consent (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theft>). According to Municipal Reports of 2005, it is an every minute activity in Mfuleni. Crimes of theft in Mfuleni include: burglary, robbery and shoplifting.

#### **3.4.1.1.1 Burglary**

This is the unlawful entering of a building to commit a felony or a theft, whether force is used or not (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2005). When an unlawful entry results in a violent confrontation with the occupant, the offence is counted as a robbery rather than a burglary (Cressey & Wood, 1969: 7). According to Police Reports, in July 2005, 51 cases of residential burglaries were reported. Common items stolen were electrical appliances like TVs, DVDs, amplifiers, cell phones, clothes and cash. Shops and institutions of learning like Elkana butchery and Mfuleni Primary School are also greatly affected.



#### **3.4.1.1.2 Robbery**

It is the unlawful taking of another's movable property or anything of value either by force or by creating fear. For theft to be considered robbery there must be violence committed against the victim or there must be a threat of violence (Ndabandaba 1987:2). In the Police Report of July 2005, 54 cases of aggravated and 57 cases of common robberies occurred in Mfuleni with the use firearms and sharp weapons like knives. Mobile phones, cash, jewelleries, and clothes are common items stolen during an event of robbery in Mfuleni. Also, in the same month, 12 cases of motor vehicles and motorcycle theft took place in the community. In addition, 24 cases of theft of items such car battery, radio, alarm cables from motor vehicles were also reported.

#### **3.4.1.1.3 Shoplifting**

This is one of the most frequent crimes in the community. According to respondents, it is mostly practiced by children and females between 14-35 years. Most shops especially big ones like Score and Rainbow wholesaler are greatly affected by this act. "It is a very common attitude practiced mostly by mothers. They get items from the



shelves and put them in their bags or in their dresses. Shoplifting costs the company about R5000 weekly". (Interview with Denise the assistant manager of Score on 12 July 2006). It is important to mention that Score is the only supermarket in the community. Shop owners in Mfuleni reported that, shoplifting is an offence treated with very little attention by the Police. In addition, this study discovered that, despite the prevalence of the act in the community no trace of the act was seen in the Police crime statistics of July 2005 despite the adverse effects of the act on shop owners.

#### **3.4.1.2 Murder**

This is a premeditated unlawful killing of one human being by another through any action intended to kill or cause grievous bodily harm (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder>). Murder is also a very common act in the community of Mfuleni. Respondents report that it is not uncommon to find a dead person on the roads in Mfuleni especially on weekends. Averagely, about 2 murders occur in the community weekly. In a discussion with the principal of Mfuleni High school, he regrettably announced the murder of two learners of the school in June this year. These youth were stabbed to death in the community by robbers who wanted their belongings. According to Police statistics of July 2005, 8 murder and 12 attempted murder cases took place in the community with the use of firearms and knives.

#### **3.4.1.3 Assault**

Assault is a crime of violence against another person or a wilful attempt to illegally inflict injury on or threaten a person. It can either be common or aggravated. Common assault is the attempt or threat to inflict less serious physical injury without a weapon. In aggravated assault, the threat of serious physical injury and possible death is substantial. Assault is a very common incident in places like shebeens, dance parties, in the homes and at schools. According to the Police, 173 cases of aggravated assault and 218 cases of common assault took place in the community of Mfuleni in July 2005.

#### **3.4.1.4 Rape**

This is an unlawful intentional sexual intercourse with a female or male by using force or the threat of force. Police Reports revealed that, in Mfuleni, a huge number of females as young as seven have been victims of this offence. Rape is an activity that takes place mostly in the dark corners of the community, in the surrounding bush and in the homes. 40 rape cases were reported to the Police in July last year. This study argues that the number could be far more than that because most rape victims do not report to the Police.

Table 5. Interpersonal conflicts registered by the police in July 2005

	<b>CRIME</b>	<b>JULY 2005</b>
1	Murder	8
2	Attempted Murder	12
3	Robbery with aggravated circumstances	54
4	Rape and attempts	40
5	Theft of motor Vehicles and Motorcycles and attempts	12
6	Theft out of or from Motor vehicles and attempts	24
7	Burglary on residential premises	124
8	Assault to do grievous bodily harm	173
9	Common assault	218
10	Common robbery	57
	total	722

Source: Police Report of Mfuleni Police Station of July 2005

### **3.4.1.5 School Conflicts**

Discussions with some heads of educational institutions in Mfuleni revealed that calm reigns on the premises of their respective institutions compared to the situations at schools in other townships. However, these officials remarked that, assault, fist fighting, and disagreements between teachers are very common conflicts at their institutions. Furthermore, the principals of Mfuleni and Manzomthombo High Schools reported few cases of drunkenness, drugs intake and possession of sharp weapons like knives by students on school premises. The principal of Mfuleni High School remarked that, the most recent incident of school deviance occurred in June this year when three students (a female and two males) were caught in the school toilet abusively drunk. The vice principal of Manzomthombo High School also

mentioned that a similar incident occurred at the institution after the June examinations this year. Cigarette smoking was declared rampant among learners at these institutions. These officials argued that, though students are hardly caught smoking on the premises; some teachers complain that many students often smell of cigarette in class.

#### **3.4.1.6 Marital Disputes**

According to respondents, only about 20 per cent of the female folk in Mfuleni are married. However, their small number is not any excuse from the torture of some very violent husbands. Marital violence in the community consists of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. According to many female respondents, emotional abuse consists of insults like “stupid” “crazy” “bitch” and humiliation of the victim in front of family members and others. Though sexual abuse is very difficult to discuss openly, a group of ladies at Hope revealed that it is a very regular activity in the homes. These ladies stated that males are very good at touching their wives sexually in uncomfortable ways. Also, they are always sex demanding and if the woman refuses they forcefully have sex with her. Physical abuse was reported by the ladies at Nobantu Centre as a very common offence practiced by men in Mfuleni. Very often it begins non-violently but later generates into slaps, punches and kicks. At times with the use of weapons. They added that, of the varied reasons responsible for marital violence in the community poverty and a high quest for sex by the husbands especially when they are drunk are the major reasons.

#### **3.4.1.7 Dating Violence**

Dating is an activity practiced in Mfuleni mostly by females and males between 13-35 years old. Many ladies have at least one boyfriend. The prevalence of physical abuse among dating and cohabiting couples in Mfuleni is immeasurable. “Guys beat ladies because they are not faithful. It is very common for your girlfriend to have sex with your very close friend or neighbour just because she needs money” (Interview with Siyo residing in Garden City on August 8, 2006). It was also discovered that some boys force their girlfriends to have sex with men for money in order for them to buy food and drinks. However, when the girl goes out for sex without the consent of the guy, it results to serious beating. Therefore, jealousy, guilt, insecurity, poverty, and

quest for sex are the reasons for dating conflicts in Mfuleni. These conflicts are inflamed by the consumption of drugs and alcohol by either the offender or both parties. Dating conflicts are very common at shebeens and at weekend dance parties.

### **3.4.2 Intergroup Conflicts**

Though not prevalent and devastating as interpersonal conflicts, intergroup conflicts also make a very significant contribution to Mfuleni's reputation of high level insecurity. Prominent intergroup conflicts in the community include: conflicts over resources, conflicts between the Police and the community, conflicts between the Taxi Drivers Association and the Traffic Police and conflicts over burial space.

#### **3.4.2.1 Conflicts over Resources**

The daily increase in the number of people in Mfuleni has generated a scramble for resources such as water, electricity, space, and jobs. For example, water, a commodity widely used by everybody is not sufficiently available to the inhabitants in the informal areas. A single tap serves a very large portion of the community. As a result many are forced to stand in long queues if they have to fetch water. Often, it results to pushing, quarrelling and fighting. Very often such conflicts take a different dimension involving members of different families. Most inter-family disputes especially in the informal areas result from a scramble over resources.

Further more, according to Municipal Reports of 2005, hundreds of squatter families plug in illegally to connection boxes and cables to enjoy electricity. This often leads to damage and overload to the network thereby causing power cuts that seriously affect legal users of electricity in the community. Legal Mfuleni users are demanding action against squatters. The matter reached a crisis earlier this year when the Council removed some of the illegal connections, prompting angry reactions from the squatters. A Council employee was held hostage in his office until he agreed to return the cables and wires.

In an interview with Councillor Jama, he revealed that Mfuleni will be a beneficiary of three very important projects in no distant time. These projects are: the construction of 5000 formal houses, a second clinic, and a sewerage pipe project. This will lead to the creation of many job opportunities for the unemployed youth in the community.

Ironically the news of the projects has sparked serious conflicts between the different sub areas of the community. The different sub areas are competing for the position of the Liaison Officer -the official who will be in charge of providing workers to the contractors. According to the inhabitants of these areas, if the Liaison Officer comes from their area they will have a greater share of the job opportunities. “The conflict has reached a point that it may lead to fighting between the different areas in the community. However the council and the contractors have decided to employ a Liaison Officer from outside the community” (interview with councillor Jama 11 August 2006). Yet, youth in areas like Extension Six have promised more trouble if they are not given a greater share of the job opportunities.

Also, on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2007, the principal of Manzonthombo High School wrote a letter to Councillor Jama asking for the demolition of all shack structures around the school premises and the land integrated into school land. According to the principal the shack structures around the school makes the premises very untidy as an environment for learning. He added that there is a general fear by the staff that the inhabitants may supply learners with substances such as dagga and alcohol. Owners of these structures have resisted every discussion asking them leave the area. They argue that they can only relocate to formal houses. By the time of the writing of this report the dispute had not been resolved.

Again, another very significant cause of conflict in Mfuleni is the need for burial space. Though the only cemetery in the community is full, it is often flooded when it rains. Residents have been encouraged to use the Welmoed Cemetery in Eersteriver or any other cemetery in the city. Councillor Jama remarked that many people in the community are not comfortable with the decision. Residents argue that, according to tradition their loved ones must be buried where late relatives were buried. Secondly, there is a general complain of lack of resources to transport the remains of loved ones out of the community. Also, many argue that deceased left instructions behind that they should be buried near prior dead relatives. Consequently, many people insist on using the community’s burial ground despite the poor conditions of the site.

#### **3.4.2.2 Community, Police and Neighbourhood Watch Conflicts**

The picture of the Police force in the apartheid era is still very fresh on the minds of the youth of Mfuleni despite twelve years of democracy. Some residents still see the Police as serving a government that is against their wishes. Police Officers and Neighbourhood Watch (Bambanani) workers are in constant battles with the youth of Mfuleni especially in the informal areas. Common incidents are when Police Officers and Neighbourhood Watch Workers are on a patrol to close down shebeens and house searches. These exercises usually trigger stiff resistance from the youth who vent their anger by throwing stones at Police Officers and Neighbourhood Watch Workers. In very serious situations it leads to exchange of gunshots. This study discovered that, none of the 180 Police Officers lives in Mfuleni. “I cannot live here, it is very risky because the community view the Police as their enemies” said a Captain.

Residents argue that, violence against the Police is due to constant harassments, assaults and threats of arrests by the Police especially on the youth. Nonetheless, despite claims by the youth to justify their actions against the Police, this study argues that, the underlying reason is that many residents still see the Police not in the contemporary dispensation but the Police in the age of the repressive apartheid regime. However, one is compelled to assert that, twelve years is still very young for the community to see the Police as working for them. This is because the Police were the main mechanism used in implementing and enforcing the policies of the apartheid government that have caused untold suffering in the lives of the black majority. In addition, though the Police force is now serving a democratic regime, some Police Officers still exert some of the characteristics of Police Officers in the apartheid era. A lot of counselling needs to be done if the mindset of the people must be drilled to view the Police as working for them

#### **3.4.2.3 Taxi Drivers Association and the Traffic Police**

The reigning conflicts between the Taxi Drivers Association (TDA) in Mfuleni and the Traffic Police Officers may generate into a crisis if immediate actions are not taken to resolve the problem. In an eight man meeting with the members of the Taxi Drivers Association in Mfuleni, bitterness overshadowed the minds of the drivers as they recounted their plight in the hands of the Traffic Police Officers in the area. These drivers criticised the numerous road blocs mounted by Traffic Police Officers in the early hours of the day when residents are in a hurry to work and businesses. The Secretary General of the association mentioned with grief that they are tired of receiving complaints from passengers who arrive late at work or miss business appointments because of delays caused by Traffic Police Officers. As if that was not enough, they decried the indiscriminate impoundment of their vehicles obliging them to often pay fines ranging from R500 to R3000. In addition, these taxi drivers remarked that, Traffic Police Officers pay less attention to offences committed by drivers of big transport companies like Golden Arrow and Sibanya as well as illegitimate transporters who very often transport people on Bakies (Pickup) but always keep their eyes widely open on the activities of taxi drivers.

### **3.4.3 Intragroup Conflicts**

Though numerically small, intragroup conflicts in Mfuleni play a significant role in making the community unsafe thereby greatly affecting the development of the community. Prominent intragroup conflicts in the community are: Party conflicts and taxi violence.

#### **3.4.3.1 Intra Party Conflicts**

It is no secret that the ANC in Mfuleni is in crisis. The reigning rivalry between the two camps within the party that emerged prior to the last municipal elections is growing from strength to strength. It is the topic of discussion in many youth gatherings in the community. Before the municipal elections of March 2006, the ANC Party in Mfuleni was divided into two camps, one in favour of the former councillor and the other against him. On the day of the elections, scared of being defeated in the elections, the former councillor's camp deployed 40 Neighbourhood Watch Workers to disrupt the March 1<sup>st</sup> elections, but the act was frustrated by the vigilance of the Police. Since the last municipal elections, the antagonism between these rival groups

has created untold adverse effects in the administration of the community and development as a whole. This is greatly manifested in party and public meetings organised by the new administration. Disagreements between these two groups wrecks almost all public meetings geared at providing services to the masses. The flame is burning brightly in organisations like the Community Police Forum (CPF) and the Neighbourhood Watch in the community. Municipal Reports revealed that, in one of the meetings of the Community Police Forum held this year, heightened political disagreements compelled the chairman of the forum to pull out a firearm threatening to shot at his opponents (supporters of the new administration). The greatest challenge facing the current administration of Mfuleni is the stiff opposition from the faction led by the former councillor.

#### **3.4.3.2 Taxi Violence**

Though, taxi drivers at the meeting with the researcher claimed that absolute calm reigns in the industry, Police Reports argue that, the violent conflict within the industry in the Western Cape is fast gaining grounds within the industry in Mfuleni. According to Police Reports, the most recent incident occurred on Tuesday June 20, 2006 when the Police and a suspected taxi war hitman were engaged in an exchange of bullets. The drama started at 4.am when some Police Officers knocked at the door of the suspected hitman in Mfuleni. Hesitant to open, the suspect fired several shots at the closed door. The Police kicked the door open and confronted the suspect with several bullets killing the 25-year-old man. In the gun battle, three constables sustained bullet wounds. One was wounded in the ear the other was wounded in the right leg and the third officer was shot in his left hand. All three were rushed to the hospital for immediate medical attention. Police investigations revealed that the man was hired for R2000 to eliminate the unwanted enemies in the on going rivalry between the Cata and Codeta factions in the taxi industry in the Western Cape. A 38 special Taurus and a R5 short gun were discovered in the hitman's house after the battle.

### **3.5 Existing Strategies for Managing Conflicts in Mfuleni**



The following are the conflict management strategies in Mfuleni: the Police, the Neighbourhood Watch, the Community Police Forum and the Bundu Court. An analysis of the various measures depicts their effectiveness in reducing conflicts in the community as well as their shortcomings.

### **3.5.1 The Police**

Much has been said in the previous sections about the Police in Mfuleni. This section is basically on the measures used by the Police to reduce and prevent conflicts in the community and how effective are they. With a staff of 180 officers, the Police unit in Mfuleni carries out daily patrols targeted at notorious conflict areas in the community. On weekends the patrols are intensified with special focus on shebeens. They ensure that shebeens do not function after midnight. However, as mentioned earlier, often Police Officers on patrol confront stiff resistance from the owners of shebeens as well as their clients who are mostly youth. Also, some youth are recruited as informants to the Police. These employees are paid depending on the validity of the information delivered to Police and the risk attached to such information. Payment ranges from R100 to about R20000. Also, the Police conduct house searches in suspected areas especially areas noted for drug sale. In some instances bags of drugs and weapons such as unlicensed firearms are seized. In addition, they also carry out raids aimed at arresting drug lords.

Furthermore, the Communication Department of the Police organises workshops at schools to inform the learners on the effects of drugs and alcohol abuse and crimes. The Police also work in collaboration with the Community Police Forum and the Neighbourhood Watch to ensure that the rate of conflicts in the community is reduced to the minimum. Nonetheless, some inhabitants frankly testified that the presence of the Police in the community has greatly led to a reduction of rape incidents in the community. According to a Constable, much needs to be done, if conflicts should be reduced and prevented in the community but the Police unit is understaffed to perform this huge task.

### **3.5.2 The Community Police Forum (CPF)**

Created in 2005 as an integral part of crime prevention at the local level, the CPF is headed by a chairman under the supervision of the Station Commander. It aims to build relations between the community and the Police, promote accountability of the Police in the community and engage in partnership programmes with the Police to prevent conflicts, to monitor the quality of services provided by the Police and to facilitate joint problem identification and problem solving campaigns (Mohamed, 2003:19).

In December last year, the forum launched programmes such as the “Domestic Violence Week” against sexual abuse and violence against women and children; “Sports against Crime Week” and a cultural day with lunch served to the elderly people. Before the events flyers against conflicts were distributed to the population. The youth also took part in sporting activities to entertain the public. Also, during the events, problematic shebeens were closed down and roadblocks were also mounted to check the movement of criminals in and out of the community.

Reports from the Department of Social Crime at Mfuleni Police Station pointed out that about 80% of the population is not aware of the existence of the Community Police Forum. In a conversation with some of its members, it was revealed that since its creation the activities of the forum have been marred by the reigning political division within the ANC in the community. In addition, the chairman solely manages the activities of the organization. He controls the funds and makes decisions alone. As a result, many vital members have been forced to resign from the organisation. According to a Constable at the Police Station in Mfuleni, the members of CPF seldom attend meetings organised by the Station Commander on crime related issues in the community. They even refuse to take part in patrols with the Police to see for themselves the level of conflicts in the community. Many respondents desperately want the management of the Community Police Forum to be restructured as soon as possible.

### **3.5.3 The Neighbourhood Watch (Bambanani)**

“The Neighbourhood Watch is a conflict prevention programme where Police and the community jointly participate, co-operate and share in the responsibility to detect and prevent conflict in the community” (Shamie 2000:13). It came in to existence in

Mfuleni in 1999. The head of Bambanani remarked that, recruitment is strictly voluntary. He added that, volunteers are trained for 7 days after which they are issued a certificate and a uniform at the end of their training. Bambanani ensures that peace reigns in the community especially in notorious conflict areas like Westbank, Happyvalley, Driftsands and Fairdale. In this regard, they conduct patrols and close down shebeens identified as hideouts for criminals. The presence of this organisation is also greatly felt at educational institutions such as Mfuleni High School, Manzomthombo High School and Itsatsa Primary School. The principals of these institutions testified that the calm on their various premises is as a result of the presence of the Neighbourhood Watch Workers. In addition, many Police Officers applauded the commitment of the Neighbourhood Workers in assisting the Police to fight against conflicts in the community.

The head of the Neighbourhood Watch also reported that the organisation is facing a lot of difficulties to fight against conflicts in the community. Primarily, just like the Police, it is also understaffed to cover the entire community. This is as a result of the fact that recruitment is voluntary. Secondly, the workers often encounter stiff resistance from the public in executing their duties. In addition, there is lack of resources such as radios and firearms thus making the job to be very risky. Finally he concluded that the inaccessibility and darkness in some parts of the community also makes it greatly difficult to maintain peace and prevent conflicts.

#### **3.5.4 Bundu Court (Mob Justice)**

Bundu court has been a very old practice in South African communities. It is an informal method of resolving conflicts in the community. In the wake of the new era many people thought the practice was going to be abandoned. Strangely enough, according to Police Officials in the community, the practice is instead gaining more grounds thus comprising one of the major challenges faced by the Police. It is a process whereby mob justice is used to resolve conflicts in the community. That is, if a criminal is caught, the entire community comes out to jeer and stone the victim to death. Everybody is expected to participate no matter your relationship with the criminal. There is a possibility that the crowd may turn against you if it is realized you are sympathizing with the criminal during the process. A Police superintendent remarked that no matter how quick Police Officers reach the scene of the event, very

often they only meet the remains of the criminal. The community members do every thing to kill the victim as quickly as possible before the arrival of the Police. Many respondents mentioned that they prefer “Bundu Court” to the Police because they have on confidence in the Police. They added that, some criminals arrested by the police are seen again in the community in no distant time committing the same offence. This work gathered that the community members are bent on reducing and preventing conflicts by murder.

### **3.6 The Impacts of Conflicts in Mfuleni**

Conflicts have far more negative than positive impacts on all aspects of life (political, social and economic) in the community. Very seldom does the threat of conflict lead to positive effects. This section examines the impact of conflicts in Mfuleni on the offender, the victim, and the community as a whole. The alarming adverse effects of conflicts in Mfuleni are a wake up call for urgent measures to resolve the crisis in the community.

#### **3.6.1 The Offender**

The high rate of conflicts (mostly interpersonal conflicts) in Mfuleni does not leave the offender unaffected. In fact, the most remarkable effect is the high death rate of offenders in the community. Police Reports revealed that about 8 youth of both sexes but predominantly male die each month in interpersonal conflicts of theft, assault, burglary, and rape. According to some Police Officers, since the creation of the Mfuleni Police Station, on average, 2 youth die each week in conflicts. This occurs either in a shootout with the Police, or between members of different gangs. Many are also killed by mob violence (Bundu Court) especially in the informal areas. More so, it was gathered from questionnaires administered to some Police Officers that between 20 and 50 youth of Mfuleni are sent to prison every month. Though a few ex-convicts interviewed pretentiously reported that it is nice to be in prison because of the high cost of living out of prison, respondents remarked that many youth in the community return from prison as hardened criminals. In prison, they learn new techniques of robbery, theft, rape and how to resist the Police. They also learn how to consume very hard substances. It was reported that that three-quarters of the youth of Mfuleni leaving prison have been on drugs. Also, some offenders return to the

community infected with a variety of ailments like skin diseases, mental disorder and HIV and AIDS. Consequently, these ex inmates find it very difficult to perform any economic activity for their good and that of their dependants. Furthermore, many die in prison either as a result of trying to escape or from diseases. This study also discovered that some of those sent to prison have families to take care of. While in prison their children face striking poverty situations at home. In the course of struggling to survive in the absence of a father, these children become a problem in the community by taking part in minor thefts either in neighbouring houses or shops. Furthermore, many offenders have sustained injuries in many parts of their bodies either as a result of trying to escape after committing an offence or gunshot and knife stab wounds in acts of violence. (Others have become permanently disabled; some cannot walk without using crutches or a wheelchair). In addition, respondents remarked that many find it very uncomfortable to move around and associate freely with others in the community because of the stigma attached to ex-inmates. He or she is overwhelmed with a feeling of guilt as one who inflicted pain on innocent members of the community and therefore feels unfit to be a member of the community. In a discussion with Councillor Fundile, he pointed out that a typical inmate in Mfuleni is released from prison with all the problems he went in with, plus a prison record that makes finding a job or a place to live even harder. He added that many ex-inmates in Mfuleni are confronted with problems like unemployment and homelessness. According to some Police Officers, these ex-inmates are left with no option than to recommit more crimes in order to survive. Very often they are rearrested and sent to prison again. Unfortunate offenders fall in the hands of the protagonists of mob justice and are seriously injured or murdered even before the arrival of Police Officers to the scene.

Furthermore, conflicts have greatly affected the literacy level of youth in Mfuleni. Drugs and alcohol consumption, possession of (criminogenic) weapons such as knives and firearms, low levels of self-control, rebellious attitudes and beliefs favouring law violation results to poor school performance, attendance, commitment and finally dropout of many learners from school. Questionnaires and group discussions revealed that, many offenders involved in conflicts in interpersonal conflicts in the community are school dropouts. Also, in the focus group discussions, it was indicated that some youth are scared to walk freely during the day especially after committing an offence.

They are scared of not being arrested or killed by mob action. These youth resort to voluntarily imprisonment at their homes during the day and only go out at night. Furthermore, it was also discovered that many youth seek solace in excessive drug and alcohol consumption to enable them to cope with the varied problems of the day. Unfortunately, and all too frequently, they find misery and degradation instead. Police Reports revealed that drug intoxication leads to deterioration of personality accompanied by a decline in moral and ethical standards which are ultimately expressed in diverse forms of criminal behaviour such as robbery, common assault suicide and murder.

In sum, the lifestyle of a delinquent youth in Mfuleni is one filled with emptiness and hopelessness. According to them, being at home just does not fit. They feel very awkward living 'at home.' Respondents also revealed that many youth of Mfuleni really do not live in any one place but find themselves 'staying' at friend's, relative's, or new acquaintance's residence or temporary quarters. They gather in groups and travel from one location to another looking for something to do'. They hang out at the taxi rank, on various unmarked or 'untagged' street corners and at the shebeens and vacant lots, during any unscheduled hour of the day. The current curriculum consists of sex, violence, money, drugs and alcohol and derogatory forms of music. "They are disrespectful of the lives and rights of others. Stripped of their individuality and self-respect, and armed with the knowledge of belonging to a group, the enactment of violence and brutality becomes a frequent experience in their lives. Death is a daily reality, as is jail, violence, sickness, mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction and homelessness." (Interview with Mr Abraham -an electrician in Mfuleni on September 5, 2006)

### **3.6.2 The Victim**

The impacts of conflicts in Mfuleni have a higher toll on the victims than the offenders. To measure the feelings of safety in the community, respondents were asked the following questions at interviews and focus group discussions.

1. How would you rate the level of conflicts in the community?
2. Do like living in Mfuleni? Yes or No? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Do you think that Mfuleni is a good place to bring up children?

4. How would you describe the attitudes of your neighbours towards strangers?
5. Would you some day like to move to another neighbourhood?
6. Is there any area in the community that you would be afraid to walk alone at night?
7. How likely is it that a person walking around the community either in the day or at night will be held up or attacked?
8. Do you make sure that all the doors in your home are locked when you leave for even a few minutes?

Answers to these questions revealed that the community is perceived as unsafe for habitation. Inhabitants expressed anger, disgust, frustration, helplessness, sadness, pity, fear and a desperate desire to take matters in their own hands. Conflicts (mostly interpersonal) inflict immeasurable physical harm to inhabitants of the community. Many have been and are still being murdered, assaulted, stabbed, shot, and raped either on the streets or at homes. As a result some have been transformed to conditions of permanent disability. “My brother was shot and killed last year by armed men.” said Andile of Extension Three rolling up his left trouser to show a fresh bullet wound.

Some staff members of Hope organization revealed that, apart from street violence, domestic violence has caused many women in Mfuleni to feel worthless, degraded, humiliated, ashamed and physically disabled. They also added that, many children in homes where violence occur have developed a range of psychological problems very similar to psychological trauma. They also suffer from depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, phobias and withdrawal. Again, some are prone in to economic hardship. (Interview with a nurse at Mfuleni Clinic on August 14, 2006). In addition, respondents also remarked that, many children from violent and single parent homes are at high risks of drug and alcohol abuse and juvenile delinquency, including taking part in conflicts such as burglary, prostitution, running away, drug use, and assault. These children have also learnt that violence is normative. They believe that it is appropriate for men to be aggressive and domineering. They view women as powerless and deserving of abuse.

Also, respondents pointed out that, offenders also inflict huge pain, suffering, and financial loss on members of the community through theft of individual possessions

such as cash, cell phones and jewelleries and electronic appliances like TVs and DVDs and motor cars and motor cycles.

More so, some parents reported being inundated with blames by friends and other members of the community for the actions of their child or children. This makes them embarrassed, helpless and lack of what to do. Some acknowledge the fact that their child is a criminal and even a member of a gang but ignored the problem for fear of retaliation by the child or his gang.

### **3.6.3 The Community**

The alarming rate of conflict and its tremendous effects have generated an atmosphere of fear in Mfuleni. Citizens are unable to move freely in the community even during the day. As the researcher went round the community conducting interviews, he got advice from some very honest and responsible members of the community to avoid very notorious areas like Burundi, Shukushukuma, Westbank, Happy Valley, and Driftsand. There is a possibility that you can be attacked and even murdered at any time in the day in these areas. How the researcher succeeded in conducting research in these areas without being attacked is what many in the community could not imagine.

It was also discovered that, the fear that reigns in Mfuleni has made the citizens to be very scared of strangers. In Mfuleni, a stranger is seen as intending harm. The popular view of the criminal is that he is a stranger or an outsider, someone different from those who fear conflict. Ironically, Police Officers remarked that, significant proportions of the most-feared conflicts (interpersonal conflicts) are performed by people with whom the victims are already acquainted- spouses, relatives, friends, and lovers. The climate of fear has given rise to very minimum interpersonal trust among community members. As a result, barriers have been erected between long-time residents of the community and newcomers to the area thereby greatly eroding social solidarity in the community. However, respondents remarked that, the problem in Mfuleni is not the seriousness of the different types of interpersonal conflicts but rather the unpredictability of the actions of offenders. Furthermore, many people in the community have been forced to change their behaviour in an attempt to minimize vulnerability. Some have resorted to staying at home at night to avoid predators, others do not visit friends or attend meetings especially at night in order to avoid



attacks. Many households have improved the protection of their home. While the poor can only buy additional locks, the rich especially those in Garden City have ADT alarm system and watch dogs in their homes. Judging from the type of precautions people take in the community, they mostly seem to fear personal attacks than the loss of property through theft. Women expressed more fear than men and most of them have engaged in avoidance behaviour.

The impact on businesses is tremendous. It affects not only the proprietors but consumers as well. Burglary and shoplifting are the two prominent conflicts faced by business owners in the community. The proprietress of Elkana Butchery reported a loss of items worth about R25000 as a result of burglaries that reached immeasurable heights during the three month Security Guards strike in South Africa. Also, some youth have been forced to go out of small trading businesses because of incessant burglaries by delinquent youth. This has increased the number of unemployed youth in the community and consequently the rate of conflict.

Shoplifting has meted huge financial loss on shop owners in the community. Most affected shops are Rainbow Wholesalers, Score and Mfuleni Cash and Carry. All three reported an average weekly loss of about R3000 as a result of shoplifting. In this regard some shop owners have upgraded the protection of their businesses. But this does not go without inflicting additional costs on their businesses. For example, the owner of Rainbow Wholesaler and the Manager of Score both revealed that about R2000 is spent monthly to maintain security on their businesses. But the burden is shouldered by innocent community members through increased prices of daily commodities. In addition, businesses are forced to close as early as six o'clock daily leaving the consumers with very little chances to shop after this hour. Also, it gives citizens fewer reasons to be on the streets after six o'clock making the streets even more deserted. This has increased the prominence of shebeens as the only places where people converge in the evening consequently inflaming the rate of conflict in the community. More so, households are also affected by the cost of additional security in their homes such as installation of burglar alarms, watchdogs, and additional locks on doors and bars on windows. This leads to a reduction in the wages earned by the few employed.

Furthermore, Councillor Fundile revealed that the disagreements between the two factions in the ANC in the community greatly affects efforts aimed at developing the community. As a consequence of the crisis, unanimity on issues to improve the welfare of the inhabitants especially with regards to prevention and reduction of conflicts is hardly attained. It has also greatly affected the delivery of services promised by the ANC in the wake of democracy. More so, it has led to heightened hatred between members of the ANC party in Mfuleni.

Also, respondents also indicated that the disagreement between the taxi drivers and the Traffic Police Officers adversely affects those who use public transport to work, school and businesses. Thus, many people reach their work places or business not early enough in the morning. Many reported unable to meet up with appointments because of delays caused by Traffic Police Officers. Also important, is the impact of the conflict between the community and the Police on the community as a whole. This greatly hinders the cooperation the Police require from the community to fight against conflicts. Further more, respondents remarked that because most people hesitate to report conflicts to the Police due to lack of confidence in the Police, offenders take advantage of such weakness to commit more acts of deviance.

#### **3.6.4 The State**

Deviance can be extremely expensive for society (in both the literal and figurative senses). A tremendous amount of money, time, and energy is spent every year on law enforcement, courts, probation and parole institutions, programs, and agencies whose sole purpose is to attempt to control, treat, and prevent social deviance. Therefore community conflicts costs the government of South Africa millions of Rand yearly.

In sum, conflicts mostly interpersonal have adverse effects not only on the offenders but to the community as a whole. The fear of conflict compels citizens to change their behavior in an attempt to minimize vulnerability. It enhances their suspicion of strangers, and it undermines the social fabric of community life.

However, despite the negative effects of conflict, it may also serve some potentially positive functions. According to Durkheim (1984) in Colin's *The Impact of Crime* (1975:35), crime is positively functional for a society because it provides an occasion for people to unite against a common enemy- the law violator. To an extent

Durkheim's views can be true when examined in the context of the Bundu Court (mob justice). Though it is illegal and violent, it plays a role in bringing the community together to fight a common enemy (the law violator). This study also discovered that the high rate of conflict in Mfuleni does not only stimulate involvement in discussions geared towards reducing it but also increases knowledge, improves the quality of decisions and tend to make possible the readjustment of norms in the community.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The history of Mfuleni depicts a community that was very calm and peaceful at the initial years of its creation, today it is one of the townships in South Africa reputed for high level insecurity. Different types of conflicts, predominantly interpersonal conflicts are a daily occurrence in the community, orchestrated mostly by the youth. So many causes and factors as well as impacts have been analysed in the previous chapters of this research. According to many respondents, the situation has reached a crisis level affecting not only the offender, his family and dependants but the entire community. Therefore, there is need for remedial actions to address the situation. President Thabo Mbeki stated that “this entails consideration of a range of strategies designed to address the perceived problems of communities from protecting potential and actual victims (who coincide over the phenomenon of multiple victimization) via situation measures, to helping or controlling offenders, reinvigorating informal social controls, and ensuring a correct fit between these and formal controls” (Cartwright, 2005:1). In other words, the focus is upon the need to reintegrate young people back into the community by mobilizing families, peers, neighbours, schools, places of employment and other community organizations Gilling, (1997: 199). It is in this regard that this research suggests a partnership between the government, the civil society and the community to seek ways of ameliorating the situation. The term “civil society” embraces a wide range of individuals and institutions that play important roles in managing conflicts. These includes; religious, traditional and business leaders, women’s organizations, scholars and intellectuals, and NGO’s (IPA/OAU, 1996:1). This measure entails careful negotiation and planning between these organizations, the government, the local leaders and opinion formers in Mfuleni to develop projects to reduce and prevent conflicts in the community. Clearly, this approach will depend to a great extent on the current situation, the history, local skills, resources, indigenous knowledge and the concerns of the people as a whole. The *raison d’etre* is to empower the community members with the capacity to resolve internal conflicts themselves peacefully, and to resolve other challenges facing the community without external assistance (Higson 2002: 54). Primarily, the new partnership should focus on addressing issues such as:

#### **4.1 Resolving the ANC infighting in Mfuleni**

A democracy needs strong and sustainable political parties with the capacity to represent citizens and demonstrate their ability to govern for the public good. But the

reverse is true in Mfuleni. The increasing discontent between the two factions within the ANC party does not only hinder measures to fight against conflicts in the community but also service delivery as a whole. Until the writing of this report, the crisis had not been resolved, rather it was growing from strength to strength. Therefore, civil society organizations, the community as a whole and the Western Cape Executive Committee of the ANC should ensure that peace reigns within the party so as to enable the smooth implementation of projects to reduce and prevent conflicts in the community. This study strongly asserts that, until the disagreement within the ANC is resolved, efforts to make the community a safe place as well as the delivery of services will be futile.

#### **4.2 Improve Community-Police Relations**

Conflict prevention and reduction will consequently be far more effective if the opportunities for conflicts are eliminated and if the offenders believe that the opportunities are scarce. Obtaining and maintaining the involvement of the community is an absolute prerequisite for effective proactive policing. The prevention of crime is the responsibility and duty of every member of the community. The extent to which the Police are able to obtain the respect and cooperation of the public will largely determine how successful they will be in controlling conflicts. Purposeful, unbiased and fair action toward every member of the community will encourage the public to respect and work with the Police. Conversely, the impact of conflict is much greater when Police – community relations are poor. Good Police –community relations are an absolute prerequisite for effective cooperation between the public and the Police, and cooperation between the two is essential in the management of conflicts. The Police rely on the public for information about conflict and the public rely on the Police for protection against conflict. Therefore, a partnership of government, civil society and the community of Mfuleni should also pay great attention to improve the deteriorating relationship between the Police and the inhabitants of Mfuleni if measures to fight against conflicts should produce expected results. In addition to other measures to be taken in to consideration, acceptable procedures for grievances against members of the Police must be instituted and publicized. Community members and leaders should be consulted in this regard. Also, respondents remarked that, the manner in which the public can lodge complaints must

be as simple and as 'friendly' as possible, and must be widely advertised. They also suggested that ongoing in service training should be given at 'ground level' to those officers who deal directly with the public. The Police must be seen to serve the community (Glanz 1994:70). Further more, urgent measures should be taken to resolve the existing crisis within the Community Police Forum and encourage the community to have trust on the organization. Precisely, the current leadership should be dissolved for a more democratic one. Ordinary citizens must be seen to be represented on this forum if it has to be credible.

### **4.3 Alternatives to Imprisonment**

Some scholars of conflict (especially interpersonal conflicts) have traditionally considered conflict control and management to be almost exclusively the task of the criminal justice system. Accordingly, the extent to which conflict is successfully controlled will be a function of the efficiency of the system. Few would now deny that the criminal justice system in fact plays a minor role in conflict prevention. This study is far from claiming that the criminal justice system plays no part in conflict control at all, rather it argues that it has a limited impact on managing and preventing conflicts especially at community level. The criminal justice system is undoubtedly a tool, which is used and should be used in the fight against conflict, but to expect every sentence to have a deterrent effect and contribute to a reduction in conflict has over and over been proved to be futile. One of the constituting ingredients of a sentence is that it should serve the interests of the community. Conversely, ex- inmates return to Mfuleni well polished to terrorize the community far more than they did before their initial arrest.

In his *Diversion of Juvenile Offenders from Criminal Justice System* (1978:47) Allison, argues that the process of arrest, trial and conviction changes the self-image of the offender. He increasingly sees himself as a delinquent, and others respond to him as if he has always been delinquent. There is certainly some evidence that such stigmatisation can intensify a deviant's self image and lead to further acts of deviance. In addition, Thorpe, (1978:64) argues that "it was recognized by some, even at such an early stage in the history of penology, that successive contact with penal institutions had a damaging effect, and seemed to increase the incidence of repeated criminal acts". More so, the needs of the released offender are many and varied and

depend on the family support networks that are available to the ex-offender at the time of release. These needs must be met at community level. It is clear that responding to this needs calls for a multidisciplinary approach whereby various disciplines pool resources and take a concerted comprehensive approach to the reintegration of ex-offenders (Glanz: 1994: 71).

Nevertheless, as earlier mentioned these reasons are not in any way aimed at abolishing the existence of the criminal justice system. Expert opinion has it that conflict prevention can only be achieved successfully through community action. The community must be empowered to say “no” to conflict through alternative measures to imprisonment. Alternatives to imprisonment have been operating as a viable option in many other countries thus their vitality is indispensable in redressing the reigning crisis in Mfuleni. Therefore, the new partnership should consider alternatives to imprisonment such as Community Service, Immediate Treatment and Community Supervision if conflicts should be prevented and reduced in Mfuleni.

#### **4.3.1 Community Service as a sentencing option**

This is a system whereby persons found guilty of less serious offences are handled in the community where they must do some kind of community work. Briefly Community Service Orders (C.S.Os) is a system whereby the offender surrenders his leisure time to perform service with a community organization. At best community service is an exciting departure from the traditional penal treatment. For example, a person aged 17 years or over, convicted of an imprisonable offence, may be ordered with his consent to undertake unpaid work for any total number of hours between 40 and 240 within a period of one year. For Community Service to be an effective measure in reducing conflict in the community, Harding (1978, 164-170) argues that it should not conflict with the offender’s work, education or religious commitments. In a focus group discussion, respondents added that if an offender fails to comply with the Community Service Order he may be fined without prejudice to the continuance of the order, or the court may revoke it and deal with the original offence.

Respondents also pointed out that the success or failure of the treatment of offenders in the community will depend to a large extent on the cooperation of members of the public. According to the assistant to the Police Commissioner of Mfuleni, community service programmes require the cooperation of employers, people with whom

offenders come into contact in the work environment, family members and friends. It is therefore important to determine the public's perceptions of sentencing options, which include treatment in the community.

#### **4.3.2 Intermediate Treatment (IT)**

It is not the intention of this approach to completely relinquish the confinement of offenders. While minor offenders are punished within the community through community service programmes, those (offenders) who would in all probability, normally receive a sentence involving custodial care should be given Immediate Treatment (IT) to prevent them from reaching a stage where institutional care and control is required. "Intermediate Treatment is a sentencing possibility by the penal system, which would have the effect of removing the offender from his immediate home environment for a brief period or succession of brief periods of time" (Thorpe, 1978: 65-80). It is a service, which supplies care, control and treatment specifically to high-risk offenders within a non-custodial context. Activities at institutions providing Immediate Treatment include: remedial education, trade training, group work programmes, and leisure activities. The staff of an institution offering Immediate Treatment is made up of teachers, social workers, craft and trade instructors and volunteers. Conlin (1975:35) argues that, although placing the offender under the care of some one or some institution may reduce public fear, this may also reinforce the stereotype of the offender as outsider and outsider as offender.

#### **4.3.3 Community Supervision (CS)**

Community Supervision (CS) includes all the programs for managing the offender while he or she is serving some portion of a sentence in the community or receiving Intermediate Treatment. The primary purpose of Community Supervision is risk control to minimize the probability that the offender will commit a new offense while being punished in the community. It must focus on implementing new strategies for handling offenders, ranging from more effective surveillance to better information systems to more appropriate interventions. According Todd et al (1983:5-11) to improve Community Supervision, the community must first understand the rationale for its existence and its intended mission.



#### **4.4 Educational Intervention (EI)**

School is an antidote to the problems of young people. It possesses a great power to socialize and 'mould' young minds. One important reason why education has increasingly been the role of 'antidote' to the problems of deviance is the mounting evidence that children who are delinquents are also very often school failures. Education instils habits of restraint, punctuality, discipline and obedience on the minds of young people (Reynolds et al. 1978: 21-22). In order for institutions of learning in Mfuleni to realize these objectives, the government should embark on the deployment of more teachers at institutions of learning in the community. This will redress the existing problem of a teacher teaching more than 50 learners in a class. Apart from shading the stress on the teacher, he or she can quickly identify any act of misbehaviour in a small class and apply immediate action to correct the learner. Being alert and recognizing the symptoms, teachers can prevent the learner from growing up as a problem to the school and the community as a whole.

Also, the Education Department should ensure that attractive courses to capture the interests of learners are taught at schools. For those who somehow manage to resist the attractions of school an ever-increasing army of educational welfare officers, school based social workers and educational psychologists should be immediately contacted to help rather than force the learners to adjust to the demands of school.

Although the great majority of research work reinforces the view that the family background and vaguely defined 'social deprivation' are the causes of pupil problems, on the other hand the school system itself may be an important influence to deviance. Consequently, the Education Department should also embark on measures of increasing the accountability of schools such as increasing the frequency of school inspectors, encouraging teachers' unions to root out their less competent colleagues and encourage schools to always publish their results in the community (Reynolds et al. 1978: 28-43)

Furthermore, Student Representative Councils (SRCs) at the high schools should be encouraged by their respective administration to raise awareness through workshops on the impacts of conflicts as well as techniques on how to deal with conflicts at

school and the community at large. They should also develop recreational activities that are exciting and entertaining.

#### **4.5 Improve Parental Control**

This study gathered that unsupervised youth in the community are far more likely to take part in conflicts than those who are well supervised. In this regard, organizations or institutions involved in the fight against conflicts and improving the living standards of the inhabitants in the community should pay special attention in improving parental control. According to one of the vice principals of Manzonthombo High School, one of the ways in which families might attempt to prevent deviance is to create clearly defined and meaningful social roles for its younger members. He adds that societal and parental expectations should be consistent, well defined, and clearly articulated to children. Whether both parents are present at home or not appears less important than the quality of the relationship established between the child and the parent(s) who is or are present. Respondents also argue that one parent who is intimately involved in the supervision of the child's behaviour may be more effective in preventing delinquency than two parents who show little or no interest in the child's behaviour or who are distracted from their parental responsibilities by marital stress or poverty. Therefore, parental education is an absolute necessity if conflicts in Mfuleni must be reduced and prevented.

Furthermore, this study also gathered ( especially from the elderly) that the high rate of conflicts in the community is partly as a result of the collapse of the traditional African system of control by parents due to exposure to the "white man's culture" (modernization). Thus according to some elders in the community, the African culture, specifically the traditional African system of control must be encouraged and strengthened if conflicts should reduce in the community. They added that, this can be done through the establishment and consolidation of stronger binding and stabilizing elements in the community and a regulated social life based on closely bound groups and assured social values.

#### **4.6 Area Committees (AC)**

Area Committees play a significant role in the administration of the community of Mfuleni. Their presence in all the sub areas in the community should be used to greatly reduce conflicts in the community. Area Committees should be encouraged to visit ‘trouble homes’ that is, violent homes or those with children who are a threat to peace in the community. They should assist parents of such homes to resolve family problems as well as assist them to regulate the behaviours of their children. They should also inform parents if their child or children are a threat in the community or seen hanging around with gangsters. It was discovered that often most parents do not know if their child or children are criminals until they are arrested by the Police or beaten by a crowd. In this regard the members of Area Committees should educate parents during public meetings organised in their respective areas to pay special attention to what their children and those of their neighbours are doing. In this way signs of deviance can be quickly detected and measures of intervention may be taken before it reaches a crisis level.

#### **4.7 Learning to cope with conflicts**

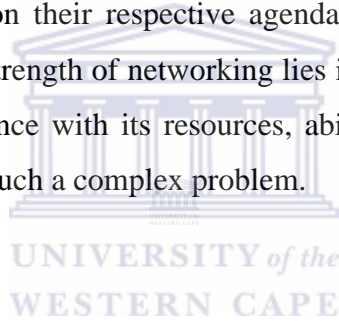
The sensitisation of violent conflicts by the Media in South Africa tends to heighten the public’s level of fear. Different organizations and the Media especially the community radio and the community newspaper should embark on a sensitisation campaign to enlighten the population of Mfuleni and South Africa at large on the chances of becoming the victim of different types of conflicts. This should be supported by practical information on ways to increase one’s personal safety and reduce one’s risk of victimization. They should be taught how to cope with the consequences of victimization and the fear of possible victimization. The impact of conflict in terms of level of fear and changes in behaviour is greatest when an individual feels vulnerable and that he or she has no control over the risk of victimization. While it is doubtlessly true that not all attacks can be prevented, the likelihood of victimization can be greatly reduced by applying a few basic principles of prevention. When this information is made known, it is tantamount to empowering individuals to take control of their situation, at least to some extent, in terms of victimization. Respondents remarked that vulnerable and fearful groups such as children, women and the elderly can greatly benefit from receiving user-friendly basic conflict prevention information. It should be noted that for victims, it is not just

injury, material loss and the trauma surrounding the event that must be dealt with, but also the impact of contact with the Criminal Justice System (i.e. the police and the courts).

Secondly, the Media should focus on reporting achievements by youth in all aspects of life within and out of the community so as to encourage those who have hidden talents but lack the capacity to exploit them.

#### **4.8 The role of Community Based Organizations**

Another way of confronting the issue of conflicts is through networking between the different sectors in the community. Organization within the community such as the SRCs, youth groups, church organizations, teachers' organizations, the police, NGO's, welfare agencies and other associations should include conflict prevention and reduction programmes on their respective agendas and also publish individual achievements realized. The strength of networking lies in the fact that each sector can take up the issue in accordance with its resources, abilities and audience. This is a powerful way of addressing such a complex problem.



#### **4.9 Poverty Alleviation**

Poverty is one of the major reasons why the youth in Mfuleni are conflict driven. For the youth and inhabitants of Mfuleni as a whole, poverty means difficulty in making a living as well as lack of basic services. In other words poverty means hunger, joblessness, poor wages, lack of shelter, water, electricity, education, medical care, lack of representation and freedom and powerlessness. Thus, a partnership between the government, the civil society and the community as a whole should develop projects to skilfully empower community members to gain access to resources to earn an income. Projects should also be initiated for the provision of basic social necessities predominantly shelter, electricity water and health. They should also be empowered to take active part in decisions that affect their well-being.

#### **4.10 Recreational Facilities and Activities**

It was discovered that one of the most significant reasons why the youth in Mfuleni spend most of their time at shebeens where many learn acts of deviance is due to the absence of recreational facilities and activities in the community. Therefore organizations and the municipality should consider the availability of facilities like playgrounds, parks and pools in the community if conflicts should be reduced. They should also actively engage the youth in recreational activities like sports and music through after school music and dancing programmes like what Nobantu Centre is currently concerned with or sports and music competitions between the different areas in the community.

#### **4.11 Improve Neighbourhood Watch**

Among other objectives, the Neighbourhood Watch is intended to prevent conflict by enhancing surveillance and other opportunity reducing measures, and by building and exploiting informal social controls. However, it was discovered that the numerous problems faced by the organization hinders it from achieving these desired objectives. Respondents greatly applauded the efforts made by the organization in the fight against crimes in the community but argued that their achievements can be more extensive if there is adequate staff, at least a minimum remuneration and the provision of resources like vehicles and radios. Thus the general impression is that, if given the necessary assistance, the Neighbourhood Watch can greatly assist the Police in reducing and preventing conflicts in the community. According to respondents, financial and material support is greatly needed from the Department of Community Safety and organizations involved in combating conflicts in South African communities.

#### **4.12 The Case of Shebeens**

Historically, shebeens have been very instrumental in fuelling conflicts in the communities especially in the townships. The situation is no different in Mfuleni. More than half of the respondents blamed shebeen operators for greatly exacerbating conflicts in the community. Paradoxically, raids by the Police and Neighbourhood Watch Workers to close down shebeens instead results to more conflicts that often give rise to shootouts and knife stabbing. Though shebeens are seen as a major cause of conflict in the community, this study gathered that many households are able to

withstand the striking poverty situation in the community from what they make from the business. This research argues that a more subtle approach could be used to influence shebeen operators in the community to discourage them from the sale of liquor to youth below 18 years old and to open the doors of their businesses only before midnight. Also, Shebeeen operators should form an integral part in the fight against conflicts by actively involving them in all the conflict prevention and reduction projects in the community, such as “business against crime”.

In sum, it is extremely unfortunate that post apartheid Mfuleni is clouded by fear due to the high level of conflicts in the community. However, this study argues that a partnership approach between the government, the civil society and the community is indispensable if conflict has to be reduced and prevented. In other words, unless the community is mobilized to take actions against conflict and empower themselves to respond collectively to the threat of conflict, conflict will continue to destroy the essence of social life in Mfuleni. The table below is an illustration of the conflict situation in Mfuleni. It looks at the causes, factors impacts, contemporary measures as well as recommended measures to prevent and reduce the crisis in the community.

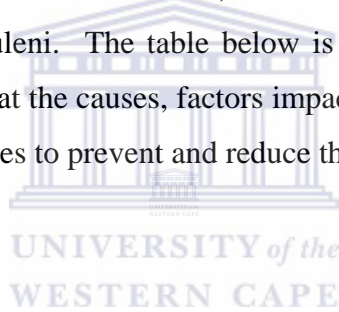


Table 6. Summary of conflict situation in Mfuleni

Causes	Factors	Conflicts	Actors in the community to reduce and prevent conflict.	Impacts	Recommendations
Poverty Urbanization History of Violence Poor parental control Peer pressure	Shebeen	Burglary	The Police	<b>On the offender</b> Death, injury, disability, prison, school dropout, diseases, stigma, fear to walk freely in the community, Depression, and unemployment	Resolve the ANC infighting in Mfuleni. Improve community-police relation Alternatives to Imprisonment Community Supervision Educational Intervention Improve Parental Control Area Committees Learning to cope with conflicts Networking Poverty Alleviation Recreational Facilities and activities Improve Neighbourhood Watch Adopt peaceful methods to manage Shebeens
	Poor community policing	Robbery	Community Police Forum	<b>On the victim</b> Death, injury, disability diseases, financial loss, loss of property, extra cost on security, fear, humiliation and worthlessness.	
	Poor prison services	Shoplifting	Neighbourhood watch (Bambanani)		
	Drug and alcohol abuse	Murder	Mob justice (Bundu Court)		
	Gender inequality	Assault			
	Lack of recreational facilities and activities	Rape			
	Illicit income generating activities	School conflicts			
	Possession of illegal firearms and sharp weapons	Marital disputes			
	Fragile Homes	Dating conflicts			
	Gang Culture	Conflicts over resources			
The Mass Media	Police and community conflicts		<b>On the Community</b> Atmosphere of distrust and distaste. Adverse effects on service delivery.		
Darkness	Taxi drivers and police conflicts		<b>On the State</b> Cost of ensuring peace and security in the community and the country as a whole.		
Low rate of crime reporting	Political party conflicts				
Weekend dance	Taxi violence				

Source: Summary of research findings.

## Conclusion

The fact that apartheid lasted for the duration it did, was as a result of the high degree of violence that was used by the regime to enforce and implement its policies. On the other hand its victims- “the black majority” did not fold their arms but also used violent methods to make their cries heard nationally and internationally. Thus, the entire apartheid era was made up of violence and counter violence. In addition, the deplorable living conditions in the townships made interpersonal conflicts of murder, rape, arson assault, armed robbery and burglary daily activities. In 1994, the unbearable rate of violence coupled with pressure from the international community, compelled the apartheid government to hold democratic elections that brought the ANC to power. Undeniably, the 1994 democratic elections freed the people of South Africa especially the black majority from the evils and horrors of the apartheid regime. The general expectation was a peaceful and secured democratic South Africa. Conversely, contemporary violent conflicts especially in the townships have deprived millions of South Africans from enjoying the long fought democracy that claimed the lives of thousands of South Africans especially the black majority. “What a shocking country we have become where even the youngest child is no longer safe...what is wrong with this country that people are not allowed to earn an honest day’s living....what is really frightening is that the grossly abnormal has become the norm”. (Cape Argus, June 12, 2006). Expressions like this and many others fill the pages in the local newspapers and make headlines on television broadcast. Today South Africa is one of the most violent countries in the world. Why are conflicts increasing instead of decreasing in the new South Africa? What are the effects on the youth who are said to be protagonists of conflicts in the communities of South Africa? These are the questions that comprised this study.

Though conflict is rated very high in present day South Africa, it differs in nature, causes, impacts and frequency from one community to the next. In this regard, this study exclusively examined the nature, causes, and impacts of conflicts in the community of Mfuleni. After a thorough review of secondary data that laid the theoretical foundation of the research, empirical study was based on interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions. The study discovered that, murder, rape, theft, burglaries, arson, marital disputes, school conflicts, dating violence, conflict over resources, community -police conflicts, prostitution related conflicts, intra party conflicts and taxi drivers’ conflicts constitute the alarming rate of conflicts in the



community of Mfuleni. The study also gathered that, poverty, urbanization, history of violence, poor parental control and peer pressure are the main causes of conflicts in the community. However, respondents argue that, without the strong contribution of factors such as the operation of shebeens, drug and alcohol abuse, possession of illegal firearms and sharp weapons, poor community policing, poor correctional services, low rate of crime reporting, the mass media, gang culture, fragile homes, illicit generating income activities, lack of recreational facilities, jealousy, hatred and gender inequality the level of conflicts in Mfuleni should not have attained its present magnitude. Nonetheless, the reigning conflicts have caused and are still causing very grievous effects on the inhabitants of Mfuleni. With regard to the offenders, many have been injured, permanently disabled, others have died, many are serving long prison terms and some have dropped out of school. On the part of the victims, many have been raped, murdered, suffered financial losses, loss of property, and some have been forced to change their ways of living. To the community, conflicts have greatly affected the delivery of services. Also, an atmosphere of absolute distrust and distaste reigns in the community. With regard to the state as a whole huge amount of money is spent to maintain the Police and the judicial system.

This work assumes that, despite the historical and present causes coupled with the factors responsible for the high rate of conflicts in Mfuleni, the root causes are the policies of the colonial regimes (Dutch and British) of South Africa exacerbated by segregationist policies of the 1948-1994 apartheid government that focused on enriching the minority at the detriment of the majority.

Therefore, in order to improve the situation, this study argues that, a partnership between the government of South Africa, the civil society and the community of Mfuleni is indispensable. This partnership should be able to establish measures to fight against conflicts in the community thereby empowering the community members to be capable of preventing and resolving disputes themselves. Primarily special attention should be focused on resolving the conflict within the ANC party in Mfuleni, improve the relationship between the community and the Police, poverty alleviation, apply alternatives to imprisonment, provide resources to the Neighbourhood Watch, provide recreational facilities and activities, educate parents on how to regulate the behaviours of their children, teach the community members

how to cope with conflicts and ensure that schools have sufficient teachers so that deviance can be easily identified and rectified.



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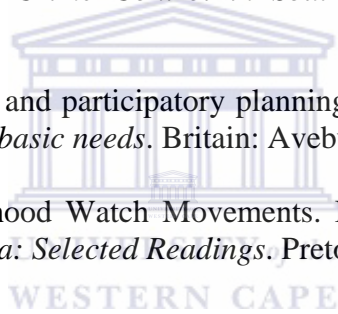
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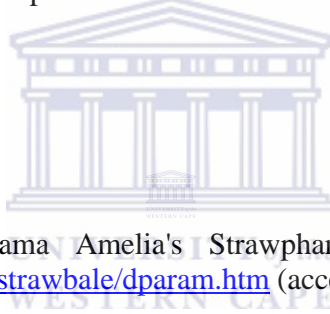
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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix .1**

#### **Letter of Consent**

I .....herby agree to assist LM Njomo in his research on “the Effects of Conflicts on the Youth of Mfuleni. I agree that the information I provide can be used as a written source and published if necessary.

.....  
Participant

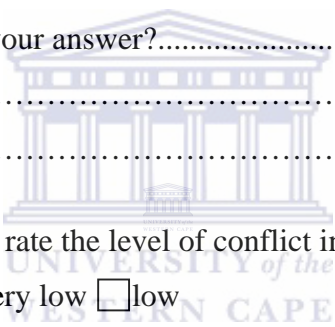
.....  
Researcher



**Appendix 2. Questionnaire administered to the Police in Mfuleni**

Thank you very much for agreeing to assist me with this research. Please read all questions and instructions carefully before you fill in the questionnaire. This questionnaire is anonymous. For reasons of confidentiality, you are requested not to write your name on the questionnaire, and therefore answer the questions as honest as possible.

1. Age.....
2. Sex male female
3. Position.....
4. In your view, what is the estimated population of the community Mfuleni?  
.....
5. What is the estimated population of the following groups in the community?
  - a) Adults - a) Males .....b) females.....
  - b) Youth - a) Males.....b) females .....
  - c) Children -a) Males .....b) females.....
6. When was Mfuleni Police Station created?.....
7. Do you live in Mfuleni? Yes No  
Please give reason(s) for your answer?.....  
.....  
.....
8. In your view, how can you rate the level of conflict in the community?  
Very high  high very low low
9. In your opinion, which group mostly take part in conflicts in the community?
  - a) Males 5-14 years old14-35 years old35 years old and above
  - b) Females 5-14 years old14-35 years old35 years old and above
- 10 Indicate the days of the week during which conflicts take place most?  
.....  
.....
11. Which sections of the community are conflict driven?.....  
.....  
.....
12. Are there any gangs in the community?  No Yes  
Please give reason(s) for your answer? .....
13. Based on your experience do many people report offenders to the police?



Yes  No

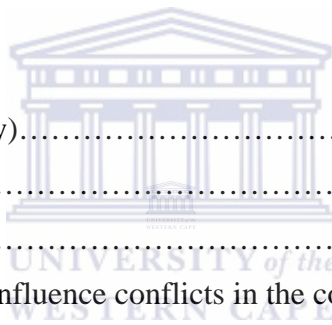
Please give reason(s) for answer.....  
.....  
.....

14. In your opinion, how would you rate the relationship between the police and the community members?  very good  good  O.K  bad  very bad

Please Give reason(s) for your answer.....  
.....  
.....

15. Based on your experience, what are the main causes of conflicts in the community? (Select all that apply)

- Poverty
- Urbanization
- Peer pressure
- Poor Parental Control
- Others (please Specify).....  
.....  
.....



16. What are the factors that influence conflicts in the community?

(Select all that apply)

- Shebeens
- Poor Community Policing
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Lack of Recreational facilities and activities
- Possession of Illegal Weapons
- The Mass Media
- Others (Specify).....  
.....

17. What are the different types of conflicts in the community? (Select all that apply)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Murder        | <input type="checkbox"/> Assault                        | <input type="checkbox"/> School violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burglary      | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic conflicts             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Armed robbery | <input type="checkbox"/> shoplifting                    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arson         | <input type="checkbox"/> Prostitution related conflicts |  |

- Rape
- Taxi Violence
- Others (specify) .....

.....

.....

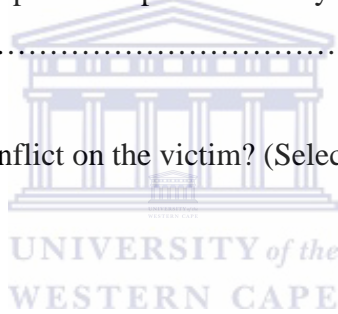
18. How does conflict affect the offender in Mfuleni? (Select all that apply)

- Death
- Disability
- Dropout from school
- Diseases
- Imprisonment
- Others (specify).....

.....

19. Averagely, how many people are imprisoned every month in the community?

.....



20. What are the effects of conflict on the victim? (Select all that apply).

- Murder
- Loss of property
- Disability
- Fear
- Distrust
- Others (Specify).....

.....

21. Based on your experience what are the measures taken by people in the community to prevent conflicts? (Select all that apply)

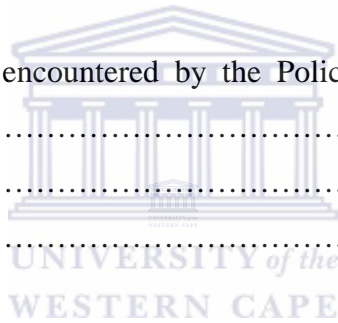
- Carry a self-defense weapon (includes knife, gun, club).
- No longer take certain routes
- Avoid going out at night
- Avoid going out alone
- Relocate to other areas out of the community
- Always report offenders to the police
- Installation of extra locks on windows and/or doors

- Installation of an alarm system
- Others (Please Specify).....
- .....
- .....

22. What are the measures used by the Police to combat conflicts in the community?  
(Specify all that apply)

- Patrols
- Close down shebeens
- Use informants
- Others (Please specify).....
- .....
- .....

23. What are the problems encountered by the Police to combat conflicts in the community?.....



24. Is there a Neighbourhood Watch in the community? Yes No

- a) If yes, how would you evaluate its effects in fighting against conflicts in the community? very good  good O.K bad very bad
- b) Please give reason(s) for your answer? .....
- .....
- .....

26. Is there a Community Police Forum in the community?

- a) if yes, how do would you rate its effects in fighting against conflicts in the community? very good  good O.K bad very bad
- b) Please, give reason (s) for your answer?.....
- .....
- .....

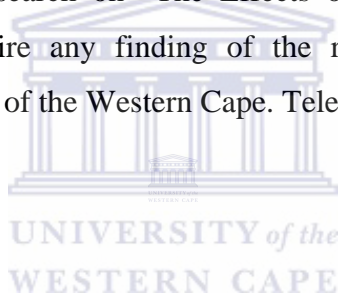
27. What do you think can be done to reduce conflicts in the community?

( Select all that apply)

- Create jobs
- Increase the number of police officers
- Provide recreational facilities and activities
- Use alternative methods to deal with offenders e.g community service
- Enhance the relationship between the police and community
- The police and the media should increases awareness on how to prevent and deal with conflicts in the community.
- Others (Please specify).....

.....  
.....  
.....

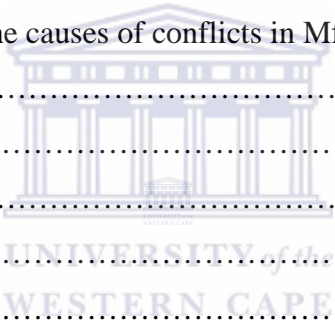
Thank you for your participation. Please note that your feed back will be used to compile a report for my research on “The Effects of Conflicts on the Youth of Mfuleni”. Should you require any finding of the report please contact me on 0763109441 or the University of the Western Cape. Telephone:021-959-3858.



**Appendix 3. Questionnaire administered to members of the community**

Thank you very much for agreeing to assist me with this research. Please read all questions and instructions carefully before you fill in the questionnaire. This questionnaire is anonymous. For reasons of confidentiality, you are requested to not write your name on the questionnaire, and therefore answer the questions as honest as possible.

1. Age .....
2. Sex.  Male  Female
3. Occupation.....
4. Marital status? Married Widow Single Divorced
5. How fearful are you about conflicts in your area?  
Very fearfulsomewhat fearful not very fearful not at all fearful
6. In your opinion, what is the level of conflict in the community?  
 Very high  high  medium low very low
7. In your opinion, what are the causes of conflicts in Mfuleni?  
1. ....  
2.....  
3.....  
4.....  
5.....
8. In your opinion, which group mostly take part in conflicts in the community?  
a) Males  Females  
b) Please indicate the age group.....
9. What are the factors that influence conflicts in the community?  
(Select all that apply).  
 Shebeens  
 Poor Community Policy  
 Drug and Alcohol abuse  
 Lack of Recreational Facilities and Activities  
 Possession of illegal weapons  
 The Mass Media  
 Others (specify).....





.....  
.....

10. Based on your experience what are the different types of conflicts in the community? (Select all that apply).

- Theft ( Burglary, Robbery, Shopping)
- Murder
- Assault
- Marital Disputes
- Taxi Violence
- Dating Violence
- Others (specify).....  
.....  
.....



11. Indicate the methods used in preventing conflicts in the community

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Are you satisfied with the roles of the Police in combating conflict in the community.  Yes  No

Please give reason(s) for your answer? .....  
.....  
.....

13. Is there a Neighbourhood Watch in the Community?  No  Yes

If yes, are you satisfied with its activities?  No  Yes  
Please give reasons for your answer? .....  
.....  
.....

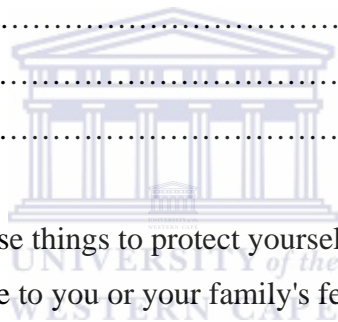
14. What are effects of conflicts on the offender? (Select all that apply).

- Death

- Disability
- Dropout from school
- Diseases
- Imprisonment
- Others (specify).....
- .....

15. What are the effects of conflict on the victim? (Select all that apply).

- Murder
- Loss of property
- Disability
- Fear
- Distrust
- Others (Specify).....
- .....
- .....



16. Have you done any of these things to protect yourself from conflict in the home, in a direct response to you or your family's fear of conflict?

(Select ALL that apply).

- You and your neighbours have agreed to watch out for each other's safety
- You've installed extra locks on windows and/or doors
- You keep weapons inside the home
- You've added lighting
- You've installed an alarm system

17. Here are some things people DO to avoid becoming a victim of conflict that takes place outside the home. Have you done any of these things? (Select all that apply).

- You carry a self-defense weapon (includes knife, gun, club, mace, Stun-gun).
- You no longer take certain routes.
- You avoid going out at night.
- You avoid going out alone.
- You plan to relocate.

18. In your opinion, what do you think should be done to reduce conflicts in the community. (Select all that apply).

- Create jobs.
- Increase the number of police officers in the community.
- Provide recreational facilities and activities.
- Increase the number of Neighbourhood Watch workers
- Increase prison terms for offenders.
- Stop illegal sale of liquor (operation of Shebeens)
- Others (specify).....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your participation. Please note that your feed back will be used compile a report for my research on. “The Effects of Conflicts on the youth of Mfuleni”. Should you require any finding of the report please contact me on 0763109441 or the University of the Western Cape. Telephone: 021-959-3858

