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SUMMARY/ABSTRACT

The extant South African literature base on male homicide is relatively small and reveals a paucity of qualitative studies. This study aimed to elicit discourses embedded within the narratives of men involved in homicidal encounters, and to analyse them from a social constructionist perspective. Semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted with 30 male prisoners who were convicted of murder. An analysis of narrative forms, followed by a critical discourse analysis of the narrative contents, was conducted and aimed to assess the social and ideological significance, functions and effects of these discourses. Participants' talk included masculine performances that allowed for positive self-presentation and ways of constructing meaning of their actions for themselves, the interviewer and an 'invisible audience'. Narrative forms of stability/continuity, decline, and transformation/growth that relied on normalising, reifying, tipping point, propitiatory and rehabilitatory lexical registers were deployed as a means to position participants as reasonable, normal, rehabilitated, and as 'successful' men. Within the narrative contents, participants constructed homicide through exculpatory and justificatory discourses to rationalise and minimise their agency, and drew on essentialist, moral and deterministic notions of male violence. Discourses of spectacular and instrumental violence were also evident. References to male honour, status and power; a defence against emasculation; the assertion of control over commodified female partners; the maintenance of referent familist and ageist discourses; and the normalisation of male violence as a utilitarian tool to access resources in unequal social contexts, underpinned these discourses. The homicidal acts thus represented adapted performances of hegemonic masculinity in a noxious context where this dominant form of masculinity is often unattainable. While participants' talk reproduced hegemonic constructions of masculinity within broader social contexts, it also contested hegemonic orders of moral discourses that govern the legitimacy or illegitimacy of violence. The findings reveal how contexts of discoursal production have a contradictory response to violence – denouncing it, but also simultaneously acting as a pernicious incubatory environment for male homicide. It concludes that the prevention of male homicide must involve the de-linking of masculinities and violence at material, structural and institutional levels, but also within systems of signification, if non-violent masculinities are to gain ascendancy.

Key Terms: Social Constructionism, Violence, Homicide, Murder, Masculinities, Power, Ideology, Discourse Analysis

BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND SCOPE

The twentieth century will be remembered as a century marked by violence. It burdens us with its legacy of mass destruction, of violence inflicted on a scale never seen and never possible before in human history […]. [It] is a legacy that reproduces itself, as new generations learn from the violence of generations past, as victims learn from victimisers, as the social conditions that nurture violence are allowed to continue. No country, no city, no community is immune. But neither are we powerless against it.

(Nelson Mandela, 2002, *Foreword to the World Report on Violence and Health*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

Violence as an entrenched mode of interpersonal and social relating has displayed a remarkable resilience and recalcitrance to change over the entire span of modern human history. Not only is this evident from a reading of the historical accounts of social conflicts globally (DFID, 2001; Schonteich, 2004; Zwi, Garfield & Loretti, 2002), but can also be seen in the worldwide pervasiveness of interpersonal violence (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002), as well as in the enduringly high rates of fatal and non-fatal violence within the specific confines of South African society (Matzopoulos, 2004, 2005; SAPS, 2004, 2005, 2006). The obduracy of violent patterns of social relating in the South African context is reflected in pre-colonial histories of indigenous conflicts (Marks & Atmore, 1980), the pernicious impacts of colonial oppression and dispossession (Milton, 1983; Vail, 1989), the perversions of social engineering associated with apartheid segregation and repression (Duncan & Rock, 1994), resistance politics and confrontational liberatory struggles (SATRC, 1998), and presently in the high rates of criminalised interpersonal violence (Suffla, van Niekerk & Duncan, 2004). Despite variations in manifestations of violence, such descriptions may present a fairly fatalistic version of history that suggests that violence is an inevitable and intrinsic element of the human condition that prevails despite multi-levelled intervention strategies. However, such fatalism is not a view that is widely espoused in the social sciences and humanities today, with many writers, researchers and practitioners arguing that violence is indeed preventable (see for example, Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Foucault, 1977, 1994; van Niekerk & Duncan, 2002).

In recent years, a trend-shift in hegemonic discourses pertaining to violence reflects a growing tendency away from the construction of violence as overtly political and endemic, to violence as predominantly criminal, sociological and as a pervasive public health concern in contemporary South Africa (Butchart, Terre Blanche, Hamber & Seedat, 2000)[1]. However, these 'new' discourses are certainly not apolitical in nature and have distinct ideological consequences through the constitution of criminal or at-risk subjects who are predominantly black, poor, male and socially marginalised[2]. Such discourses and relatively fixed subject constructions and positions are commonplace in a range of everyday interactions and articulations. For example, in his State of the Nation Address at the end of the first decade of South Africa's democracy, President Thabo Mbeki (State of the Nation Address, Houses of Parliament, Cape Town, 6th February 2004) noted that

> *Almost ten years after its liberation from white minority rule, our country still faces many challenges. Many of our people are unemployed. Many of our people continue to live in poverty. Violence against the person in all its forms continues to plague especially those sections of our population that are poor and live in socially depressed communities.*

It is therefore understandable that the prevailing public perception of violence is dominated by accounts and statistics of robbery, murder, sexual assault, and violence against women and children. Furthermore, it is often implied that such forms of violence tend to be perpetrated primarily by marginalised individuals within socially depressed communities, resulting in the construction of an *Other* that is to be feared and vilified, especially within more affluent sectors of the population. This is reflected in the broader South African consciousness through the ubiquitous media reports on violent crime[3], high levels of threat perception

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[1] Also see for example, Duncan (1996), Duncan and Rock (1994) and current issues of the *South African Crime Quarterly* and *Acta Criminologica* for comparative illustrations of this phenomenon.

[2] See the sections in this chapter on *Changing Discourses and Contexts of Violence in South Africa* and *Challenges from Recent Analyses of Homicide in South Africa* for a further exploration of this shift.

[3] Although violent crime is differently constructed and represented within the media and partly dependent on the target audience being addressed, a perusal of most mainstream media reports in contemporary South Africa reveals a veritable journalistic industry on this topic.

among South African citizens in relation to violence and crime (Lemanski, 2004; Burton, du Plessis, Leggett, Louw, Mistry & van Vuuren, 2004; Stavrou, 1993; Valji, Harris & Simpson, 2004), increases in the securitisation of public and private spaces (Butchart, Terre Blanche, Hamber & Seedat, 2000; Vale, 2003), and concern for its political, social and economic impacts and consequences (Bowman & Stevens, 2004; Butchart, 2000; NCPS, 1996; Simpson; 2004).

Certainly, violence against women and children often rightfully receives the lion's share of academic, public and media exposure that foregrounds it within the social and political milieus as a psychosocial priority (see for example, Jewkes, 2002a; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Shefer, Boonzaier & Kiguwa, 2006; Vetten & Haffejee, 2005), but this is a partial representation of the extent of interpersonal violence today (SAPS, 2004, 2005, 2006). It is however unsurprising, given the ideological and political currency associated with it, especially since the onset of second-wave feminism in the 1960s that framed violence of this nature as gendered and being related to patriarchal relations of domination (Dworkin, 1981; Greer, 1971; Whitehead, 2005). The subsequent gains made by gender activists and feminists in South Africa (Walker, 1982), and the emotional and visceral responses to violence of this nature within broader constructions and discursive networks of women, children and family constellations as being vulnerable (Mama, 1995; Shefer, Boonzaier & Kiguwa, 2006; Wilkinson, 1996), have also generated the demand for ideologically critical and rights-based protective strategies (see for example, Jewkes, 2002b).

Nevertheless, one aspect of interpersonal violence that is frequently not reflected upon substantively is that homicide (of which murder is a specific legalistic exemplar) is the single largest contributor to non-natural injury mortality in South Africa at present (Matzopoulos, 2004, 2005). In South Africa as in most parts of the globe, fatal interpersonal violence or homicide tends to occur predominantly between men as both perpetrators and victims (Krug *et al.*, 2002; Matzopoulos, 2004, 2005)[4]. Given the central implication of masculinity within such encounters, male homicide is therefore a highly gendered form of violence in and of itself, irrespective of whether it is enacted between men or between men and women (Archer,

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[4] Connell (1987, p. 14) also cites statistics on non-fatal violence from various countries illustrating that in these instances, *"men are more commonly than women the victims of serious interpersonal violence, and even more commonly the perpetrators"*.

1994; Bourdieu, 2001; Connell, 1987; Edley & Wetherell, 1995; Whitehead, 2005). While not minimising the ideological and political import of addressing violence against women and children, male homicide epitomises the most severe forms of interpersonal violence that are manifest within South African society at present. Comparatively speaking, it has not received widespread critical attention within academe and in psychology in particular, and has the potential to extend our analyses beyond victim profiles to include processes and meaning-making strategies that inform the enactment of fatal interpersonal violence. Furthermore, it may augment our understandings of the relationship between violence and society, and therefore constituted the specific focus of this study.

A central problematic emerging from the study was therefore how we conduct research, analyses, theorising and knowledge production/discovery in the area of male homicide in a manner that destabilises taken-for-granted understandings of causality, and that transcends descriptive statistical data on the phenomenon (Ladikos, 1995; Snyman, 1994). In addition, how do we extend upon the sometimes linear social scientific arguments relating to the historicity of violence in the context of oppression (Bulhan, 1985; Straker 1992), its relationship to poverty and social disorganisation (Emmett, 2003), and understandings positing violence as a cyclical outcome of violent cultures (Vogelman, 1990)? While these forms of data and knowledge have no doubt been of great value in understanding violence and served specific political functions related to a critique of ideology within broader liberatory initiatives opposing the violence of the apartheid state, as well as to re-allocate resources and to shape public policy in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, they are not without difficulties. Certainly, descriptive statistical data on this topic have the potential to re-inscribe racialised, gendered and class relations (Bowman, Seedat, Duncan & Burrows, 2006); while qualitative analyses either frequently stop short of deconstructing and tend to describe social actors' subjective accounts of the relationships between violence and the social contexts; or deconstruct them to such an extent so as to undermine the project of a critical psychology that is rooted in the social through its abandoning of the concept of reality (Burr, 1998). What this ultimately results in is a theoretical circularity that in turn contributes to a social and political paralysis, apathy and impasse in critically addressing the issue of male homicide. This research therefore endeavoured to deepen and supplement existing understandings and discourses on male homicide in South Africa, and attempted to overcome some of the above epistemological challenges. To this end, it locates male homicide within the social world, examines its relationship to ideology, searches for discursive discontinuities

associated with the non-unitary subject (Shefer, 2004; Hollway, 1984) that may lead us to alternative ways of thinking about and addressing this priority, and reflexively engages with how this psychological research may also unwittingly contribute to the regulation and constitution of specific subjectivities (Burman, Aitken, Alldred, Allwood, Billington, Goldberg, Gordo-Lopez, Heenan, Marks & Warner, 1996).

Broadly speaking, the social sciences offer a well established frame within which to critically interrogate male homicide within these parameters, namely, social constructionism. As a recognised ontological and epistemological alternative to the dominance of positivist thinking not only in the social sciences, but specifically within psychology (Gergen, 1985), the relativism of social constructionism suggests that all knowledge, social actions, human interaction, relations and behaviour are dialectically related to specific socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts, and that these elements therefore offer up the possibility of multiple social realities to exist. Furthermore, it suggests that these realities have the potential to be reconstructed and subjects reconstituted in the presence of altered configurations of social contexts and relations (Burr, 1995, 1998). While being cognisant of the benefits of this frame, the challenges facing relativism and certain variants of social constructionism have been alluded to above and are well-documented elsewhere (Parker, 1998). This study therefore adopted a social constructionist perspective of male homicide, and also drew elements of a realist position[5] into this analysis (Bhaskar, 1979, 1997; Collier, 1994, 1998)[6]. In so doing, it endeavoured to address concerns about the privileging of individual subjectivity and interiority above context in analysing language within interpretivist frameworks (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Furthermore, it also attended to the growing trend towards a

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[5] Within critical realism (Bhaskar, 1979, 1997), distinctions are made between the empirical (observable human experiences), the actual (all events and experiences existing in time and space), and the real (more enduring underlying structures from which observable events emerge). The position adopted in this study was one in which participants' narratives were explored to reveal aspects of the real (i.e. underlying social features that may contribute to the social construction of homicide).

[6] Similar debates on social constructionism have emerged within other disciplines in the social sciences as well. See for example, Giddens (1990) on the view that there needs to be a *"radicalisation of modernity"* and Bauman (1991) on the issue that "*postmodernism is modernity coming to terms with its impossibility*" – both of whom nevertheless argue that a re-calibration of social constructionism is necessary and can be achieved through super-reflexivity.

"methodolatry" (Painter & Terre Blanche, 2004) as discursive analyses are increasingly being deployed solely to interpret language as a symbolic form of meaning, thereby elevating language to reality itself (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Lacan, 1968). Rather, it conceived of language as a textual vehicle for discourses, and that language is learnt and acquired by reference to a specific 'reality' and within circumscribed socio-historical and socio-cultural contexts. Thus, it was *"concerned with broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language"* (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 149), in the narratives of male homicide. Critical to understanding male homicide in this frame is the issue of context and historicity, and an attempt to engage with the manner in which narratives of male homicide relate to particular configurations of masculinity and power in social contexts that may fuel and ignite interpersonal violence of this nature.

One of the most obvious analytical nexus points between male homicide as an act of fatal interpersonal violence and the socio-historical and socio-cultural context in which it is enacted, is the phenomenon of power. Power is central to both of these and the study is concerned with the relationship between power as operant at these two apparently distinct levels. The relationship between violence and power is well-noted in the psychological and social scientific literature on feminism, violence prevention and critical social theory. While power is generally implicitly assumed to underpin and drive most forms of violence in the definitions offered in the social sciences today (Bourdieu, 2001; Bulhan, 1985; Connell, 1987; Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Dworkin, 1981; Greer, 1971; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000; Van der Merwe, 1989), this relationship may also be considered in more complex ways. Foucault (1977, 1994) for example, suggests that violence and power are related but distinct. In the first instance, violence acts on bodies, while power is a strategic relation that acts on the actions of others or yields a specific outcome with regard to actions. Violence on the other hand represents an attempt to end an existing power relation or to maintain or establish a new power relation, and is thus an outcome, expression or effect. While power as a strategic relation may therefore exist in the absence of violence, violence invariably occurs in the context of power differentials, resistance to it, enforcement if it, or maintenance of it. However defined, the relationship between violence and power is frequently integral to each other. Similarly, at a broader social level, the histories of social formations also reveal power as a central feature of their operations. Here the work of Foucault (1977, 1994) is again instructive in examining the evolution of power across various historical epochs from sovereign to more disciplinary forms. Contemporary writers such as van Dijk (1998) and

Thompson (1984, 1990) note that power is a specific type of social relation, and that the exercise of power essentially involves control and often results in forms of domination or systemised asymmetries in social relations that are characteristic of modern social formations. It enables the *"pursuit of [...] aims and interests and is dependent on one's position within a field or institution"* (Thompson, 1990, p. 151), making it not only a central feature of individual social activity, but also of institutional locatedness that is bound by specific socio-structural parameters (Thompson, 1990). From this perspective, the study explored how power at an ostensibly interpersonal level of violent action that is performative within the male homicidal encounter (Butler, 1999), relates to power at a discursive, institutional, ideological and structural level of society. Primarily, it concerned itself with the nature of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1977, 1982, 1994) discursively embedded within narratives of male homicide, and examined how it reflects, reproduces and contests existing power relations, through focussing on its social and ideological effects and functions.

Finally, a discursive analysis of the narratives of homicide was undertaken, focussing on spoken language as the unit of analysis. Thompson (1984, p. 69) notes that *"to examine the relations between language and power is to study the ways in which agents implement in their speech-acts various kinds of resources – not only the competence to speak [...] but also and simultaneously the capital of an enterprise, the authority of an institution, the affection of another – in order to secure specific outcomes"*. As a form of symbolic representation, language is a medium through which discourses or systemised forms of signification are realised, and discourses reflect and help to constitute our realities and the subjects within them (Parker, 1990; Thompson, 1990; van Dijk, 1998). Stated differently, a discourse analysis of the language and rhetorical strategies deployed within the narratives of the participants helped to excavate and reveal meaning systems, their functions and relationship to the operation of discourses related to power in the broader social formation (Wetherell, 1998). In this manner, the study not only explored the effects and functions of referent discursive networks and repertoires in relation to the social, historical and ideological, but also the actual discursive structures underlying persuasive communicative encounters (Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Parker, 1990; van Dijk, 1998). This analytical method is of course consistent with both a social constructionist and realist position (Burr, 1998) insofar as meaning systems conveyed through language are not only socially and historically rooted, but as Collier (1998, p. 48) notes, *"language can only be learned by reference to reality [...] [and] it gets its meaning from its relation to the world outside it"*. It is therefore acquired in

relation to a pre-existing reality or socio-historical context that is material and 'real'. Furthermore, while the study acknowledges that language and power are performative, productive and constitutive, resistances to them are inevitable (Foucault, 1977), and the analysis identified instances of rupture in the discursive networks that may lead to alternative ways of conceptualising and re-constituting subject positionalities of males involved in homicidal violence. Thompson (1984, p. 69) supports this contention when he argues that the implementation of language in the context of power *"often results in resistance, conflict and social struggle [and] is not a consequence of the concept of power as such, but is partially a consequence of the fact that, in a society divided into groups and classes with differential privileges and opportunities, the outcomes sought by some agents seldom coincide with the aims and interests of those affected by the exercise of power"*. In utilising this analytical method, the study was also fundamentally concerned with the interpretation of meaning. It however extended beyond the romantic hermeneutic position of describing and interpreting the subjective and independent intentions of the users of language within context from a more distanciated or bracketed perspective, as captured in the earlier writings of Dilthey, Gadamer and Heidegger (Ricoeur, 1981). Rather, it adopted a critical hermeneutic standpoint, drawing on the work of writers such as Ricoeur (1981) and Thompson (1990), in which language is seen not only as a conveyer of meaning that is historically and socially derived, but also that language itself is responsible for partly constructing our realities (i.e. the social world 'speaks' through us, but our subject positions and 'intentions' also determine in part the functions and effects of language). It thus requires an analysis of language itself, and also presupposes reflexivity and sensitivity on the part of social researchers with regard to their socio-historical and personal locations. This is related to the fact that researcher interpretations are most frequently conveyed through language and therefore also construct and convey meanings that are apprehended by others, but these only represent specific plausible analytical instances, of which there may be many. Objective distanciation is neither possible nor desirable in this frame, as our utility of language also constitutes a construction of reality (Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Language is thus no longer understood in terms of structuralist linguistics (Lacan, 1968; Saussure, 2006), but from a post-structuralist perspective (Parker, 1992).

More specifically, this study employed Thompson's (1990) *Depth Hermeneutics*[7] meta-framework which allows for a focus on the historical context out of which discourses emerge, a formal analysis of the discourses by examining language and rhetorical strategies (see for example, Burman & Parker, 1993; Parker, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1992), and an interpretation of how these discourses function to either reinforce or challenge our understandings of the socio-historical context. In this manner, critical hermeneutics allows us to pursue not only a subjective *"intention hidden behind the text, but a world unfolded in front of it"* (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 93), that may have been previously concealed, implying *"in principle a recourse against any given reality and thereby the possibility of a critique"* (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 93).

The following sections of the chapter expand on this introduction, and elaborate on the broad background, rationale and scope of the study, as well as its potential significance and contribution to an emerging South African knowledge base on male homicide.

2.   BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:

The following section provides a broad foundation and justification for the ongoing identification of male homicide as a social priority with respect to research, theorising and intervention praxis. In particular, it sketches a socio-historical terrain in which changing discourses on violence may impact profoundly on our everyday constructions of male homicide, reflects on current and alternative conceptualisations of the social phenomenon under scrutiny, and argues for the importance of examining the central nexus between male homicide, power and the social context in which it is enacted.

2.1.   Changing Discourses and Contexts of Violence in South Africa

Constructions of violence in South Africa have been characterised by distinctive shifts in discursive networks that have been directly and functionally related to contextual changes in the socio-historical landscape over time (Butchart, Terre Blanche, Hamber & Seedat, 2000). As these discourses and contexts have changed, our predominant understandings of violence have also altered, alongside our conceptualisations of the

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[7] This is based on the work of Jurgen Habermas (1972), who earlier referred to *Depth Hermeneutics* in his critique of ideology, as well as Paul Ricoeur's (1981) critical contributions to the field of hermeneutics.

subjectivities associated with violence, as well as the consequent 'ameliorative' strategies undertaken in response to them. From a Foucauldian (1977) perspective, the interplay and oscillations between sovereign and disciplinary power provide one possible analytical framework within which to understand violence across history. The intent of this section is not to deconstruct these discourses, but rather to provide an overview of these trends in which sovereign and disciplinary forms of power are either foregrounded or recede within such historical constructions, as these provide a partial window into why and how particular discourses surrounding homicide are potentially articulated today.

2.1.1. Colonisation, Sovereign Power and Violence

In the earliest instances, violence was integral to European expansionism and colonialism in southern Africa, and was deeply embedded within racism and constructions of indigenous populations as primitive, barbaric, and therefore in need of 'civilisation' (Mamdani, 2004; Miles, 1989; Said, 2003). This discourse was utilised not only to understand violence among indigenous populations as culturally peculiar, but of course also extended to the legitimation of acts of suppression, repression and dispossession during colonial occupation. Racism, the role of organised religion (and in particular, the role of morality as espoused by the Christian missionaries), and the economic drivers behind colonial accumulation (e.g. the discovery of mineral resources in the interior of southern Africa) all contributed to these discourses, and sanctioned the use of violent forms of social control. During this period however, it would certainly be accurate to suggest that counter-violence was also prevalent (Bulhan, 1985; Fanon, 1991). In his reflections on Fanon's body of work, Mamdani (2004, p. 9) notes that in it we see the *"premonition of the native turned perpetrator, of the native who kills not just to extinguish the humanity of the other but to defend his or her own"*. Counter-violence in such instances took on many forms including direct confrontation, but increasingly the *"lyricism of marginality found inspiration in the image of the 'outlaw', the great social nomad, who prowled on the confines of a docile, frightened social order"* (paraphrased from Foucault, 1977). Steinberg (2004) points to the presence of Eric Hobsbawm's construct of *"social banditry"* aimed at righting

social wrongs associated with colonial occupation, when looking at the early precursors of criminal violence in early Western Cape region of Southern Africa. This period of early colonialism represented the exercise and contestation of sovereign power, in which visible violence became the hallmark of social control not only of the emerging state, but also of those offering resistance to it.

2.1.2. Disciplinary Power, Moral Orthopaedics and Violence

However, Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche and Seedat (2000), note several other developments in the discursive networks related to violence. The first includes the secularisation of culture, and the growth and hegemony of science (Miles, 1989). The utility of Christianity in buttressing colonial violence was waning at the same time that scientific racism and the eugenics movement were emerging strongly, and during this period scientific racism was incorporated and co-opted into the realm of moral orthopaedics as a form of political technology to address the issue of violence in South Africa. Violence was constructed as being related to the psychological constitution and intrapsychic dynamics of blacks in particular, intersecting directly with scientific racism. While elements of sovereign power still underpinned violence in South Africa, increasingly this was surpassed by the emergence of greater disciplinary power and technologies directed towards the mapping and control of the exotic and somewhat deficient black body and psyche (Butchart, 1998; Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche & Seedat, 2000). Psychology's reactionary contribution to this process is well documented in the writings of Nicholas and Cooper (1990), Nicholas (1993), and Duncan, van Niekerk, de la Rey and Seedat (2001).

2.1.3. Sovereign Power, Repression, Resistance and Violence

By the mid-1900s, critical challenges to moral orthopaedics, the social crisis of apartheid capitalism, and the rise of liberation movements all necessitated unprecedented forms of state control through violence (Butchart, Hamber, Terre Blanche & Seedat, 2000). In particular, 1948 Apartheid policy legislating racialised segregation in South Africa compelled the state to

enforce the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act and the Pass Laws amongst others, through visible and active policing that promoted the often violent patrolling of these social boundaries and spaces through forced removals and arrests (Duncan & Rock, 1994; McKendrick & Hoffman, 1990; SATRC, 1998). This re-emergence of sovereignty saw escalating violent conflicts between the state and its adversaries within the South African social formation, with violence being constructed as a fundamentally political act, outcome, response and consequence. As a political construction, political mechanisms such as the state security apparatuses were liberally deployed against the South African population, but also coexisted alongside more subtle disciplinary endeavours to control the population's dissent through the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971). Notions of the 'swart gevaar' associated with black militancy and later still, the 'rooi gevaar', further ideologically coupling the threat of black militancy with the apparent perils of the communist threat, became the hegemonic construction of violence. Resistance to these displays of power were equally politicised with adversaries of the state inverting and subverting political technologies and social practices associated with moral orthopaedics to critique the state (Adler & Webster, 2000; Alexander, 1990; Njobe, 1990), together with an increase in counter-violence that was characterised by underground armed struggles that burgeoned within the liberation movement more broadly (Barrell, 1990; Kasrils, 1993). Several writers in psychology noted the historical impact of prolonged exposure to violence in South Africa, culminating in perspectives such as the *"culture-of-violence"* thesis, but more importantly this signified an epistemic community that undertook an analysis of violence as a means of reflecting upon the nature and character of the South African social formation (Dawes & Donald, 1994; Duncan & Rock, 1994; Rock, 1997; Straker, 1992; Vogelman, 1990). Violence was seen not only as an active contributor to the evolution of society, but also as a direct consequence of, and analytical window into this evolution. This approach to understanding the long-term effects of violence within societies, together with an analysis of violence as an embedded feature or characterisation that vividly reflects and symbolises aspects of societies is by no means new. Bulhan (1985), Fanon (1990) and Taussig (1987) are but a few writers who have examined violence in colonial

contexts and then reflected upon the repercussions thereof in post-colonial periods. Not only have they argued that violence is frequently a tool of oppression, repression and the creation of social asymmetries, but that this social milieu invariably becomes fragmented and remains so even in the wake of social transformation. In a seminal work on terror and healing, Taussig (1987) echoes this view when he recounts a South American folktale in which a creature within the forest abducts little children, dismembers them brutally, and then stitches them back together in a fragmented and obscure manner so that their broken limbs are reversed and misplaced on their bodies. In so doing, he metaphorically suggests that such fragmentation occurs in all social formations that experience prolonged exposure to violence, terror, repression, oppression and exploitation. In this context, the history of oppression is also a history of violence (Bulhan, 1985). In South Africa during this period, irrespective of whether violence was constructed as being an outcome of, or response to, oppression or social anarchy, the pervasive thread running through these discursive constructions was its interlocking relationship to political terror, serving as ideological currency in the struggle for social control in an environment of sovereign enactments of power and equally violent resistances to it.

2.1.4. Disciplinary Power, Transformation Politics and Violence

In the early 1990s one of the greatest perceived threats to a democratic transition and relative normalisation of South African society was the potential risk of political violence and destabilisation. While these concerns were grounded to some extent, given the machinations of ultra right-wing and conservative groups, they did not materialise in any significant manner and South African society embarked on a process of unprecedented political stability in the years following the first democratic elections of 1994 (Kemp, 1990; Swart, 2001). However, a decade later another manifest form of violence, namely fatal interpersonal violence or homicide, ranked as the single largest contributor to non-natural mortality in South Africa (Matzopoulos, 2005). Injury deaths (of which violence is the primary contributor) is second only to the mortality caused by HIV/AIDS (Bradshaw & Nannan, 2004) and

continues to represent one of the most significant threats to contemporary South African society. Furthermore, at the social, political and economic levels it remains a lightning rod for social fractures that continue to splinter and threaten the normalisation of the organised public space in South African society (Suffla, van Niekerk & Duncan, 2004). Post-apartheid South Africa has thus once again seen the receding of overt sovereign displays of power though violence, and is certainly more preoccupied with a mapping of the sociological, criminological, moral, health and psychological origins and consequences of violence (Butchart, Terre Blanche, Hamber & Seedat, 2000). The democratic transition has witnessed an unsurprising decline in discourses of violence as an overtly political phenomenon, and the predominant construction of violence in contemporary society appears to be as a social, economic and public health threat, related to forms of social disorganisation, at-risk individuals and environments (Bowman & Stevens, 2004; Emmett, 2003; Stevens, Seedat & van Niekerk, 2004; Stevens, Seedat, Swart & van der Walt, 2003). Consequently, this has driven efforts to address violence through saturation policing and tougher criminal justice initiatives (Altbeker, 2007; Butchart, 1996; Dixon & Rauch, 2004; Schonteich, 1999, 2002) from a relatively moralistic standpoint in which there are efforts to understand the apparent decline in the value placed on humanity (Rauch, 2005), preventative strategies to address violence and its relationship to psychosocial and developmental risks, and development initiatives to address socio-structural determinants of violence (see for example, Bornman, van Eeden & Wentzel, 1998; Emmett & Butchart, 2000; Keegan, 2004; Seedat, 2002). In understanding what has driven these discursive shifts, some assessment of the transition and the current context of South African society are potentially instructive.

Despite the intervening decade in which there has ostensibly been a movement towards an egalitarian and democratic state, poverty, unemployment, health status and social security amongst others, remain highly variable across prosaically ritualised cleavages of 'race', class and gender, threatening the very notion of a unitary nation (UNDP, 2003). Even though we witness forms of liberalisation, deregulation and increased social, political and economic

opportunities that may ultimately enhance the overall well-being of various sectors of the populace (Bond, 2000), we also observe the presence of increased anomie (Durkheim, 1984) and alienation (Marx & Engels, 1974) within the same context. Here, social and economic expectations and goals have begun to outrun the means to attain them revealing high levels of relative deprivation, South African citizens disclose perceptions of communal estrangement and atomisation, participation within and access to democratic institutions remains poor, perceived institutional failures of a new and relatively inexperienced government has resulted in reduced public confidence in them (Bundy, 2000; Burger & Gould, 2002; Manganyi, 2004) and of course, rates of criminal violence remain high (Burton *et al.*, 2004; Kok, 1998; Matzopoulos, 2005; SAHRC, 2006; SAPS, 2004, 2005, 2006)[8]. In this context, the diffuse social regulation associated with governmentality (Hook, 2004a) has replaced overt forms of social control, and has become a primary characterisation of contemporary South African society. The rights of the citizenry and the obligations of the state to its citizens' welfare are common hegemonic discourses that are articulated within the current period. Discourses on violence are therefore peppered with references to crime statistics, economic and health impacts and a taken-for-granted coupling of violence and forms of social disorganisation. While these discourses certainly reflect a return to the use of political technologies through which to construct the broad social phenomenon of violence, they are also reflective of a new state that is faced with the imperatives of illustrating 'good governance' and who is measured and evaluated in terms of these standards as it attempts to reinsert itself into the regional and global social, political and economic community (Bond, 2000; Gumede, 2005). However, it would be asinine to assume that these are the only drivers of such discursive shifts. Certainly, the very same

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[8] With regard to the empirical evidence highlighting high levels of crime and interpersonal violence (e.g. Annual South African Police Crime Statistics), it is important to note that high levels of criminal and interpersonal violence also existed prior to the transition (Dawes & Donald, 1994), and the current preoccupation with criminal violence is therefore also in part a reflection of the changing social context in which violence occurs and the consequent shifts in understandings thereof.

discourses have been propelled to prominence by authentic attempts to improve the general quality of life of South African citizens from within the organised public space or civil society. Strategic opportunities to raise the profile of social concerns such as violence have rightfully been exploited as spaces in public policy, decision-making and resource allocation opened up in the post-apartheid era, and many groupings have appropriated this discourse in an attempt to further socially progressive agendas for transformation and improved social conditions for the majority of South Africans[9]. However, there also remains in some instances a sceptical Afro-pessimism that serves to question the degree to which South African society has really transformed from a one-time international pariah on the path to perdition, to an international symbol of the triumph of the democratic political process. In this regard, once initial fears of political violence associated with right-wing destabilisation, economic ruin, civil war, and the purging of white South Africans proved to be an imagined and unrealised outcome of the democratic transition, alternative social indicators began to emerge to test the veracity of the South African 'miracle'. In this context, violence as an impingement to normalising society has become one of the alternative indicators against which to measure the lack progress of the democracy, and we witness a further appropriation and reactionary reproduction of these discourses (Kemp, 1990).

What is apparent from this historical review is that constructions of violence are fundamentally shaped by socio-historical contexts, and that these constructions become diffused into widely held public discourses. In contemporary South Africa, hegemonic public discourses on male homicide are undoubtedly constructed predominantly as criminal violence. In attempting to delve beneath these everyday understandings that may elide a potentially more complex set of relationships between male homicide and the social context, a multitude of questions immediately arise. While the following are

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[9] See for example, the publications and policy briefs emerging nationally from structures such as the Medical Research Council, the Human Sciences Research Council, the UNISA Institute for Social and Health Sciences, and the Institute for Security Studies, to name but a few.

not intended as research questions, they are nevertheless worth considering and are addressed to varying degrees in the analysis section.

While discursive networks around violence have changed historically and appear to be contextually specific, to what extent is there a resurgence and referential interplay of many of these historical and contemporary discourses in relation to the phenomenon of male homicide? To what degree is there a relationship between male homicidal violence and indicators of anomie and alienation in the context of globalisation and its effects on South Africa? Is male homicide reflective of a social transition that has supplanted forms of sovereignty, and simultaneously diluted pre-existing forms of disciplinarity without alternative social and institutional disciplinarisation to fill this vacuum (see for example, McKay, 1997, for her comments on violence and the breakdown of authority structures within South African communities)? Has there been sufficient depth to social transformation with regard to material realities or does social marginalisation continue to occur to such levels so as to foster the image and fantasy of the 'outlaw' as one with proclivities towards social resistance and a repudiation and disavowal of the status quo? To what extent can male homicidal violence be seen as a failure of the moral economy in the period of late capitalism in which a collective sense of social justice simply appears unattainable and inaccessible? What is the relationship between masculinity and violence in this context, and how are hegemonic discourses of masculinity and violence reflected and contested in the narratives of participants? To what extent will social actors' subjective accounts of homicidal encounters reflect upon these issues, either overtly or inadvertently, and allow for a deepening of our understandings of male homicide?

By engaging with many of these analytical questions amongst others, the study brought a critical social science approach to bear onto the examination of homicide not simply as a form of extreme interpersonal violence that is criminalised, but as a predominantly masculine encounter that occurs within the confines of particular socio-historical contexts; that reflects these contexts, and that is fundamentally related to and premised upon manifestations, permutations, articulations and configurations of power that prevail within the

current South African context. It therefore builds on the epistemic tradition of critical social scientific research on violence in South Africa, and engages in an analysis of male homicide as a means to understanding how South African society may continue to act as an incubator for such acts of violence.

2.2. Homicide as a Critical Priority

In its broadest definition, homicide is essentially the act of killing one or more persons, through whatever means, by another person or persons (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Polk, 1994; Wolfgang, 1958). However, this generic definition is often contested, especially with regard to how it relates to issues of legitimacy. This is particularly evident in cases of fatal violence within contexts of war or civil conflict, as compared to fatal interpersonal violence enacted during the commission of a crime. While these definitional tensions are addressed later in the dissertation together with issues of intentionality and the consequential outcomes associated with violent acts, what is critical to note is that all homicides have as their outcome a fatality of one or more persons resulting from an act that may be construed as violent.

2.2.1. The Social and Economic Burden of Homicide

In South Africa, homicide is a social priority because of the significant consequences associated with it. The most obvious of these is naturally the death of a person or persons, but alongside this are the psychological and economic impacts of this loss that are experienced by families and others closely associated with the deceased. Similar psychological impacts may be experienced by those responsible for committing the homicide, especially in relation to guilt, trauma and an adjustment to the loss of freedom due to incarceration (Cohen & Taylor, 1972; Paulus, 1988). In addition, the families and associates of those held responsible for homicidal acts also frequently have to endure the social stigma and related economic losses that accompany community vilification and incarceration (Morris, 1965).

The broader social and economic burden of homicide is more clearly evident when reviewing economic productivity losses and health costs associated with homicide in South Africa (Bowman & Stevens, 2004; Butchart, 2000; Peden & van der Spuy, 1998; Phillips, 1999), but also in the increasing emphasis being

placed on the prevention, reduction and control of homicide by the political apparatus, criminal justice systems, public health systems, and others in the public and civil sectors. While homicide and violence were ranked as second only to HIV/AIDS as a cause of premature mortality in South Africa in 2000 (Bradshaw and Nannan, 2004), it also out-ranked other causes of premature mortality such as tuberculosis, respiratory illnesses, low birth weight and diarrhoeal diseases, highlighting the importance of addressing it as a public health priority once more. Not only has it been recognised as a significant component of the triple burden of disease in South Africa, but it is also clear that it is increasingly being recognised as a pressing focus of intervention for various government departments within South Africa, with its prevention becoming part of the stated core business of several departments such as Safety and Security, Justice, Health and Social Development (see for example, Department of Correctional Services, 2007a; Department of Health, 2004; Domestic Violence Act, 1998; NCPS, 1996).

Even though the economic costs of violence in general are often quoted to run into billions of US Dollars per annum internationally (Krug *et al.*, 2002), and exact figures for South Africa do not exist at present, estimates place them in the millions of South African Rands each year (Butchart, 2000). Despite homicide being located at the apex of the injury pyramid and accounting for a small proportion of this, the total monetary sum is still considerable, both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, the social effects for the public at large can not be as easily quantified. Homicides and their widespread reporting in the media affect public opinion as to the nature of perceived threats to personal and asset safety, encourage behaviours that promote increased social securitisation and limit resource inputs into preventative measures, impact on investment, foreign trade and tourism, and generally contribute to a pervasive social culture of fear and a reduction in social capital that can not be entirely measured in economic terms (Emmett, 2003; Emmett & Butchart, 2000). Clearly, how we then come to understand homicide is as important a broader social priority as how we can prevent and reduce it as a public health priority.

2.2.2. The Extent and Magnitude of Homicide

Internationally, predictions from within the public health sector suggest that as a component of the triple burden of disease, non-natural injuries (of which homicide is a component) contribute significantly to the overall global burden of disease, and by the year 2020 it is estimated that these injuries will be the second largest contributor to Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)[10] in low-income countries (Murray & Lopez, 1996). More specifically, homicide as a fatal form of non-natural injury is a major determinant of mortality, especially in low-income countries across the globe. Whilst homicide rates in most high-income countries average approximately 14/100 000 population, in low- to middle-income countries the mean tends to cluster around 32/100 000 population – more than twice the rate in high-income countries (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

Notably, the African region and the Americas are implicated most significantly in these high rates. Whilst there are variations and anomalies across countries, such as the fact that the United States of America as a high-income country is characterised by homicide rates similar to those of many low-income countries (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002), and within countries (see for example, the work on regional differences in homicide rates in the United States of America by Corzine, Huff-Corzine & Whitt, 1999; and in South Africa by Matzopoulos, 2005), South Africa mirrors the overall trends visible in low- to middle-income countries, with approximately 40% of all non-natural injury fatalities being due to homicide in the year 2004 (Matzopoulos, 2005).

This staggering statistic provides some insight into the nature, magnitude and potential consequences of fatal, interpersonal violence in South Africa, especially when we consider that the sector of the population most represented

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[10] The Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) construct is a quantitative indicator of the burden of disease that reflects the total amount of healthy life lost due to mortality and/or morbidity within a population (Murray & Lopez, 1996).

as victims are those economically active adults between the ages of 15-44 years (Matzopoulos, 2005).

In 2002, statistics obtained from the Department of Correctional Services did not yield rates, but the actual number of incarcerated prisoners who were serving penal sentences for murder were in the region of 19504 (Department of Correctional Services, 2002), while the total number of prisoners serving sentences for aggressive crimes (including murder) in 2007 was 63677 (Department of Correctional Services, 2007b). While there is considerable debate about the extent to which rates of homicide have increased or decreased over time in South Africa, recent murder statistics released by the South African Police Services still highlight a rate of 39.5/100 000 population in 2005/2006 (SAPS, 2006)[11]. While these statistics reveal an apparent decline from 47.8/100 000 population in 2001/2002, they nevertheless are significant in relation to global statistics and means.

The current rates of homicide and murder in South Africa may in part be due to either improved data collection techniques and methods, or faulty data collection technologies that are overestimating such rates. Alternatively, they may also reflect failures of interventions in this field (e.g. saturated law enforcement as a strategy flies in the face of the fact that most homicides are committed between acquaintances in commonly shared private spaces), or more complexly suggest that homicide as a subject of knowledge has generated antithetical reactions from populations, thereby challenging

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[11] Information of this nature is invariably contested to some degree, partly because of the methodological challenges in generating accurate data, but also because the social currency of the statistics render them susceptible to being utilised by political entrepreneurs to either condemn or support states, governments, institutions, interest groups and ideologies.

processes of social control and increasing the number of homicidal encounters[12].

2.2.3. Limitations of Research and Intervention Practices

However, while there is broad social recognition as well as international political and scientific support[13] for addressing violence, and specifically homicide, the overall responsiveness and effectiveness of interventions is at best, highly variable in South Africa. Even though public outcries often demand that 'more be done' to combat and address violent crimes such as homicide, there is a plethora of social programming in South Africa that attempts to address violence either directly or indirectly. However, this apparent saturation of programmes reveals a significant shortcoming – that many programmes are ill-conceived, non-sustainable and have limited efficacy (Griggs, 2002; Stevens & Swart, 2005; WHO, 2004). Where programmes are implemented, these are often so varied in their attempts to address the scale of

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[12] While the intent behind most formal social responses to homicide is to reveal its horror and to then institute mechanisms to control it, this process also subverts itself to some extent. For example, in popular contemporary culture, the prominence of the detective novel, the murder ballad and the thriller has helped to shape constructions of killing, depicting them through various mediums as a manner of entertainment (Keathley, 2002; Seltzer, 1998). The last two decades have also seen an even more complex set of constructions and representations of killing, especially given the increase in communications technologies, globalisation and the importance of the media as a fundamental tool of social construction. Killing is now constructed in multiple ways as spiritual, moral, structural, social and psychological alienation from the world, but simultaneously as an act that ultimately overcomes these forms of powerlessness and alienation through elevating the killer to the status of celebrity. In attempting to reveal the horror of the act, social institutions lose the ability to effectively manipulate the mechanisms of social control, as the act of killing, the trial and the execution are all communicated to a populace that consumes it as voyeuristic entertainment and often enact it as spectacle (Pinnock, 1997; Pistorius, 2002). The production of an object of knowledge on homicide in order to control it as a social phenomenon, has also fundamentally facilitated the constitution of human subjects (Foucault, 1977) who have to some extent been interpellated by this discourse - the killers - who simultaneously undermine and subvert the central element of social control in an antithetical manner.

[13] See for example, the political support and stimulation rendered to such an endeavour by the release of the World Health Organisation's World Report on Violence and Health (Krug *et al.*, 2002) and the African Union's pledge to promote 2005 as African Year of Violence Prevention (Stevens, 2003).

the problem, that they are collectively incoherent (see for example, the varied intervention proposals by the Institute for Security Studies, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the UNISA Institute for Social and Health Sciences, and Gun Free South Africa). Not only is the process of ameliorating social fabric factors through social crime prevention an immense task (NCPS, 1996; Palmary, 2002), but there are also limited numbers of immediate benchmarked practical interventions with proven efficacy that converge with the imperatives and resources of governance, resulting in an overall lack of co-ordinated coherence and strategic clarity on how best to tackle the issue.

This lack of clarity is further compounded by constricted and inadequate research on homicide in South Africa, especially beyond the quantitative, descriptive categories and typologies that view homicidal encounters in relation to psychological, behavioural, health, product or environmental features (see for example, Cartwright, 2001; Ladikos, 1995; Pistorius, 2002; Snyman, 1994; Vetten, Ngwane & Isserow, 2003). Nevertheless, despite the paucity of national research into this area, international studies have focussed on social and scientific questions related to whether violence is an inevitable evolutionary outcome of the human condition, whether it is indicative of a pathological social structure and organisation, or a consequence of the interaction between these factors (Krug *et al.,* 2002; Smith & Zahn, 1999). While these are important questions that have opened up the field of quantitative risk factor research, they are not represented significantly in the South African literature, which tends to be less matured as a research field as compared to other contexts such as Australia and the United States of America (Polk, 1994). Furthermore, current research studies involving social analyses of homicide from a qualitative perspective are atypical in the South African academy, resulting in further limitations in the extant literature. While discursive studies into violence more broadly have been undertaken in South Africa (see for example, Duncan, 1996; Foster, Haupt & de Beer, 2005; Moon, 2006; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000), homicide as a specific focus of study has been notably absent from this knowledge base.

The above challenges translate into an uncertain political and economic will related to decision-making and resource allocation, as well as to the absence of an integrated national plan of action to establish a research agenda and to convert this into prevention action. Socially, it renders us susceptible to increased levels of individual and familial securitisation and a reliance on everyday causal explanations that draw on existing and frequently conservative discursive constructions of violence. However, when such responses and attributions fail to meaningfully explain the recalcitrance of male homicide as a social phenomenon, a populace may display a paralysing incomprehensibility and horror as to why homicide occurs. Commonsense and organic social inquiry then very often leads to questions pertaining to the nature of the world that we occupy as a driver of homicide, the value placed on human life in this context, and the role of an apparently absent moral compass within the social formation. While many of these organic forms of inquiry clearly have a reactionary potential and often draw on individualistic and liberal humanistic notions of morality and the value of human life, they nevertheless point to central questions that should also be considered even in a critical social analysis of homicide. For example, to what extent is the idea that a society only protects that which it values reflective of our current social formation's undervaluing of human life and how does this impact on constructions surrounding male homicide? Are our assumptions about homicidal violence as abhorrent, deviant and a flouting of morality shared equally across a disparate population in which there are sets of shifting goal posts for what constitutes morality? These and other questions become even more critical when we consider that homicides are committed disproportionately by and against socially marginalised men in the age range of 15-44 years across the world, with South Africa being no exception in this regard (Findlay, 1999; Krug *et al.*, 2002; Matzopoulos, 2005; SAPS, 2004, 2005, 2006). This disproportionality potentially implicates social asymmetries such as those relating to 'race', class and gender within homicidal encounters. It once again points to the imperative of examining asymmetries and other manifestations of social power differentials in relation to morality, human value, manhood, masculinities, gendered subjectivities and violence as they converge within homicidal acts. In so doing, such examinations offer us the

possibility of transcending quantitative research that focuses on psychological, behavioural, environmental, socio-cultural, socio-structural and interactional determinants of male homicide, and to elaborate on how social location and subject positioning impacts on the consequent discursive constructions and meaning-making of males involved in the commission of homicides themselves.

2.3.   Challenges from Recent Analyses of Homicide in South Africa

As mentioned above, the nexus between violence and power is a well-recognised in the national and international literature, spanning sociogenic, social constructionist, gendered, criminological, and even contemporary health perspectives. While most perspectives broadly acknowledge that power is a central underpinning component to all forms of violence, in reality this relationship is scrutinised variably within research studies, and is highly dependent upon contextual demands and parameters that frame knowledge production processes in this research area. From a broad social constructionist and materialist perspective, Cornforth (1963) noted that *"ideas are not the products of pure intellectual process, nor are they mere automatic responses to stimuli reaching us from external objects. They are produced by human brains in the course of human activity. They reflect the connections of men [and women] with one another and with the external world, the real conditions of men's [and women's] existence"* (p. 57). While recognising this, Foucault (1977) also suggested that knowledge is produced and constituted as an outcome of the operation of power as a strategic relation within specific contexts. This operation of power, he suggested, gives rise to the production of specific social meanings about given objects and subjects, as well as the constitution of particular social practices by and in relation to these objects and subjects that then both come to represent forms of social knowledge. He suggested that *"power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge [...]"* (p. 27). Research into homicide in South Africa as a form of knowledge production is no exception in this regard and has tended to reflect the dominant preoccupations and strategic relations within the social milieu at a given point in history. To this end, the extent to which the concept of power is addressed or evacuated from research into homicide is in part a feature of the social environment in which that knowledge is

produced, reflecting contestations around power that are overtly visible, or concealing power relations when they are more insidious. In this regard, research into homicide in South Africa mirrors to some degree the broader discursive shifts in violence that we have witnessed over several decades and that have been referred to earlier.

2.3.1. Trends in Homicide Research

While not attempting a genealogical analysis of homicide in South Africa, it would be fair to state that despite homicide research being relatively underdeveloped as compared to analyses in the United States of America, Europe and Australia (Polk, 1994; Smith & Zahn, 1999), that within the past two decades, two emerging trends can broadly be delineated in South Africa. These may of course be viewed in the context of changes within the social formation, with the 1994 transition acting as a convenient socio-historical watershed reflecting differing approaches to science, research, and knowledge production as they pertain to understanding homicide as a form of violence in South Africa. While not a definitive or comprehensive classification of research, these trends do have a number of implications at the levels of epistemology, methodology, theory-building and praxis, as we attempt to understand homicide and intervene appropriately as we consider its prevention in South Africa today.

In the first instance, as evidenced in work from the 1980s and 1990s, male homicide and other forms of violence tended to be viewed as a manifestation and consequence of a repressive and exploitative history in South Africa, or alternatively as a feature of social unrest. Certainly, a primary strategic relation or preoccupation in the country at that point was concerned with institutionalised, formalised and legalised systems of segregation and how to maintain or overthrow it. Violence was understood as being embedded within this social context and was therefore integrally linked to issues of power, ideology, repression and resistance. The spectre of sovereignty loomed large and understandings of violence and homicide were naturally reflective of this and reinforced it, relying on both empirical and polemical studies in a struggle that was essentially one of social control. From a Foucauldian perspective, homicide was seen as a manifestation and outcome of the expression of and

resistance to forms of sovereign or political power as located within the South African state. Both supporters of the conservative state as well as radical proponents of liberation prior to 1994 tended to construct it through a repression-resistance or suppression-social unrest binary. In each case, fatal interpersonal violence was viewed primarily as a socio-political act that was imbued with certain features of sovereign power, and was an expression, outcome or associated consequence of repression (or suppression) of marginal groups, or a contestation and form of resistance (or social unrest) in response to such repression (or suppression).

While high levels of criminality were certainly present during this period (Dawes & Donald, 1994), and the crime statistics on murder in particular showed significant levels in the period between 1950 an 1994 (McCafferty, 2003), the dominant research on homicide tended to be highly politicised in nature during the 1980s and 1990s. A great deal of work was conducted on the psychosocial impact on children exposed to violence, and was particularly pertinent in the context of youth involvement in necklace killings and the homicides committed within Self-Defence Units (1994; Dawes & Donald, 1994; Duncan & Rock, 1994; Rock, 1997; Straker, 1992). Adult involvement in homicides was also frequently investigated through the lenses of political conflict, and research into 'kangaroo court' violence and 'spontaneous' homicidal encounters involving the killing of informants or police personnel in group contexts were not uncommon. A case in point was the Upington 25, in which progressive psychologists clearly acted ideologically in favour of the protagonists and even went so far as to utilise dated social psychological theory on deindividuation to account for this killing (Durbach, 2002; Foster, 1991a). Pinnock's (1997) work on gangs and violence was a further example of how gang culture and killings were related not only to ritual rites of passage, but were also constructed as a consequence of apartheid's violent and fragmenting impacts on communities and families. At an interpersonal level, studies on sexual violence (Vogelman, 1990) and familicide (Graser, 1992; McKendrick & Hofmann, 1990) all explored homicide as a feature and consequence of the violence endemic to the South African landscape. While this type of research generally promoted a critical social science and an

ideological agenda towards liberation, they nevertheless provided a partial account of power in the context of homicide that was fairly binaried and fixed, and essentially relied on the culture of violence or the cycle of violence thesis, thereby identifying homicide as an outcome of contestations pertaining to sovereign power. Nevertheless, they also opened up the possibilities of exploring the relationship between power and violence more elaborately, and facilitated later studies on violence and its relationships to more ritualised everyday forms of power (e.g. Cock, 2001; Cock & Nathan, 1989; Duncan, 1996; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000).

From a slightly different perspective, but within the same politicised framework, murder statistics were often separated from 'political' killings within official statistics during this period. However, Turrell (2004) notes that during this time, the majority of men convicted for murder and awaiting execution on death row were black, and that the criminal justice system was profoundly influenced by racialised notions that these men were somehow 'weaker' in their personal constitution, making them more prone to this type of violence. Furthermore, the splitting of the official statistics from 'political' statistics served the ideological function of allowing the apartheid State to claim a measure of social control, and to vilify political opponents by claiming that these homicides were acts of terror. Alternatively, when reflecting on discourses of violence in the Midlands of Kwazulu-Natal, on the Cape Flats, and in the mine compounds of Johannesburg, homicides involving various political factions were characterised as 'black-on-black' (Simpson, 1993). In addition, homicides committed by the security forces during this period were clearly constructed as being in defence of apartheid political agendas against the total onslaught of liberation organisations (de Kock, 1998; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003; SATRC, 1998). Certainly the particular political tone of much of this research and discourse, albeit somewhat modified, can still be found in some studies on homicide today (see for example, research on farm murders by Moolman, 2000; Strydom & Schutte, 2005).

The second major trend coincided with the socio-historical shift towards democratisation and the 'normalisation' of South African society. During this

period, there was a pre-occupation with the creation and maintenance of a stable political order, and the pursuit of economic fundamentals to ensure regional and global economic reinsertion. Discourses of liberation, national unity and the preservation of a 'rainbow' nation prevailed in the run-up and aftermath of the formal transition. Governmentality emerged more strongly in this period, and addressing threats to the legitimacy of the new state and associated social and economic order became a central feature of the 'new' South Africa (Bond, 2000; Hook, 2004a). In the context of new dispensation that was broadly acknowledged to be democratic in nature, the predominant strategic relation shifted away from an overt contestation of sovereign power, to one which was much more subtle and that tested the legitimacy of the new regime and its ability to deliver on citizenry rights.

Research also thus reflected an increasing utilisation of political technologies to address social problems such as crime and homicide. Science was deployed more consciously to address social phenomena that represented threats to the new order. Research studies into homicide showed a growing tendency to depart from the point that it was a problem of civil society and individuals, and not a problem of a political nature, despite the data sometimes being utilised in a highly politically charged manner (Keet, 2006; Mail & Guardian, 2006a, 2006b). While this in part reflects the social order's general defensive response in favour of the new dispensation and its reluctance to critically appraise itself in a post-conflict context, it also represented an opportune mechanism to conceal the deficits in this socio-political order. However, a significant portion of this type of research could also be attributed to a range of researchers and practitioners who authentically felt the need to employ their skills in a strategic manner within this context, to generate the greatest possible social gains for communities through research that increased resource allocation, and promoted policies that were in favour of historically marginalised sectors of the population.

As early as the late 1980s, descriptive epidemiological studies on injuries revealed interpersonal violence as a major determinant thereof (Butchart & Brown, 1991), and was later followed by more systemised studies revealing

homicide as a major determinant of non-natural mortality (see for example, Matzopoulos, 2003, 2004, 2005, and the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System [NIMSS]). These studies reflected early attempts to accurately quantify the extent and magnitude of the problem in transitional and post-apartheid South Africa, but were also indicative of the growing influence of public health on the violence prevention sector. They provided the basic descriptive data that allowed for the initial co-ordinates of the problem to be established and then to further develop our knowledge base thereof. This epistemic swing towards 'hard data' was accompanied by a tendency to take for granted the historical and contextual arguments that had been present in previous research, which was conspicuously absent from these studies. This of course can all be well appreciated and understood in light of the imperatives of governance, reform and the maintenance of law and order in the face of the threats of violence to a fledgling democracy, and thus the importance of data to drive broad-based, solution-focussed interventions to address this phenomenon. Targeted threats to this process of normalisation were identified and a higher premium placed on the identification of patterns and causes for violence that could be remedied through intervention efforts. Other studies by Ladikos (1995) and Snyman (1994) went a step beyond describing patterns of homicide and attempted typologies of homicide in South Africa. A further deepening of this trend can be seen in the utilisation of this descriptive data to attempt to draw linkages between homicide, environmental, product and socio-structural proxies (such as 'race') (Matzopoulos 2005; Thomson, 2004). More recently, a special focus has been placed on seeking the psychological or behavioural basis for homicide from a psycho-forensic basis, with a proliferation of studies on rage-type murders (Cartwright, 2001), serial killers and their profiles (Labuschagne, 2000; Pistorius, 2000, 2002), women who commit murder (Pistorius, 2004), and hired killers (Joubert, 2006). However, there have also been several studies that have focussed on the individual basis for homicide in specific instances or case studies, but have attempted to locate these within the contexts of a personal and social historiography of apartheid South Africa (de Kock, 1998; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003; Steinberg, 2004).

Despite many of these studies indirectly recognising the historical impact of sovereign power through an examination of operationalised indicators of inequality such as 'race' and socio-economic status and their relationships to homicide, the analyses contained therein were one step further removed from an overt engagement with power as a central feature of the homicidal encounter. Unlike many earlier studies in which power was a central concern around which arguments centred, many of these studies (with some exceptions) reflect a gradual trend towards ahistorical, decontextual and apolitical research processes in which power is frequently evacuated completely from the analysis of homicidal violence. Ironically, from a Foucauldian perspective, this is precisely the powerful nature of this type of research - a mechanism to ensure that the social order addresses social problems in a manner that does not fundamentally challenge the social system itself as the generator of the problem. As is the case in many post-conflict or transitional societies, critical social analyses are often surpassed by the imperatives of democratic consolidation and day-to-day governance; analyses take on a different slant to focus on policy and service delivery, and are often sterilised and sanitised of their critical social content. In contemporary South Africa, the study of homicide has therefore increasingly shifted from 'political' to 'civil', from 'social' to 'individual', and from 'polemical' to 'scientific'.

2.3.2. Effects on Epistemology, Methodology, Theory and Interventions

The particular forms of research into homicide in South Africa over the past two decades have resulted in specific implications, challenges, biases and limitations at an epistemological, methodological, and theoretical level that no doubt have had a bearing on praxis as well[14]. In particular, the overwhelming drive to 'scientifically', definitively and rationally account for homicide has resulted in an ongoing bias towards positivist research in this field of inquiry. Furthermore, the relationship between power and homicide has either been

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[14] While the author recognises that there are a diverse number of discourses and theoretical perspectives on violence that are heterogeneous in their analysis, these biases and limitations tend to characterise dominant and mainstream research and praxis in this field at present.

characterised by binaried conceptualisations in which contestations of sovereign power predominate, or simply omitted through the systematic dislodging and extrication of homicide and power from each other. This results in a partial understanding of homicide and power in relation to broad macro-social processes at best, limits our ability to explore the manner in which power as exercised within homicidal encounters relate to more everyday and diffuse forms of power, and minimises the likelihood of uncovering discontinuities and instabilities in our taken-for-granted understandings of homicide and its relationship to power.

The first of these implications relate to the epistemic shift towards the 'hard sciences'. While this shift away from the qualitative, critical social theorising conducted in the 1980s is in part a function of the changing social context, it also speaks to the appropriation of science in specific historical epochs in the service of hegemony. Seedat (2002) notes the preoccupation with positivist logic in the social and health sciences, especially in situations that stress measurement and control for the purposes of developing models of prediction for human behaviour. He suggests that this tends to occur in contexts that are particularly conducive to delimited intellectual appropriation (see Therborn, 1980, on this issue) and communicentrism, both of which are apparent in post-apartheid South Africa where the need to consolidate the pressures, demands and vicissitudes of a new democracy within the era of globalisation is paramount. Of course, this approach is also premised upon ontological assumptions that include the notion that contexts are static with universal rules that govern the functioning of human behaviour, and that all human behaviour occurs in relatively linear, causal relationships (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). It places hefty limitations on attempting to understand human behaviour in social, non-linear and dialectical terms, as well as in environments that are constantly changing and that are fundamentally dynamic. In the context of homicide research, the very fact that homicide itself has been defined differently over time and in various contexts means that it is not a static and absolute feature, but rather one that is socially determined, making its study as a fluid social phenomenon difficult within this dominant philosophical framework. This framework assumes that homicide as a phenomenon can in

fact be described and predicted 'objectively and scientifically' through for example, public health surveillance and by an analysis of risk factors related to products, individuals, families and environments, as well by examining the social correlates of homicide perpetration (Smith & Zahn, 1999). Fundamentally, the homicidal encounter is viewed as being related to at-risk individuals or groups rather than as a social and systemic manifestation, with various correlates and determinants impacting upon and shaping such individual or group behaviour[15]. Furthermore, researchers are considered neutral and objective experts who accurately operationalise constructs and interpret data as a singular factual truth, with limited space for research participants to convey their often multiple and less definitive interpretations of events. This restriction on understanding human subjectivity as it pertains to the enactment of violence reduces our ability to understand how social actors themselves come to understand the act of homicide within a specific social context, and may deprive us of a first-hand account and direct source of valuable information on meaning-making processes that may provide insights into the homicidal encounter from a critical psychological perspective.

Methodologically, the difficulties emerging from this type of quantitative research are also fairly self-evident. In an attempt to act 'scientifically', the emphasis on positivistic and quantitative empiricism to determine factual truths and to generalise this information to homicides more broadly, results in a notable absence of qualitative research methods. This tends to deny us the possibilities of engaging with multiple experiences of the homicidal encounter that are directly articulated by social actors, thereby restricting our exploration of systems of signification or discursive networks as they relate to power and homicide in relation to specific subjectivities and within particular socio-historical contexts. Furthermore, given the pervasiveness of homicide across the globe (Krug *et al.,* 2002), it is more likely that a greater number of

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[15] See the ***Chapter Two*** for research on homicide and relative poverty, social welfare spending, urban housing environments, levels of unemployment, social integration, and governance, all constructing these as risks to individuals and groups that require modification within existing social formations, rather than as fundamental expressions of asymmetrical social formations that themselves require redress.

differences rather than similarities are likely to be found when attempting to quantitatively describe 'typical homicides' through the use of these methodologies. Polk (1994) notes that the degree of inconsistency in descriptive studies makes comparisons very difficult, resulting in much of this research information lacking analytical value in understanding and preventing homicide.

At a theoretical level, while there is no doubt that much of the contemporary mainstream research has provided a broad understanding of the phenomenon of homicide, it has also constituted a particularly individually-oriented scientific approach to this object of social inquiry. Despite many of the afore-mentioned research studies focussing on personality, family, community, environmental, product, social and structural risks, they are ultimately directed at attempting to answer why one individual or group is more prone to commit homicide than others. Consequently, research in this area tends to be weighted heavily in the direction of perpetrator analyses and typologising[16], rather than focusing on homicide as a process that pivots around issues of power. This ultimately contributes to a discourse of individual or group criminal variance within populations and inadvertently conceals the pervasiveness of homicide internationally and the consequent imperative for a broader social analysis and theoretical orientation. This form of research has therefore also contributed to the constitution of particular human subjects, namely the criminal, criminally-prone, or individual with propensities towards homicidal interpersonal violence. Furthermore, when risk factors are correlated with homicide they may serve both a critical or reactionary function. While homicide may be related to specific psychological, familial, community and socio-structural risk factors and these can be critically commented upon as outcomes of socially asymmetrical contexts, the same correlations may be inverted to suggest that psychologically 'damaged' individuals, those from 'dysfunctional' families,

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[16] This does not preclude several studies that have attempted to examine victimisation in the homicidal encounter, such as those focussing on victim profiles and victim-offender relationships, but these tend to be limited by the data that can be reliably gained after the victim's demise.

those from fragmented and poor communities, or those who are from minority social categories, are more likely to commit homicides. In so doing, many contemporary studies in this area tend to implicitly re-inscribe existing power differentials within social formations, through a circular reinforcement of negative attributional relationships, re-affirming notions that the socially marginal are more at risk and *risky* within social formations (i.e. those on the periphery or margins of society are more dangerous and require greater social control interventions). Dominant theories within contemporary homicide research include psychological frameworks on development and familial functioning (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Freud, 1974; Kohlberg, 1981), classic criminological approaches ranging from rational choice theory (Cornish & Clarke, 1986) to social organisation theory and its variants (Bursik, 1988), as well as public health models (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Daly & Wilson, 1988). The theoretical limitations referred to above also restrict an analysis of homicide as a socially embedded act that reflects to some extent the power hierarchies within a given context, as the phenomenon of power itself is often not overtly addressed within these dominant theoretical frameworks, other than through operationalised indicators (such as socio-economic status) that may act as proxies of social asymmetries.

The direct impact of current approaches to research on homicide can be more visibly seen at the level of intervention praxis. Rather than addressing why certain individuals or groups appear to be more at-risk for homicide perpetration from a systemic and broader social perspective, the emphasis of current preventative interventions are premised predominantly on risk exposure reduction (e.g. reducing access to substances and firearms) (see for example, the work conducted by Gun Free South Africa, the Gun Control Alliance, the Alliance for Crime Prevention, and the Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programme). While these may entail substantial modifications within the social fabric and should be supported, they are truncated and do not necessarily address the sociogenic features of the social formation itself. Where risk exposure reduction is not possible, criminal justice approaches tend to dominate in the fields of policy and prevention practice, with an emphasis on deterrence, detection and incarceration (Altbeker, 2007; Butchart, 1996;

NCPS, 1996). Not surprisingly therefore, recent years have seen a proliferation of studies attempting to criminally profile subjects (Labuschagne, 2000; Pistorius, 2000, 2002). Even more disconcerting is the reactionary use of data emerging from contemporary research to support blatant discriminatory behaviours as illustrated by practices such as 'racial profiling' within law enforcement agencies across the world (Harris, 2003; Withrow, 2005), and increased global securitisation premised upon descriptive demographic information on homicide internationally (e.g. the tendency to restrict travel for certain social categories or nationalities) (Vale, 2003).

The most recent contemporary approaches to researching homicide unfortunately offer little in the way of understanding the actual operation of power within the act of homicide and the manner in which this comes to reflect the operation of power within the broader socio-historical context. By reframing the process of examining the relationship between power and homicide, a more comprehensive and sophisticated analysis of how it operates within this form of violence and comes to reflect the broader operation of power both at a micro- and macro-level of society, becomes possible. Such an approach allows us to look beyond taken-for-granted understandings of homicide and power, and to explore ruptures that may reveal that homicidal violence can simultaneously reflect an enactment, expression, outcome, contestation, resistance and exertion of power with a range of social and ideological effects and functions. Furthermore, it allows us to explore power in homicidal violence as reflective not only of sovereign forms of power operational, but more importantly, of the diffuse, everyday and self-regulatory forms of power that tend to operate within the capillaries or extremities of social formations (Foucault, 1977).

2.4. Reframing the Problematic: Re-Centralising Power in the Study of Homicide

Given the above challenges that face those working in this area, what is required is a general re-orientation and reframing of the fundamental research problematic. Rather than focussing on homicide purely as an act that allows for the analysis of perpetrators and the internal and external correlates and determinants that influence their behaviours, this research study was reframed to focus on homicide as an action that

allows for the analysis of the social formation in which it is embedded. In the latter instance, homicide is viewed as a social interaction that is influenced by social actors' subject positions and consequent interpretations of and locations within socio-historical contexts. It is therefore shaped by this context, reflects and reproduces it, and in some instances contests it. This not only locates homicide as a social act, but also allows for an analysis of the social formations in which it occurs as potentially 'homicide-inducing', and allows for a deeper level of theorising as well as a range of potential and alternative intervention strategies.

Furthermore, a fundamental component of the act of killing involves the expression of multiple forms and manifestations of power, predominantly within an interpersonal domain. However, based on the critical social analysis referred to above, the expression of such power within homicidal encounters also offers us a lens through which to explore the forms and content of power within social contexts. Moreover, this study is concerned with manifestations of power that extend beyond disputes for sovereign power to include more diffuse, everyday forms of power that operate on the extremities of society and that act in self-regulatory, self-reproductive, but also in discontinuous ways. This is not to suggest that power is the only explanatory dimension across which homicide should be analysed, but given its notable absence from many current studies, it is a critical element that requires consideration of we are to generate more holistic understandings of this social phenomenon. In addition, a focus on the qualitative aspects of power allows for a challenging of the notion that positivist quantitative studies represent the gold standard in social research, and also gives voice to subordinated methodological and analytical voices within social scientific research (Feyerabend, 1978; Seedat, 2002).

Such an approach to research into homicide is consistent with critical social analyses and allows for an interpretation that moves beyond the mainstream exploration of descriptors, risks, triggers and correlates that are so characteristic of positivist victim, perpetrator and interactional studies. It facilitates an inclusion of an assessment of the underlying social dynamics of power that are reflected in the act of killing within specific historical, cultural, social, subjective and intersubjective contexts. Understanding power in this context lends itself very well to a qualitative analysis that examines the spoken linguistic accounts of social actors as a vehicle for signification

and discursive transmission, and then attempts to locate them in their social and historical contexts. In accessing this kind of information, allowing social subjects themselves to express this through their own words and stories in a manner that is unencumbered by the strictures of quantitative research, is extremely beneficial. Schutz (in Mouton, 1988, pp. 5-6) makes a compelling argument for the necessity of engaging social actors' interpretations directly, when he notes that

> *[...] social reality [...] has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the human beings living, acting and thinking within it. By a series of commonsense constructs they have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought-objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it.*

Duncan (1993) notes that the self-articulated expressions of people in the course of their everyday lives reveals a commonsense understanding of their experiences of the world and is not only a valid source of knowledge and research data, but also a desirable form, as they emerge from the very social actors under examination. This no doubt raises the possibilities of analytical approaches such as discourse analysis in the examination of utterances, conversations and narratives of the social actors themselves. A discursive analysis of personal accounts of homicide is an ideal method for the analysis of power as a pervasive and diffuse feature of society, even though such analyses are always perspectival and oblique and may vary from perpetrator to perpetrator and context to context. As Parker (1990) argues, discourses reproduce power relations, and by examining discourses we are able to identify power as it operates coercively as well as power as a form of resistance. In addition, given the centrality of language in conveying discourses, it is perhaps instructive to reflect on Ngũgĩ's (2003) views on language as both fulfilling a subjugatory and resistant social role. Analysing language can therefore simultaneously reveal the manner in which subjects are interpellated into social formations as language conveys dominant socio-cultural models and prescriptions, but may also contest such dominant or hegemonic positions though linguistic devices, rhetorical strategies and repertoires that act as forms of resistance and disruption themselves.

van Dijk (1985, p. 5) furthermore suggests that within a narrational context, such an analysis is also useful as it not only reveals the operation of power at a macro-level, but also uncovers the persuasive intention of speakers as a form of power. He states that

> *[…] sentences when used in some specific context also should be assigned some additional meaning or function, an illocutionary one, to be defined in terms of speaker intentions, beliefs, or evaluations, or relations between speaker and hearer. In this way, not only could systematic properties of the context be accounted for, but also the relation between utterances as abstract linguistic objects and utterances taken as a form of social interaction could be explained.*

A qualitative approach of this nature allowed for participants to narrate their account of the homicidal encounter, and allowed the researcher to uncover systemised forms of meaning or signification (i.e. discursive networks) related to power within these narrations. The study was therefore concerned with how power is expressed, defended, enforced, resisted and desired in the social encounter of killing. Not only is it then possible to discern various forms of power that are operant within the social context together with their social functions and ideological effects, but we are also able to examine the functions of these discursive networks for the narrators in relation to their interlocutors within the interview context.

3. SCOPE:

3.1. Summary of the Present Study

The central focus of the present study involved an analysis of the talk from 30 individual interviews with a cohort of males who had been convicted of murder (as an exemplar of homicide), and who are presently incarcerated in a Department of Correctional Services' facility in Johannesburg, South Africa. In particular, the study focussed on a discursive analysis of their personal narratives of homicidal encounters in which they were involved, and attempted to explicitly uncover and analyse elements of power reflected within these narratives. Furthermore, the study aimed to illustrate the manner in which these elements of power are not only reflected within

the social formation, but also what their particular social functions and ideological effects are.

3.2.   Research Aims and Questions

The study therefore <u>aims</u> to:

(i)   **elicit and uncover *<u>discursive networks</u>* pertaining to power in the personal narratives of homicidal encounters of male participants who have been convicted and incarcerated for homicide in South Africa.**

(ii)   **illustrate the *<u>social basis and significance</u>* of these discourses by highlighting how they come to reflect, reproduce and contest relations of power that are operational within the broader social context within which the homicidal encounters are located.**

(iii) **highlight the *<u>functions and effects</u>* of these discourses, both within the broader socio-historical context as well as within the narrational context or immediate interlocutory space.**

More specifically, the <u>research questions</u> resulting from these aims are:

(a)   **What are the forms of power reflected in the discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(b)   **What is the social or thematic content of power reflected in the discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(c)   **What are the linguistic structures within the narrational talk of participants that convey the form and content of power reflected in discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(d)   **To what extent and in what ways do these discourses serve ideological functions associated with systemised forms of social asymmetry or domination within the broader socio-historical context?**

(e)   **To what extent and in what ways do these discourses act as critiques of ideology in so far as they contest ideological functions associated with systemised forms of social asymmetry or domination within the broader socio-historical context?**

(f)   **What are the functions and effects of these discourses for participants within the broader socio-historical context?**

(g)   **What are the functions and effects of these discourses for participants within the interlocutory context of narration?**

Firstly, the specific emphasis on men within the study was partly premised upon the fact that they are disproportionately implicated in homicides internationally and in South Africa. Because the study approached male homicide from the perspective adopted by many feminist writers, it was concerned with the very constitution of maleness within society, its relation to ideologies of patriarchy and sexism, the resultant gendered social relations that play themselves out in constructions of masculinities and femininities, and the manner in which violence is frequently performed as means of attaining a sense of ideal or 'successful' masculine identity. While a great deal of research has been conducted into gender violence more broadly (see ***Chapters Two and Three***), much less has been conducted in relation to male homicide in South Africa. In addition, gender and sexual asymmetries are relatively enduring features of most social formations despite social, political and economic transformations, making the study of highly gendered social behaviours such as homicide crucial to understanding its resilience, elasticity and mutability, but also its potential points of discontinuity. Also, rather than entrenching the stereotypical representations of certain cohorts of men being implicated in this form of violence (e.g. men from minority social categories), the study included a broad spectrum of men who were conveniently drawn upon, thereby allowing the data to comment on men, homicide and power more generally (i.e. there was no stratification or differentiation of the participants according to demographic and other social dimensions such as race, class and socio-economic status).

Secondly, the emphasis on incarcerated males who have been convicted of murder is not of course synonymous with homicide perpetration, but was a convenient manner

to engage directly with those involved in homicidal acts. While other forms of data analysis could have been conducted (e.g. docket analysis), the availability and reliability of this information in South Africa is extremely poor (see for example, Mathews, Abrahams, Martin, Vetten, van der Merwe & Jewkes, 2004; Prinsloo, 2004; Vetten, 2003). While working with this cohort raised its own challenges (that are dealt with in the *Chapter Five* in greater detail), incarcerated prisoners continue to present one of the only opportunities to engage with those involved in homicide directly in South Africa. Even though the author recognises that murder is not to be equated with homicide, it does represent one particular form of homicide that is therefore more easily open to social inquiry.

Finally, the methodological choice of a discursive analysis (see Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992, 1999; Potter & Wetherell, 1992; and Thompson's, 1990 *Depth Hermeneutic Model*) of the personal narratives of homicides has already been reflected upon earlier, but was certainly most appropriate for the form of data collection as well as the analysis of this data within the study. Not only is the narrative probably the ideal manner through which to elicit individual stories from participants, but it also allows for a reflexive analysis of the interaction between listener/researcher or narrator/participant (van Dijk, 1985). Also, given that the content of the data being analysed pertains to violence, power and masculinities, it will invariably intersect with ideological effects, functions and critiques when examining the encounter within its social location. Kress (1985, p. 30) notes that as an analytical tool for the study of ideological effects, discourse analysis is extremely valuable because the

> *[…] systematic organisation of content in discourse, drawing on and deriving from the prior classification of this material in an ideological system, leads to the systematic selection of linguistic categories and features in a text. […] A linguistic feature or category therefore never appears simply by itself – it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms which themselves realise discursive and ideological systems.*

3.3.   Significance of the Study

While a range of contemporary, mainstream, experimental research studies have provided us with useful information pertaining to male homicide, there are two fairly problematic consequences emerging from many such studies. Firstly, there is an implicit structuring of a discourse of *Othering* and social marginalisation that identifies 'dangerous' or 'at-risk' individuals or groups within populations, and this stymies our ability to comprehensively understand homicide as a socially embedded act. Furthermore, initiatives directed towards its prevention often then emphasise the need to induce adjustments within social formations to reduce and control homicide rates, and not to fundamentally challenge asymmetrical social contexts directly. This raises what Rappaport (1981) refers to as the paradox of prevention, as most strategies attempt preventative action within the confines of a status quo, when in fact it is often the status quo itself that directly generates the need for such preventative action in the first place. Prevention endeavours under these conditions run the risk of becoming ameliorative measures to conceal the contradictory nature of social contexts that are fundamentally implicated in facilitating violence[17]. A critical analysis of homicide as suggested in this study compels intervention practitioners to consider alternative strategies that of necessity will lean in the direction of critical social and political activism as well.

Secondly, the analysis of power as a central feature of homicide is almost always implied, peripheral or absent within these studies. This study therefore hopes to highlight ways in which research need not necessarily contribute to a discourse of difference and marginalisation through its focus on environmental, relational and product-related risks, but can rather involve a critical engagement with power relations within social contexts and their manifestations within homicidal acts. In the specific context of South Africa, these approaches may allow us to understand homicide beyond epidemiological patterns, trends and profiles, and allow for an

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[17] Emmett (2003) extends on this argument when suggesting that empowerment approaches in the social sciences with respect to crime and violence often fail because of the lack of recognition among practitioners of the social limitations that exist in communities before interventions are embarked upon, and that then almost predetermine their failure and facilitate a blaming of victims for their own plight.

illumination of subjective accounts and social meanings that social actors have utilised to understand this particular social interaction. In so doing too, the role of the social scientist as violence prevention researcher-practitioner is of necessity cast as social activist.

3.4.   Chapter Organisation

By way of concluding this chapter, a brief synopsis of the remaining chapters contained in this dissertation is provided. *Chapter Two* and *Chapter Three* focus on a literature review of the most salient quantitative and qualitative research that is of pertinence to the current study. It should be noted that it concentrates primarily on the actual research studies and findings, while the theoretical and conceptual considerations are summarised in an entirely separate chapter. Because of the complexity of the subject matter related to power, violence and several of the associated constructs within this study (such as ideology), *Chapter Four* has been devoted to the major definitional and theoretical considerations on which this study is premised. Thereafter, a detailed motivation for the use of the qualitative, rather than the quantitative approach, is provided in *Chapter Five*. Furthermore, discourse analysis, as a specific form of qualitative analysis, is also discussed as an appropriate research approach to the study of power and violence. Finally, the aims, research questions, data collection methods, procedures and method of analysis of the current study, are also highlighted in this methodological chapter. It is generally accepted that the use of discourse analysis is accompanied by an integrated analytical report section in which both the data or results and the discussion and analysis thereof are combined (Potter & Wetherell, 1992)[18]. *Chapter Six* constitutes such a report and provides a qualitative explication of the collected data. Finally, *Chapter Seven* concludes with a summary of the primary research outcomes, together with the significance of these findings. In addition, brief assessments of the limitations of this study as well as the prospects for future research are also addressed.

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[18] This differs from traditional quantitative studies in which the results or data sections are separated from the analytical or discussion sections within research studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW – QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

There is no 'scientific method'; there is no single procedure, or set of rules that underlines every piece of research and guarantees that it is 'scientific' and, therefore, trustworthy. The idea of a universal and stable method that is an unchanging measure of adequacy and even the idea of a universal and stable rationality is as unrealistic as the idea of a universal and stable measuring instrument that measures any magnitude, no matter what the circumstances.

(Paul Feyerabend, 1978, *Science in a Free Society*)

1. INTRODUCTION:

While this study is of a qualitative nature, it would be remiss to negate the plethora of quantitative research that has been conducted into homicide, both internationally and within South Africa. This is particularly so, given the contributions of quantitative research studies to understanding and mapping the characteristics of homicide, together with its utility in advocacy and lobbying in many instances. From more individually-oriented studies that explored the relationships between personal attributes and homicide, to correlates within the social formation that tend to be implicated within homicide, these studies have been instrumental in arguing for the importance of child-care practices, developmental strategies to minimise violence, as well as to advocate and lobby for improved living conditions, employment opportunities, and increased social welfare spending (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

Moreover though, a focus on these studies is not only important to understand such contributions, but also to illustrate how many of these studies have come to form the canvass of hegemonic discourses on homicide in contemporary society. In his work on the birth of the socio-medical sciences, Foucault (1976) argued that certain social ills such as violent crime increasingly became managed through bio-power – a political technology that attempts to control the bodies of entire populations – which has been accomplished through *"an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations"* (p. 140). Disciplines such as medicine, sociology, criminology, psychology and penology all emerged within this context not only to understand and surveil

populations and their behaviours, but also started to determine what was considered deviant versus normal, and culminated in remedial strategies in the form of moral orthopaedics (Hook, 2004b). If we are to accept Foucault's (1980) conceptualisation of the integral relationship between power and knowledge, and recognise that knowledge comes to constitute specific power relations while simultaneously being employed to maintain such power relations, then it becomes clear that the preponderance of quantitative studies have also helped to construct dominant discourses on homicide that prevail today. Foucault (1980, p. 52) suggests that *"the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power"*. Armstrong (1990, p. 1225) notes that quantitative methods *"enabled the extent and range"* of ills within communities to be mapped alongside their characteristics and formed the basis for extending the socio-medical gaze to populations at large, but also that it yielded certain tautological effects with regard to object and subject formation. In focussing on violent crime, the object of homicide was generated, and the homicidal perpetrator was born as subject. Extending on this argument, it is apparent that quantitative studies on homicide have not only produced a fulcrum for social reform, lobbying and advocacy, but also constituted the homicidal subject as predominantly male, with specific physiological or psychological deficits in constitution, located within minority groups with lower levels of relative wealth and social resources, and with previous exposure to violence. The tautology here is self-evident as the very correlates that are determined as 'causal' to homicide, are also the correlates that are deployed to predict, identify and constitute potential homicidal subjects. Given the dominance of positivist rationality that has characterised modernist thinking, it is not surprising that many of these studies have therefore come to form the basis for hegemonic discourses surrounding homicide. It is therefore critical to review such studies as they provide us with some account of the backdrop against which to view and analyse many of the discursive networks emerging from the narratives of the participants, and more specifically, to examine the social functions and ideological effects of hegemonic discourses that are appropriated and deployed by participants. In addition, such a foundation also allows us to be more attentive and alert to the presence of potentially subordinated and subversive discourses within these narratives.

2. ANTECEDENTS OF CURRENT QUANTITATIVE HOMICIDE RESEARCH:

At present much of the quantitative research into understanding homicide tends to be clustered around four primary areas. Since Wolfgang's (1958) seminal work on criminal

homicide, the idea that homicides are not homogeneous and may have varied geneses has taken root. However, rather than fundamentally altering methodological approaches, the result has been an increasing attempt to typologise homicide as a multidimensional, heterogeneous social phenomenon. The first primary area of study represents the most basic of descriptive data and focuses on victims of homicide. It has generally drawn on surveillance methodologies (Holder, Peden, Krug, Lund, Gururaj & Kobusingye, 2001; Matzopoulos, 2004, 2005) within the context of hospitals, mortuaries, police reports and state statistics, and essentially begins to describe who within populations are likely to be most at-risk for being killed through interpersonal violence. While not being a focus of this chapter, it is nevertheless important to note as it feeds into understandings of homicide, especially from a relational and interactional perspective, by examining the relationships between victims and perpetrators and the environments of violence.

More central to this study though, are the second, third and fourth key areas that follow. These include studies of the individual factors underpinning homicide perpetration (e.g. Farrington, 1998; Kandel & Mednick, 1991); the relational, interactional and community factors and spaces in which the homicidal event occurs (e.g. Blumstein, 1995; McCord, 1979; Thornberry, Huizinga & Loeber, 1995); and the social factors that are correlated with homicide perpetration. Individually-oriented studies have tended to emphasise the physiological and psychological attributes that are implicated in homicide perpetration, while relational, interactional and community studies have largely explored aspects such as learned behaviours, victim-perpetrator relationships, encounter circumstances, triggers, weapons utilised, location, temporality, alcohol-relatedness, and instrumentality versus expressiveness, amongst others. Finally, studies examining the social aspects of homicide (e.g. Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 1999; Messner, 1988; Schneidman, 1996) have generally centred on issues of poverty, social welfare provision, and employment, as integral structural and cultural correlates of homicide trends within specific sectors of the population.

Given the significant number of theoretical approaches to the study of homicide and its genesis, this section is primarily concerned with reviewing some of the most salient historical antecedents of contemporary theories associated with this quantitative research area.

2.1.   Individually-Oriented Approaches

Certainly one of the longstanding approaches to homicide research that is still employed today can be characterised as individually-oriented, in so far as it relies on intrapsychic, physiological or evolutionary analyses that suggest that the causes of homicidal behaviours are rooted within individuals' psychological or physiological constitutions.

The early works of Lombroso (Lombroso & Lombroso-Ferrero, 1972) suggested that criminal behaviour represented an atavism that was related to primitive evolutionary forms of human development to which people reverted, and he thus focussed on measuring the physical differences in anatomical structure between prisoners and the general population. While his findings were contested by scholars such as Goring (1913), this approach also gained credibility through the work of Hooton (1939) who compared criminals and non-criminals and found differences across several physical traits such as body size, and later, was bolstered by the research of Sheldon (1949) on body types (i.e. endomorphs, mesomorphs and ectomorphs) when he found that most delinquent youths in his studies were of the mesomorph categorisation. While these studies have come under severe methodological criticism (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989), they have nevertheless formed the basis for contemporary *sociobiological approaches* that have tended to emphasise the correlations between intelligence, cytogenetics, biochemistry, endocrinology, physiology and criminality (Mednick & Christiansen, 1977; Jeffery, 1970; Rowe, 1983; West & Farrington, 1973).

From a *psychological standpoint*, the work of Sigmund Freud has been extremely influential in considering intrapsychic dynamics and its relationship to aggression and criminality. While Freud (1974) himself did not devote a great deal of attention to criminality, his drive theory on aggression and the structural model of the psyche has generated a host of subsequent studies and research, especially on the correlation between personality-type measures and criminality (Cleckley, 1964; Conger & Miller, 1966; Glueck & Glueck, 1968). In addition, based on the principles of psychodynamic theory, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik and Levinson (1993) postulated an authoritarian personality that was more predisposed to violence and prejudice than other personality types – a theoretical position that still has a foothold in social psychological studies today (Duckitt, 1991). Furthermore, cognitive approaches within psychology from

theorists such as Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1981) also emphasised the centrality of appropriate cognitive development and the ability to reason morally, and retains a significant following in contemporary studies on criminality, aggression and antisocial behaviour.

While varying degrees of empirical evidence exists for all of these theoretical positions, the primary criticism levelled against them has been the deterministic and essentialising tendency to overemphasise individual attributes as a causal component of homicide, and a consequent neglect of more social and acquired or learned aspects that may impact on patterns of violence.

2.2.   Relational, Interactional and Community Approaches

This broad approach to understanding violence has tended to focus on the relationships between violent behaviours and the immediate external factors that have come to shape them. While not homogeneous in orientation, these theories have all stressed the importance of interactions between individuals and various elements that produce the predisposition for the homicidal encounter to occur. Included within this approach has been the historical focus on the relationships between individuals and parenting, families and peer-groups. More recently though, it has included emphases on the available products that may be pivotal to violence, the environmental context of communities, and the manner in which these are able to influence the individual's relationship to violence as a dominant behavioural repertoire.

Early *criminological and sociological research* focussed on differential association theory (Sutherland, 1947), which was an approach that essentially argued that criminal behaviour was learned in interactions with others and in contexts where there were limited prohibitions against such behaviours. Extending upon this approach, Matza's (1964) drift theory suggested that individuals do not simply acquire criminal behaviour through learning, but also neutralise themselves against responsibility and drift in and out of delinquency and criminality as a response to varying social demands in adverse contexts in which moral bounds are ambiguous. Goal directedness and free-will are central to this orientation and corresponds at some level with the increasing utilisation of latter day rational choice theory (Siegel, 1992), that assumes that individuals rationally choose the best action according to preferences and

constraints facing them after weighing up the risks and benefits of their behaviours. In moving beyond the learned and rational decisioning components of crime and violence, Reckless (1961) and Hirschi (1979) focussed on aspects within the immediate environment that facilitated control and policing of potential delinquent and criminal behaviours. This perspective, referred to as control theory, suggested that internal containment (i.e. features of personality that were not conducive to violence and crime) and external containment (i.e. social prohibitions) were both imperative to insulate individuals from crime. Furthermore, social bonds were also considered central to the prevention of crime, particularly in the contexts of immediate peers and familial relations. In the absence of these features of containment and bonding, crime was perceived as a more likely outcome for individuals.

Similar developments can be traced in relation to the application of *psychological theory* to understandings of violence, aggression, criminality and delinquency. In focussing on external environmental influences as well as the interaction between the individual and context in the production of violence and aggression, behavioural and social learning theories have historically dominated the landscape of studies examining this phenomenon. Skinner's (1974) work argued against mentalistic explanations of aggression and rather favoured the idea that aggression is an operant behaviour that is acquired through processes of reinforcement. Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939) cogently posited in their frustration-aggression hypothesis that all aggression is underpinned by a frustration or obstruction of certain drives or goals, and that aggression may be one potential outcome if it is socially sanctioned and there is an absence of others strategies to manage the frustration (Berkowitz, 1989). While shifting from Skinner's radical behaviourism and the strong internal focus of the frustration-aggression hypothesis, Bandura (1973), Rotter (1954) and Mischel (1968) also regarded the environment and external influences on the individual as central to learning aggression and violence, but simultaneously focussed on the individual's motivations, expectations and assessment of potential outcomes when imitating and learning behaviours from others in social interactions. Thus, a relational component within social contexts became central to understanding how individuals become more predisposed to violence, aggression and homicide (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1997).

The contemporary applications of the above-mentioned criminological, sociological and psychological theories abound in the extant literature, especially in relation to studies exploring the impact of parenting on the acquisition of violent behaviours in children (e.g. McCord, 1979); the family as a learning context for violence (e.g. Farrington, 1998); the peer group as a facilitative or constraining social and interactional space for acquiring violent behavioural repertoires (e.g. Thornberry, Huizinga & Loeber, 1995); the proliferation of gangsterism and its impact on criminality and violence (e.g. Pinnock, 1997; Rodgers, 1999); and the influence of exposure to violence in immediate social environments on the acquisition of violent behaviours (e.g. Buckingham, 2000).

In attempting to address many of the limitations of previous research into homicide, a more current theoretical focus includes holistic analyses of the relationships between individuals, products and environments, thereby allowing for an examination of the interactional convergence of several factors that may increase the risk for, or trigger, the homicidal encounter. In employing Haddon's (1980) Matrix, this research has frequently focussed on the relationship between vectors/agents/mechanisms (e.g. firearms), hosts (e.g. persons) and environments (e.g. social and physical) in the occurrence of injuries (including homicide) over a specific temporal period. In addition, this research has also drawn on *ecological theory* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to understand violence as occurring at multiple levels and therefore being simultaneously related to individuals, families, groups, communities and the broader social fabric. This approach to research into homicide was partially illustrated in Wolfgang's (1958) ground-breaking study in Philadelphia, and even though not articulated as public health research, has been a compelling antecedent of current *public health research* into homicide (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

While these approaches have certainly all contributed to our understanding of the phenomenon at a relational, interactional and community level, they continue to raise debates as to the roles of human agency and environmental determinism in the generation of homicidal violence. Furthermore, and more crucially, many of these studies tend to descriptively map homicide and are therefore often devoid of much of their potential political, social and historical character.

2.3.   Social Approaches

A final trajectory in research into homicide, violence and aggression can generally be characterised as more social in orientation, but once again draws on a range of criminological, sociological, psychological and political theories to explicate relationships between social environments and homicide. Unlike the previously referred to theoretical frameworks that have shaped quantitative research, this approach places the genesis of violent behaviours such as homicide squarely within social contexts. At the risk of conflating this diverse theoretical landscape, the following section examines these perspectives in the context of social organisation, emphasising socio-cultural and socio-structural analytic trends in homicide research.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti's (1967) work on violence revealed consistently that young males from lower classes were implicated in acts of violence – a finding that still holds in contemporary research. In attempting to understand this phenomenon, they postulated that a ***sub-culture of violence*** existed within these communities, in which violence was the norm and was in fact legitimised as a component of social interaction. While failing to note the reasons for this normative trend, and therefore being criticised as class biased and ethnocentric (Bulhan, 1989), it is nevertheless a framework that has persisted due to the empirical evidence that has broadly supported it. Adaptations of the sub-culture of violence thesis have been employed to understand regional and racialised differences in homicide patterns and rates in the south of the United States of America, and have suggested that the historical pervasiveness of violence in these environments has resulted in a belief system that reinforces the idea that violence is a legitimate, credible, normalised and socially sanctioned means of interacting, which is also learned and transmitted inter-generationally (Corzine, Huff-Corzine & Whitt, 1999). More recently, there has been a resurgence of adaptations of this approach in attempting to understand the genesis of violence in contexts of continuous war, civil strife and oppression. Referred to as the ***culture of violence thesis***, this approach has argued that in social formations where violence is normative, omnipresent and where there are few alternatives to violent resolution of conflicts, that it becomes an acceptable and even desirable means of social relating and survival across the entire context to varying degrees (Bedoya Marín & Jaramillo Martínez, 1991; Christie, 2001; Vogelman, 1990).

Much of the work conducted on socio-structural factors that are implicated in homicide owe their existence to Durkheim's (Giddens, 1979) functionalist conception of anomie and Marx's (Kamenka, 1983) structuralist conception of class exploitation, alienation, the centrality of the economic base, and the oppressive functions of the ideological superstructure. These approaches tend to emphasise the impact of social structure, as one component of social organisation, on trends related to violence and homicide in particular.

Durkheim's (Giddens, 1979) understanding of anomie suggested that when societies undergo significant changes in terms of their development, levels of growth, urbanisation and industrialisation, that the social formation loses its ability to regulate and control the aspirational pursuits of its subjects. Essentially, approaches that stem from the Durkheimian tradition suggest that certain socio-structural factors may undermine social control or create a strain in the attainment of aspirations, thereby encouraging asocial and criminal behaviours. *Social disorganisation theory* (Shaw & McKay, 1942), has consistently argued and gained empirical support for its postulations that with development, comes increasing levels of institutional breakdown, population heterogeneity and transition, economic dependence, urban blight, and therefore a lack of regulation and social control over deviant behaviours such as criminality. Despite not being able to adequately account for why differences in criminality within populations in such contexts still occur, this approach has nevertheless had an enduring impact on research into homicide trends.

More recently, some of these arguments on social disintegration have been extended into the realm of studies on *social capital* and its relationship to crime and violence. Social capital essentially refers to the extent to which social networks exist within communities and social formations, and the degree to which they facilitate a set of values and norms that are shared within populations that allows them to support and co-operate with each other (Fukuyama, 1999; Putnam, 2000). It is normally evident in the degree of institutional strength, civic participation, community ties/bonds and trust – all of which help to collectively regulate social behaviour in a prosocial direction away from crime and violence (Emmett, 2000).

In addition, *strain theory* (Merton, 1957) and its variants have argued that there are specific culturally determined aspirations that are generated within contexts but that

social structures may then inhibit the attainment of these aspirations, resulting in strain and the potential for the transgression of acceptable social norms. This double-bind that exists in modern market-driven social formations has also been articulated in social psychology through *relative deprivation theory* (Gurr, 1970) and also through more critical psychological approaches such as the *constrained-strained theory* of Bulhan (1987). Relative deprivation theory also suggests that conflicts are likely to arise as groups evaluate themselves relative to others and perceive some form of deprivation, and see minimal possibility for social mobility to attain aspirational levels that are prescribed within that context; while the constrained-strained theory proposes that a constraining social, political and economic environment places psychological strain on individuals and increases the propensity for escalating violence to be enacted by and within marginalised groups as this remains the only domain in which they can exert some influence and power.

Finally, *Marxist and neo-Marxist contributions* (Kamenka, 1983; McLellan, 1979) on class stratification, economic exploitation, alienation, powerlessness and ideological hegemony have also been widely utilised in conflict studies on homicide, criminality and violence (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989). Essentially, this view has argued that economic disparities embodied in class stratification, alongside ideological interpellation, give rise to continuous forms of alienation and powerlessness within working class communities. Legal prohibitions against socially deviant behaviour are seen as serving specific class interests, and crime and violence are therefore logical manifestations of alienation, localised attempts to reclaim power, and anarchic forms of organic social resistance to socio-economic and political oppression. While not explicitly Marxist in orientation, Fanon (Bulhan, 1985) has also argued that the structural basis of oppression results in the double-bind of a Manichean worldview in which the oppressed have a foreshortened sense of future. He suggests that this generates internalised psychological oppression and spirals of violence, especially within oppressed communities who frequently have no alternative modality or interactional space in which to enact power on others, given their overwhelming sense of powerlessness within the oppressive context. While these perspectives have certainly added a great deal of substance to social and psychological understandings of crime, violence and homicide, they have also been critiqued for being socially

deterministic and complicitous in minimising the severity of violence and the culpability of those individuals enacting it.

Within contemporary quantitative research that utilises social approaches to understanding homicide, there has been a tendency to focus on the major socio-structural and socio-cultural correlates of homicide that are invariably linked to social stratification variables such as 'race', social class, age and gender, and the manner in which these may act as proxy measures for a range of other factors of inequality in daily living. More salient exemplars of this type of research include studies on the relationship between homicidal violence and contexts of social transition (e.g. Schneidman, 1996; Shaw, 1998), wealth disparities such as income inequality and relative poverty (e.g. Gartner, 1990), 'race' as a proxy measure for inequality (e.g. Parker & McCall, 1999), and access to social welfare benefits (e.g. Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997), amongst others.

Such studies go a long way in attempting to operationalise discrepancies and equity differentials within social formations, and to examine how they impact on trends in homicidal violence. While a sound evidentiary base exists in support of most social approaches, there are also instances of extreme inconsistency in results and findings that have as yet not been fully accounted for. In addition, more radical proponents frequently suggest that ameliorative strategies directed towards reducing social differentials associated with homicide are merely reformist and do not take into account the systemic implications thereof. However, radical proponents are also frequently critiqued for not sufficiently lobbying for reform and substantively articulating what comprehensive social transformation would entail in the prevention of homicidal violence. Finally, while many of the social approaches are founded upon sound social theory, the imperatives of quantification within research have often diminished and rounded their potentially critical edges. The consequence can be seen in the fact that many of these studies tend to engage with power and inequality as givens that are represented by proxy social differentials, rather than with how power and these social differentials are manifest within the fabric of homicidal encounters themselves.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS IN QUANTITATIVE HOMICIDE RESEARCH:

3.1. Individually-Oriented Findings

3.1.1. Physiological Factors

While many social researchers in the area of violence are fairly sceptical and even dismissive of the following findings, it nevertheless remains a body of knowledge that is constantly developing. Given the advances within the medical sciences as well as in auxiliary technological developments, this form of research and the resultant findings can not simply be discharged without some consideration thereof. In particular, the resurgence and growth in this area of research has acquired an additional impetus through, for example, the constantly unfolding human genome project, and associated developments in fields such as genetics.

Studies on the relationship between *genetics* and violence date back to the early 1900s, when one of the largest systematic adoption studies in Denmark revealed that boys who had biological parents with criminal backgrounds had a 20% likelihood of themselves having one criminal conviction, as opposed to boys whose adoptive parents had a criminal background who only had a 14.7% likelihood of similar convictions. Mednick and Christiansen (1977) argued that this implicated a genetic transmission of criminality and in addition, found that monozygotic twins had a significantly higher probability of criminality than dizygotic twins, supporting even further the genetic hypothesis.

Jacobs, Brunton, Melville, Brittain & McClermont (1965) also found a disproportionately higher rate of men in a maximum security prison in Scotland who had an additional Y-chromosome. The XYY-sex chromosome theory was supported by a study in Denmark by Witkin, Mednick, Schulsinger, Bakkestrom, Christiansen, Goodenough, Hirschhorn, Lundsteen, Owen, Philip, Rubin & Stocking (1976) who suggested that those men with XYY chromosomes in their study had a 40% prevalence rate of criminality as opposed to the 9.3% in the normal population.

Brunner, Nelen, Breakefield, Ropers and van Oost (1993) suggested a link between a genetic variant causing Monoamine Oxidase-A deficiency and violent behaviours in males. This was supported by Caspi, McClay, Moffitt, Mill, Martin, Craig, Taylor and Poulton (2002) who found that this variant increased the likelihood of antisocial behaviour in males who had been maltreated by four times, as compared to those males who had experienced maltreatment, but who did not have the variant. Lesch and Merschdorf (2000) also suggested that serotonin pathway genes were tentatively implicated in antisocial, aggressive, impulsive and violent behaviour, further supporting the genetic hypothesis.

While some evidentiary basis for a genetic hypothesis can certainly be found in the literature, it has often been critiqued for not accounting fully for how genetic anomalies and transmission become translated into violent or criminal behaviours. The absence of the mechanism of translation has therefore undermined the degree to which these studies have been accepted widely within the social sciences. In addition, most geneticists today would accept the interactional effects of genetics and environmental factors as well as the argument that genetic anomalies may also be associated with a range of additional adaptational problems that may also predispose individuals to aggressive or violent behaviour. Furthermore, the field of genetics and criminality and its historical relationship to the eugenics movement as well as to more contemporary studies that have suggested that genetic anomalies are more prevalent among the Maori and Asian/Pacific Islanders, for example (Sabol, Hu & Hamer, 1998), raises the possibility for research that re-inscribes minority deficit models.

More contemporary *sociobiological research* suggests that there are interactional effects between biology, neurobiology, neurotransmitters, the endocrine system, environmental factors and violent behaviours. Drawing on medical research as well as the field of comparative psychology, violent behaviours are seen as an outcome of the interaction between various factors that also include physiology at some level.

Kandel and Mednick (1991) showed that 80% of youth arrested for violent crimes had higher rates of delivery complications at birth, pointing to some congenital effects. Farrington (1997) also found that youth with a lower resting heart-rate showed greater propensities for risk-taking behaviours that may predispose them to violence and aggression. Comparative research on animals has also suggested that violence is built into the neurological machinery of humans and that the limbic system in particular is responsible for increased aggression (e.g. stimulation of the hypothalamus and amygdala or damage to the frontal cortex and its associated executive functions) and for heightened levels of risk taking, especially amongst males (Lewis, 1992).

Comparative research has also shown that prenatal exposure to certain hormones such as androgens due to maternal stress can sensitise the foetal brain and contribute to hypervigilance and aggression in later life (Floody & Pfaff, 1974; Rutter, 1970). In addition, testosterone increases at this stage as a result of rapid responses to environmental stimuli from mothers may also be associated with postnatal aggressiveness in infants (Lewis, 1992). With regard to neurotransmitters, animal studies have highlighted how norepinephrine may in fact inhibit certain inhibitors of aggression in males in particular (Reis, 1974), while dopamine blocking or reduced synthesis may result in diminished aggressive behaviours (Lycke, Modigh & Roos, 1969). However, most comparative studies on animals concede that the transposition of this research directly onto human behaviour as explanations are problematic at best, and furthermore acknowledge that while the exact mechanisms of causality are not understood, that there is clearly an interaction between physiological factors and environmental influences.

Finally, *evolutionary psychology* has long held that violence is a condition that is hard-wired into the constitution of humans as species, and in particular, that these differences occur across sex. More recent research has supported this argument by suggesting that gendered differences that are correlated with differences in behaviours and disease patterns between men and women may be present at a neurological level within the structures of the brain itself (Dennis, 2004; Goldstein, Seidman, Horton, Makris, Kennedy, Caviness,

Faraone & Tsuang, 2001). Using advanced Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) techniques, this research has highlighted the notion of the gendered brain or sexual dimorphism in the brains of men and women that implicate differences in information processing, sexual preferences, and sex-biased conditions such as depression – all of which may have some impact on behavioural repertoires that either inhibit or facilitate aggression.

A more established argument suggesting evolutionary precursors for risk-taking behaviours and violence also exists (Nell, 2002) and has its origins in Darwinian Theory of natural selection, suggesting that all species tend to survive because of the fittest elements within the species (Workman & Reader, 2004). With regard to homicide research, the most prominent authors who have articulated this view have been Daly and Wilson (1988) in their seminal review of various forms of homicide. Arguing from the perspective that survival is related to human traits that are most adaptive from one generation to the next, and that fitness should be viewed in the context of reproductive continuity over generations, Daly and Wilson (1988) have reviewed a myriad of heterogeneous acts that are considered homicidal. Using an array of international, ethnographic data sets, they provide a cogent analysis of homicide from an evolutionary perspective. With regard to violence within families (either genetically similar or dissimilar), they suggest that sibling rivalry over familial property acquisition, inheritance disputes and resources often feature strongly in the international data, and gives credence to ideas that self-interest and interpersonal conflict over access to such resources are viewed as a means towards fitness attainment in relation to others within the species, especially non-genetic relatives. In examining ethnographic research on infanticide, they also argue that it frequently represents the rational choice of mothers making strategic fitness decisions about scarce maternal or other resource allocation (e.g. with the killing of one twin), or that fathers who have offspring whose features provoke suspicion that they are not the biological parent may demand the infant's death in some instances to ensure fitness adaptations for self and family. Female-selective infanticides and their relation to fitness in specific cultural milieus are linked to the value that male infants are bestowed with, as they invoke certain material benefits for families in the

long term, thus enhancing survivability and fitness. Furthermore, they suggest that 'fatherless' children, children with congenital defects or mental illnesses are often implicitly assessed by parents for the cost-benefit ratios in terms of fitness (i.e. that they have a negative fitness value), frequently resulting in violence and homicide. Violence against women partners or daughters is also understood primarily from a perspective which argues that males control the reproductive capacity of the species through the control of productive women. Following on this they therefore suggest that male-on-male violence predominates across all data sets partly because men have a higher fitness ceiling on reproduction than women, making them more competitive and increasing sexual rivalry and the consequent commodification and control of women. In instances where sexual rivalry is not the central focus of the homicide between males, the violent altercation is often around material resources or social resources such as face, honour and status as a means towards fitness, while seemingly vengeful homicides are understood in terns of the species adaptation to containing lethal conflict and ensuring survival[19].

While providing compelling data and sound theoretical arguments, there are nevertheless several glaring critiques of this approach. The first pertains to gendered differences in the neurobiology of men and women, and the fact that while such differences may account for differential behavioural clusters, causality is often difficult to determine and the mediating impact of environmental factors has to be recognised. In addition, the degree of similarity between the neurobiology of men and women far outweighs their sexual dimorphism, suggesting that we are more similar than dissimilar. While evolutionary theory certainly attempts to account for violent behaviour despite social prohibitions against it, there are many instances within international data sets that can not easily be accounted for by this approach (e.g. rape-murder of older women who have a negative fitness value). In addition, the degree to which current social contexts are explored as contributors to the maintenance

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[19] Nell (2006) however also argues that violence is integrally related to evolutionary patterns of predation, which deviates from Daly and Wilson's (1988) views to some extent.

and escalation of homicidal violence often appears as peripheral and not central to such arguments, thereby raising the plausibility of politically opportunistic and socially reactionary research. Here in particular, research that denies the cultural, historical and ideological meanings that are overlaid onto violence, runs the risk of deflecting responsibility away from human culpability and/or social conditions, back to ancestral hard-wiring.

3.1.2. Psychological Factors

Similarly, psychology has a lengthy tradition of attempting to determine constitutional factors at an intrapsychic, cognitive and moral level to account for individual differences in violent behaviour. As a psychological component that is characterised by our states of arousal and arousal responses to situational circumstances, and that is also influenced by both prenatal and postnatal factors and exposures, *temperament* has also been implicated in research findings on violent behaviour. Earlier work by Eysenck (1977) and Eysenck and Gudjonsson (1989) attempted to link constitutional factors to violent behaviours. Both studies noted a relationship between the autonomic nervous system and delinquent behaviours, specifically that more excitable and less inhibited individuals were more prone to violence than those who displayed greater levels of reflex inhibition. While being methodologically critiqued, more recent studies have also supported the contention of a correlation between temperament and violence. Henry, Avsalom, Moffitt, and Silva (1996) found a relationship between impulsivity in childhood and convictions for violence in adolescence, while Caspi and Silva, (1995) also noted that negative emotionality such as avoidance, caution and anxiety in childhood had an inverse relationship to violence among the same youth. More recently, Follingstad, Bradley, Helff and Laughlin (2007) have also noted an angry temperament as a correlate and predictor for dating violence in later life.

Low intelligence scores have also been found to be a consistent correlate and predictor of violence in later life, dating back from studies in the early 1900s to present day (Bartollas & Dinitz, 1989; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; West & Farrington, 1973). However, while the propensity to enact violence was stronger in many of these individuals, Hollin (1989) suggests that it is not

necessarily a major factor that always predicts extreme violence such as homicide. Rather, it may be a reflection of poor impulse control and a limited set of psychological and social resources that are often associated with low intelligence, which in turn impact on the individual's ability to manage conflictual encounters.

Running parallel to cognitive development, and associated with it, research on *moral development* in children (Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1932) has also been a focus as a potential correlate of violence. However, while most contemporary writers acknowledge that moral reasoning is an important internal psychological process (Garbarino, 1995), it is also relative to context and therefore not simply a direct determinant of violence in later life. Illustrative studies within South Africa suggest that adverse circumstantial influences on moral reasoning do not always translate into more diffuse forms of truncated moral reasoning. Dawes (1994) and Straker (1992) note that exposure to political violence in South Africa has not in and of itself reduced moral reasoning among children and resulted in greater proclivities towards violence, and that in instances where such acts do occur, that they are not generalisable to contexts outside of the political terrain.

With regard to *psychopathology*, children who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders or Oppositional Defiant Disorder tend to be at greater risk for asocial behaviours and also for developing Conduct Disorder if their initial symptoms persist into adolescence – both of which include an increased potential for impulsive and violent acting out. Conduct Disorders in childhood and adolescence are also relatively good predictors for later antisocial behaviour and possible psychopathy, especially if there are comorbid diagnoses such as substance abuse, alongside poor social resources (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Cartwright (2001), in his review of research on psychiatric illnesses and their relationships to rage-type homicides (see for example, Blackburn, 1993; Hollin, 1989), notes that while psychotic disorders such as Paranoid Schizophrenia are sometimes implicated in homicides, that these form the minority of instances. In addition, he notes that studies on Depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder tend to *"endow an*

individual with a greater propensity for explosive violence" (p. 14) of this nature.

With regard to ***personality types and disorders***, Glueck and Glueck (1968) found that delinquents were more assertive, unafraid, aggressive and unconventional in their attitudes that non-delinquents who were more self-controlled perceptive and responsive to social cues. Conger and Miller (1966) also found that delinquents were rated more highly on average than their non-delinquent counterparts, as emotionally unstable, suspicious, hostile, and unhappy. Earlier studies using the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) found that violent criminals deviated from the general population on traits of psychopathy, schizophrenia and hypomania (Hathaway & McKinley, 1951). Many of these studies have provided the basis for the consistent associations of personality and certain personality disorders (e.g. the Antisocial Personality Disorder) with violent acts that include homicide (APA, 2000; Sadock & Sadock, 2007), the Borderline Personality Disorder (Cartwright, 2001) and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder (Kernberg, 1992)[20]. While studies on authoritarianism as a central feature of personality have frequently been directed towards understanding rigid ideological belief systems (see for example, Perrin, 2005), they have also suggested a correlation to a propensity for violence (Funke, 2005), but the specific relationship to homicide is unclear.

While much of this psychological research certainly enjoys a great deal of support from social scientists and practitioners in the violence prevention sector, it nevertheless tends to either neglect environmental and social factors, or reduces them to partial influences. As with the physiological research referred to earlier, the effects of psychological research are fundamentally essentialist in nature, reducing the genesis of homicidal violence to intrinsic psychical or constitutional factors.

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[20] See Pistorius (2002) and Ladikos (2000) for illustrations of this focus on psychodynamic personality structure in understanding violent crime and homicide in South Africa as well.

3.2. Relational, Interactional and Community Findings

3.2.1. Relational Factors

Relational factors have long been implicated in the enactment of violence, either as precipitants or as predisposing features that may encourage violence as a normative form of social relating. Most commonly, research in this area has focussed on the influencing nature and context of intimate romantic relationships, family relationships and peer relationships, on the occurrence of male violence.

Within the context of intimate relationships, male-on-female violence has generally been considered more pervasive and is frequently understood in terms of normative male behaviour within the context of gendered power relations (Hird, 2000). However, the process of *intimate relational violence* is not only unidirectional, and also sometimes involves an interaction between partners. Swart, Seedat, Stevens and Ricardo (2002) noted that a significant proportion of both males and females involved in intimate romantic relationships perpetrated violence (i.e. 36% of males and 44% of females) and were on the receiving end of violent behaviours (i.e. 38% of males and 42% of females) within their relationships within a South African community. While this should not be understood as a mutuality of violence, the study does suggest that violence within this context is in part a relational process of normalisation and escalation, but because it is often associated with love in committed or intimate romantic relationships, females often bear the brunt of more serious forms of violence (Rasool, Vermaak, Pharoah, Louw & Stavrou, 2002; Swart, Seedat, Stevens & Ricardo, 2002)[21]. While rates of violence are variable, such gendered relational findings are not only supported by studies of violence in intimate romantic relationships internationally (Bergman, 1992; Jackson, Cram & Seymour, 2000; Jezl, Molidor & Wright, 1996), but also by

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[21] This eroticisation of violence against women in which violence and love are coupled, suggests that greater understandings of the interactions between hegemonic gendered relations, male dominance and heterosex need to be examined. These are addressed further in *Chapter Three*.

national studies on violence against women (see for example, Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Reddy, Panday, Swart, Jinabhai, Amosun, James, Monyeki, Stevens, Morejele, Kambaran, Omardien & Van den Borne, 2003).

Furthermore, in a longitudinal analysis of homicide data in the United States of America from 1976-2005, approximately 47% of male homicide victims and 64% of female victims were killed by an intimate partner, family member or acquaintance who was known to them (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). This finding is supported by others studies (e.g. Dahlberg & Krug, 2002), suggesting that between 40-70% of females murdered can be accounted for by someone that they knew. Similar results were found in South Africa, where just over 50% of women who were killed could be accounted for by their intimate partners' violent actions (Vetten, 1996). Within these contexts the type of homicidal violence is frequently expressive in nature, implying heightened levels of emotional tensions that escalate from disagreement to altercation to violence and potentially to homicide. It suggests personal emotional investments where the intention is to harm a known person because of jealousy or rage and therefore implicates a relational dynamic in homicide. Other triggers that implicate relational factors include loss that may then precipitate a rage or despair response (e.g. loss of employment, personal security and internal control, finances, or a loved one), the most extreme of which may be seen in the context of family murders (Graser, 1992).

A second strand of inquiry in this area has focussed on the relationship and interaction between the individual and *parental or familial factors* that may predispose such individuals to commit acts of violence that may or may not have a fatal outcome. Here McCord's (1979) study noted the role of violence in child rearing practices and found that certain antecedents such as harsh physical punishment of children was correlated with later convictions for violent interpersonal enactments. This has been supported by other studies on the role of parental involvement and has highlighted that poor monitoring and supervision of children (McCord, 1996), harsh physical punishment (Eron, Huesmann & Zelli, 1991), poor parent-child bonding and low levels of parental affection (McCord, 1996), parental neglect or abuse of children

(Widom, 1989), exposure to familial violence (Farrington, 1998), poor familial cohesion and support/stability (Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Zelli, 1996), single parent family structures (Henry *et al.*, 1996) and lower socio-economic status families (Hawkins, Herrenkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano & Harachi, 1998), all contribute to and place children at greater risk for violent behaviours in later life. In South Africa, males committing violence in intimate relationships were more likely than women to have been exposed to physical assault by a family member, had witnessed couples physically fighting within families, and had characterised their relationships within families as more negative (Swart, Seedat, Stevens & Ricardo, 2002).

Finally, *peer relations* as a potential determinant for violent behaviours have also been studied, suggesting that associations with delinquents or drug users increased the risk of violent behaviours, most notably in the form of the gang culture or subculture (Blumstein, 1995; Farrington, 1998; Hawkins *et al.*, 1998). The increased presence of gangs tended to increase the rate of violent crime and homicide in particular as well (Howell & Decker, 1999). Because peers provide an important developmental point of reference, particularly within adolescence, negative peer influences may lead to delinquent behaviours that deviate from social prescriptions, in order for adolescents to maintain a sense of psychological and social integrity (Pettit, 1997). In South Africa, Pinnock (1982a, 1982b, 1997) conducted extensive work on gangsterism and its relationship to violence, noting its historical development and its social functions in adverse social conditions. Mingo (1999) also reviewed some of the available literature, and suggested that involvement in gangs predisposes individuals not only to the perpetration of violence, but also to injurious outcomes, psychological disruption and the potential for moral truncation and atrophy. Reddy *et al.* (2003) also found that 14.3% of learners in South Africa had been involved in a gang structure of some sort, and that this also coincided with significant levels of interpersonal violence of different forms among the same cohort.

Relational studies certainly extend beyond the individual factors previously discussed, and thereby introduce the possibilities of social learning and the

acquisition of violent behavioural repertoires within a relational dynamic. However, within this process the acquisition of learned violent behaviours implies a deficit of some sort or another within the relational interaction, and broader social factors are once again either excluded or merely engaged with in a peripheral manner.

3.2.2. Interactional Factors

The interaction of certain situational factors such as temporality, victim characteristics, location, and violence as instrumental within criminal activities; together with the presence of specific products such as drugs and weaponry also increases the likelihood of violence. Interactional studies focus on the importance of the interaction between individuals and certain products and situations that may enhance the individual's predisposition to violence and homicide in particular.

One of the most significant findings around *victim-perpetrator relationships* outside of the trend that suggests that homicide is more frequently than not perpetrated by someone known to the victim, is the fact that men are over-represented in both the victim and perpetrator categories across the world. Wolfgang's (1958) seminal study of homicide in Philadelphia showed that 76% of victims were men and 82% of perpetrators were also of the same sex. In his review of international studies and data, he also noted that this over-representation was significant and consistent over time (see for example, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007, showing that from 1976-2005, 5% of all homicide victims were men and that 88% of all perpetrators were men). While some variability has been shown in international studies since then, Dahlberg and Krug (2002) note that in 2000, 77% of all homicides were accounted for by men, that men had homicide rates of more than three times that of women, and that the highest rates of homicide tend to be found in men between the ages of 15-29 years followed by the 30-44 year age cohort. In South Africa, the 2004 National Injury Mortality Surveillance System recorded homicide as the leading manner of death among men in the same age categories as reflected in the international data (Matzopoulos, 2005). Furthermore, the victim rates of male homicide were estimated at just over five times more than that of female

homicide, and was also a staggering 5.9 times that of the global homicide rate for males in 2000 (Matzopoulos, Norman & Bradshaw, 2004). Irrespective of whether this is due to evolutionary, biological, psychological or social factors, it suggests that being male is in and of itself a demographic risk factor for homicidal violence either as perpetrator or victim within these age groups (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

Furthermore, in studies in contexts with notable minority populations, male populations from within these social categories are also over-represented. Here again, Wolfgang's (1958), study noted that blacks were 12 times more likely than whites to be homicide victims, and that the rate for offending was almost 14 times greater for blacks than for whites in the United States of America. This has not only been consistent with preceding studies, but also with more contemporary studies (see Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007; Krivo & Peterson, 2000, for a review of this in the United States of America). In South Africa, similar consistent findings have also implicated 'race' as a victim-perpetrator and demographic risk factor (Burrows, Bowman, Matzopoulos & van Niekerk, 2001; Butchart, 2000; Matzopoulos, 2002), but such studies may highlight 'race' as proxy for other measures of inequality and social strain (Bowman, Seedat, Duncan & Burrows, 2006; also, see following section on socio-structural and socio-cultural factors).

Studies on the interaction between homicidal violence and *temporality* have also become commonplace within descriptive studies that have attempted to map the nature, extent and magnitude thereof. Wolfgang's (1958) research noted that most homicides were committed over weekends, between 8pm and 2am, and that there were seasonal variations that suggested higher rates in warmer months of the year. These temporal patterns have been reasonably consistent in many public health studies since, and even in South Africa most homicides have tended to occur between 8pm and 3am, over weekends, and are unevenly distributed with the highest rate of homicide being in the month of December (Matzopoulos, 2005). While this may implicate thermometric and barometric factors in relation to seasonal variations, this relationship has not been clearly established. However, these findings do suggest that temporal

factors may be closely associated with less structured social activities, higher levels of interpersonal socialising, higher levels of interpersonal proximity over leisure or vacation periods, and the possible involvement of substances such as alcohol – all of which may contribute to greater propensities for interpersonal violence.

Interactions between homicidal violence and product availability in the form of ***drugs and weapons*** are further factors that have been extensively explored in the literature. Blumstein (1995) noted that the increase in homicides in certain parts of the United States of America could be directly attributable to battles over turf in the selling of crack cocaine. Similar findings on the relationship between drugs and violence have been noted elsewhere in the international literature (Howell & Decker, 1999; Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002). In South Africa, where blood alcohol levels were available for homicide victims, 47.27% of these victims tested positive for alcohol, indicating again the significant relationship between alcohol and violence (Matzopoulos, 2005). In Swart, Seedat, Ricardo and Johnson's (1999) study in South Africa, high rates of intimate partner violence also coincided with 46% of males and 27% of females using alcohol, higher rates of other drug use by males, and at least 10% of males reporting that they had sold drugs as compared to 2% of females. Reddy *et al.* (2003) found that 41% of South African learners had been bullied, 30.2% were involved in physical fights, 29.3% were injured in these fights, 13.6% had been assaulted by an intimate partner, and at the same time, 49.1% of these learners had used Alcohol, 12.8% had used Marijuana, 11.1% had used Inhalants, Mandrax use was 6.0%, Cocaine use was 6.4%, Heroin had been used by 11.5%, and 5.8% had used 'Club Drugs'. While the link between drugs and homicidal violence is not a simple linear causal relationship, substance use, abuse, dependence and sales are clearly implicated as interactional factors that increase the likelihood of violence (Marais, Sukhai & Donson, 2004).

Howell and Decker (1999) also argue for a significant interactional relationship between gangs, drugs, guns and homicide rates. They suggest that the mere presence of firearms in these contexts increases the likelihood of

homicide, and that drugs tend to increase the presence of such firearms. While the relationship between the availability of firearms and homicide is not always consistent across international studies, it is certainly not as insignificant as the World Health Organisation (WHO) tends to report (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002). Kellermann, Rivara, Rushforth, Banton, Reay, Francisco, Locci, Prodzinski, Hackman and Somes (1993) in their study in the United States of America note that despite perceptions that the presence of guns in homes confers protection, that it in fact rather increases the risk for homicide by a family member or intimate acquaintance. Keegan (2004) notes that more than 500 000 people are killed each year due to firearm-related injuries, and those countries like South Africa experience greater levels of this form of violence than other countries undergoing similar social transitions because of the availability of firearms. Studies on youth violence in South Africa have showed that between 16.7% and 32% of learners have carried weapons (Reddy *et al.*, 2003; Swart, Seedat, Ricardo & Johnson, 1999). Other South African studies have highlighted that the leading causes of homicides have been due to firearms (22.7%) followed by sharp objects such as knives (14.7%) (Keegan, 2004; Matzopoulos, 2005). This was supported by Ladikos (1995) who found that firearms accounted for between 26.7% and 49.2% of homicides, followed by sharp objects such as knives accounting for between 12.3% and 26.7% of homicides.

In studying the interaction between location or scene and homicidal violence, *spatial dynamics* point to potentially important factors to consider in understanding homicide. For example, Wolfgang (1958) found that over 40% of homicides had occurred in the home, followed by just over 30% occurring along public roads or highways. Similarly, South African data suggest that private homes are the leading scene of homicidal violence, especially for women as victims, followed by public roads and informal settlements (Matzopoulos, 2004). This again suggests that homicide is frequently associated with victim-perpetrator relationships in which individuals are known to each other intimately; where public spaces provide acquaintances and/or strangers with opportune proximity for the enactment of expressive violence (e.g. homicides resulting from settling personal scores, or killings in

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the name of honour); and where public spaces provide a serendipitous interactional space for the enactment of instrumental homicidal violence (e.g. during the commission of an opportunistic robbery).

With regard to ***instrumental homicidal violence and motive***, Wolfgang (1958) found that outside of the expressive homicidal violence associated with domestic altercations, approximately 17% of homicides were motivated by economic gain (i.e. altercations over money, robbery). In South Africa, Ladikos (1995) examined the motives of inmates on death row in the early 1990s and found that just over 50% had murdered for economic gain of some sort or another. While expressive violence certainly accounts for a significant proportion of the homicides committed between known individuals, instrumental homicide can be seen as a means to an end in attaining certain objectives or goals (see also, Howell & Decker, 1999, for this phenomenon in the contexts of gangs, guns, drugs and homicidal violence).

While interactional studies focus on the convergence of multiple factors that may predispose individuals to violence and homicide, they tend to be limited to immediate environmental influences. Once again, the relationship to the environment is viewed pejoratively and systemic social factors are generally omitted from the analysis. Despite the importance of these findings, they have the potential to either propagate an environmentally deterministic approach to violence, or to minimise the importance of such factors to a chance, coincidental, or situationally-specific confluence without considering their social embeddedness.

3.2.3. Community Factors

These factors essentially refer to the extent to which community integration or lack thereof results in certain prohibitions against violence, or the extent to which violence is accepted as a normative means of conflict resolution.

Mercy, Butchart, Farrington and Cerdá (2002) note that there is good evidence that community integration affects the extent and magnitude of youth violence within communities. Citing the body of literature on the relationship between

social capital and violence, they argue that lower levels of social capital are more frequently than not associated with higher levels of youth violence.

Similarly, Ahmed, Seedat, van Niekerk and Bulbulia (2004) examined community integration in South Africa through the associated concept of *community resilience* and found a relationship between seven domains of resilience and the potential for violence prevention. In the three communities reviewed, they found significant relationships between neighbourhood cohesion and community hope, small business ownership and security, the use of community structures when poor social supports exist, and poor material resources and low levels of physical security – all of which impact on the potential for violence to be enacted and to be prevented. Using the concept of *sense of community* from community psychology, Levine (1986) also highlighted the importance of fostering this psychological sense among community members to reduce crime and violence within community contexts.

Other community level studies have focussed on the normativity of *exposure to violence* and its relationship to violent enactments. In their community-based study in Johannesburg, Swart, Seedat, Ricardo and Johnson (1999), found that high levels of violence within romantic relationships among youth coincided with significant exposure to violence within the community context. 25% of boys and 32% of girls reported that they had been physically hurt by an adult family member; between 11-38% of boys reported perpetrating physical violence, 5-20% had been the victim of violence, and 32-51% had witnessed physical violence; 1-12% of girls had been the victim of violence, and 27-31% had witnessed physical violence within the community. Here again, violence as a normative method of social relating and conflict resolution within communities may have a significant effect on legitimising further violence.

With the exception of community resilience and sense of community studies that have emerged from community psychology and focussed both on community assets and deficits, most community level studies tend to explore the paucity of prosocial resources as factors that predispose men to the

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commission of violence and homicide. Even though this level of analysis incorporates a greater ecological understanding of violence as compared to individual, relational and interactional studies, there is always the possibility of inscribing the tautology that Armstrong (1990) refers to. In studying violent individuals from these communities from a deficit perspective and failing to locate both the communities and individuals more broadly within socio-historical contexts, these studies may run the risk of reinforcing the notion that poorly resourced communities are violent incubators by nature, thereby generating an analytical circularity, foreclosure and impasse.

3.3. Social Findings

3.3.1. Socio-Structural Factors

Following on the early work of Durkheim and his concept of anomie (Giddens, 1979), the functions of social cohesion and integration have been well researched as factors that contribute to either the facilitation of violence or the creation of prohibitions against it (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

Here the concept of *social capital* has been increasing utilised, and is characterised by *"features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action"* (Putnam, cited in Emmett, 2003, p. 11). Moser and Holland (1997) found that lower levels of social capital were generally associated with an increased likelihood of violent behaviours. This was supported by Lederman, Loayza and Menéndez (1999) who found a similar relationship between social capital and crime rates across several international contexts. Wilkinson, Kawachi and Kennedy (1998) noted that in particular, higher homicide rates were associated with lower levels of social capital as well. Emmett (2000, 2003) has also cogently argued for this approach to be undertaken in understanding the particularly high homicide rates in South Africa.

However, beyond the issue of social capital, countries such as South Africa that are undergoing *social transitions* to post-conflict and post-authoritarian nation state formations (Manganyi, 2004) have also shown to have higher rates

of violence. Shaw (1998) noted that in such contexts, new social structures require a certain amount of time to develop to create the necessary levels of civil obedience in the direction away from violent crime. Kim and Pridemore (2005) and Pridemore (2006) found that negative socio-economic change in transitional Russia was associated with higher homicide rates, and this has been supported by other writers in contexts such as transitional Serbia as well (Simeunović-Patić, 2003). Co-occurring with such transitions is of course the process of globalisation that also influences homicide rates in certain regions due to the penetrating proliferation of associated criminal activities in the illegal arms industry, the trafficking of drugs, and the trafficking of humans (Findlay, 1999).

With regard to more mainstream socio-structural research into homicide, certainly some of the most pivotal variables across which social stratification and organisation occurs, are along 'race', class, gender, age, and socio-political protection and coherence variables.

While many studies in this area show a correlation between *economic decline*, recessions, downward pressures on real wages, a lack of economic opportunities, and the increase in homicide rates, this relationship is not necessary as definitive as believed (Messner, 1982). Schneidman (1996) points out that in periods of economic crisis, basic social infrastructure is often compromised, while the WHO (1995) notes that under these conditions, poverty often becomes concentrated in urban areas – both of which can partly account for the linkages between poverty and homicide. Similarly, Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza (1999) noted a decline in homicide rates with an increase in the GDP across several countries. In addition, under circumstances of economic crisis, a decline in access to low-skill, entry level employment was also correlated with increased propensies towards homicidal violence (Shihadeh & Ousey, 1998), while the decline in industrialisation within certain sectors has opened up the possibilities for greater levels of unemployment, female-headed households and increased rates of juvenile homicide in many urban cities in the United States of America (Ousey, 2000). However, Gartner (1990) found that income inequality (i.e. relative poverty and deprivation) was

significantly related to homicide rates in several industrialised countries. In South Africa, Appelgryn (1987), Appelgryn and Nieuwoudt (1988) and Bornman (1988) also found relationships between perceived relative group deprivation, perceived injustice and militant attitudes towards outgroups who were considered more privileged. In their focus on concentrated relative poverty, Parker and Pruitt (2000a) and Lee (2000) have also highlighted the importance of this concentrated relativity in wealth disparities as a significant localised variable that impacted on the homicide rates in the United States of America.

Similar to the taken-for-granted relationships between economic factors and homicide rates, members of *minority groups* are clearly over-represented in victim and offender profiles related to homicides internationally (Matzopoulos, 2005; Pallone & Hennessy, 1999; Sampson, 1985; Wolfgang, 1958). Taking this data at face value however generates several ideological pitfalls that range from stereotyping minorities as violent, engaging in racial profiling, supporting white supremacist notions, and even bolstering newer forms of scientific racism (Pallone & Hennessy, 1999). Notwithstanding those who uncritically utilise such data in reactionary ways, mainstream research has also attempted to focus on 'race' as a proxy measure, most notably for economic, wealth, social and political disparities.

While the extant literature in this area is by no means conclusive and entirely consistent (see Ousey, 1999), disaggregation studies on 'race' and homicide such as Krivo and Peterson's (2000) highlight the importance of 'race' as a proxy for concentrated disadvantage and residential instability, especially among black populations. McNulty and Holloway (2000) also noted that 'race' is often also reflective of proximity to public housing (which mainly houses the poor) and that increased proximity to this form of institutional housing increases the homicide rates for black populations in particular. Wallace (1990) and Morenoff and Sampson (1997) also suggest a geographical component to studying 'race' and homicide. They suggest that certain spatial patterns in homicide rates in black communities in particular, can be related to overcrowding, drains on municipal services, and the disruptions of social

networks that all exacerbate violent behaviours, result in urban desertification and decay, further compounding the problem of violence within black communities.

Parker and McCall (1999) noted that racial differences in homicide rates could also be accounted for by economic deprivation and local opportunity structures facing blacks in particular, and this is supported by Ousey's (1999) contention that deprivation and poverty were the most significant factors in determining black homicide rates.

Nevertheless, many of these findings show a degree of variability across various geographical regions and also impact variably on white and black populations within the extant literature. Thus, while they point to potential proxies for which 'race' acts as a marker, this area of study remains highly researched and contested in contemporary studies.

At a ***macro-political level***, population confidence in the state's ability to respond in a protective manner towards its citizenry, as well as more objective indicators of this ability, have been well documented as factors influencing rates of violence. In their review, Mercy, Butchart, Farrington and Cerdá (2002) highlight the importance of adequate policing pertaining to homicides that may result in its overall decline, and state that where a populace feels unsatisfied with this policing and protective function, that it often opens up the possibility for the enactment of alternative forms of *"extra-judicial actions involving violence"* (p. 37).

Pampel and Gartner (1995) argued that the presence of national institutions charged with social protection had an inhibiting effect on homicide rates as compared to those contexts where these institutional arrangements were absent. Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) also found that in countries where higher rates of social welfare spending were directed at populations, that there was also a generally lower homicide rate than in contextual instances in which fiscal demands necessitated spending in a direction away from social safety nets.

Messner (1989) also found that indicators of economic discrimination against certain social groups were strongly related to increases in homicide rates and were even more significant than income or poverty concentration, highlighting that more formalised socio-structural inequalities have a significant bearing on rates of violence and homicide in particular. This was confirmed by Krivo and Peterson (2000) as well as Massey (1994, p. 1231) who reviewed and highlighted the significant relationship between homicide and racial segregation in the United States of America as a *"locked […] set of institutional arrangements that will only exacerbate racial inequalities, perpetuate urban violence, deepen the socio-economic problems of African-Americans, and erode the status and well-being of American cities"*. In South Africa too, institutionalised racism during the apartheid era was also examined in relation to its impacts on levels of crime and violence. Wilson and Ramphele (1991) highlighted how poor access to social, political and economic resources among the black populace often promoted an underground economy that involved illicit criminal activities that were also often associated with increased rates of community violence. Bulhan (1985) also highlighted how the structural features of apartheid predisposed black communities to higher rates of mortality, in which homicide ranked within the top five causes of death during the 1970s. This pattern remains fairly consistent today, suggesting that the historical effects of institutionalised racism may still be a significant factor in high homicide rates, even in contemporary South Africa (Matzopoulos, 2004).

While research on *sex and/or gender* as variables of social stratification that are central to homicide studies has been reflected upon earlier, the primary research has tended to suggest that female victimisation is directly related to ideological processes supporting male domination, and/or the inadequacies of male domination and associated masculine anxiety, thereby encouraging the control of women and the resort to violence in instances where such control can not be exercised through other means. While some contradictory evidence exists, the general findings indicate that women are more likely to be victims of homicide in circumstances where their absolute status in a social formation is compromised or where their status relative to men is compromised (Heise &

Garcia-Moreno, 2002; and Salo, 2007, on the inversion of this phenomenon in the townships of Cape Town as well).

Finally, *age* is not merely a demographic marker but also a social stratification marker across which significant variations in homicide rates can be found. Unlike the previously examined variables which have all in some manner been directly associated with other variables linked to inequality and status, age appears to operate relatively independently from 'race', class and gender. However, upon closer inspection, and moving beyond the developmental, psychological, physiological or evolutionary sets of processes that may be responsible for this global trend, the implicated age groups in their late teens and early adulthood may be more susceptible to the economic strains of an environment, given that this not only represents the time of entry into the world of work, but also the period of greatest anticipated economic and social productivity. The absence of such opportunities may very well predispose this age group between adolescence and early adulthood to greater rates of violence, highlighting a potentially more complex relationship between age and other variables such as 'race', gender and class (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002).

Quantitative socio-structural research studies into homicidal violence have probably had the most progressive social reform agendas underpinning them, and have been actively utilised to lobby and advocate for improved social conditions for the marginalised. However, despite the acknowledged complexity of this research, in its collective totality this body of research tends to construct an image of linear relationships between poverty, economic decline and violence. While this may be partly accurate, it has the effect of fixing and stabilising this relationship in the public discourse, and creates perceptions of violence as an effect of poverty and simultaneously suggests that poorer contexts are predictive of homicidal violence. Furthermore, in articulating uneven social relations through variables, the issue of power becomes one-step further removed from the analysis of homicidal violence, thereby directing intervention praxis towards reformist orientations in most instances.

3.3.2. Socio-Cultural Factors

While socio-culturality certainly manifests at multiple ecological levels, such as those alluded to above in community contexts and in relation to levels of social capital, most studies examining the relationship between socio-cultural factors and homicide have been directed towards understanding regional differences in homicide patterns and rates.

Drawing on Wolfgang and Ferracuti's (1967) subculture of violence thesis and extending this to contemporary analyses, these studies have focussed on regional differences in homicide trends and patterns within countries, between countries, and across continents, attempting to account for such differences when economic factors in particular have been unable to provide sufficient grounding for these dissimilarities or variations. In her definition of culture, Swidler (1986, p. 284) argues that as a social resource and organising set of principles,

> *Strategies of action are cultural products; the symbolic experiences, mythic lore, and ritual practices of a group or society create moods and motivations, ways of organising experience and evaluating reality, modes of regulating conduct, and ways of forming social bonds, which provide resources for constricting strategies of action.*

In the context of homicidal violence, many researchers have turned to this type of understanding of culture as a means of examining the normativity of violence within particular contexts and the manner in which it is endorsed and legitimised as a mechanism for conflict resolution (Mercy, Butchart, Farrington & Cerdá, 2002). Swidler (1986, p. 284) further suggests that such normativity is associated with *"settled cultures"* that constrain strategies of action as

> *They provide ritual traditions that regulate ordinary patterns of authority and cooperation, and they so define common sense that alternative ways of organising action seem unimaginable, or at least implausible. Settled cultures constrain action over time because of the high costs of cultural retooling to adopt new patterns of action.*

In reviewing the extant literature, Mercy, Butchart, Farrington and Cerdá (2002) note the effects of *media violence as a cultural artefact* on immediate aggressive behaviour, but are cautious about making the linkages to homicidal violence in the long-term. The premise of such studies rests on the idea that various social institutions such as the media may play a significant role in reproducing and maintaining such normative belief systems that are embedded within the cultural fabric of a social formation.

In addition, they also point to the relationship between *cultures of violence* in certain South and Latin American contexts and higher levels of youth violence, as a potential explanation for increasing levels of violent crime, including homicide. This is very similar to the thesis adopted by many researchers in South Africa, who suggest that part of the reason for the high levels of violence in the country is due to a pervasive belief that it is a legitimate form of expression and conflict resolution, especially given the violent nature of historical forms of oppression and liberatory struggles in South Africa.

By far the most extensive research on cultural influences on homicide patterns has been conducted on the variance in homicide rates between southern and other states in the United States of America. In attempting to understand why rates of homicide have historically been higher within these states, and where they could not be accounted for by economic factors, Messner (1983) suggested that this variance was a result of violent values permeating multiple levels of southern society. Huff-Corzine, Corzine and Moore (1986) supported these findings and noted a *subculture of violence* among white southerners that was associated with high rates of white homicide. In a later study, Huff-Corzine, Corzine and Moore (1991) point to a southern culture that incorporates a perception of violence as an acceptable mechanism for resolving frustrations, and a tendency to make external attributions that increase the propensity for homicidal violence to occur. They relate this to the historical development of this region, in which southerners have constructed themselves as victims who need to defend themselves in a hostile environment which has always been responsible for imposing social change, from the abolition of slavery to the demise of legal segregation. This finding has been

supported by Parker and Pruitt (2000b) who note that white southerners tend to have beliefs and attitudes that are consistent with the use of violence as a means of self-defence and in defending a collective sense of honour. Clearly, such studies highlight how various historical belief systems within specific socio-cultural contexts have contributed to sanctioning violence as a legitimate social response in certain situations, thereby partially accounting for higher rates of homicide.

Socio-cultural studies such as those reflected on above are perhaps the closest quantitative approximations of discursive studies such as the current research endeavour. This is due to its focus on the nexus between belief systems, meaning-making, masculinity, violence, historicity and social context – all of which are also focal points for this discursive study. However, given the quantitative slant of the research, social actors' direct articulations of their interpretations of social realities are partially lost, and because of the definitive nature of quantitative research, potentially undermines the excavation of more unstable and discontinuous systems of meaning that social actors may reveal. The role of the social subject in representing, reproducing and even contesting the social milieu in which he or she is located is therefore more easily lost within this form of research.

4.   DISCURSIVE EFFECTS OF QUANTITATIVE HOMICIDE RESEARCH:

The preceding sections of this chapter have illustrated the breadth and depth of the extant quantitative research base on male homicidal violence internationally and within South Africa, its value in mapping the nature of this social phenomenon, as well as its potential utility in driving interventions. To be fair and more circumspect in appraising this knowledge base, much of the more recent quantitative research into male homicide and its social correlates has been utilised as a fulcrum upon which to critically argue for greater levels of social transformation, reform and development.

Nevertheless, while it would be disingenuous to simply relegate this entire body of work to the realm of a reactionary discursive figment, it is critical within the context of this study to examine how such quantitative research has contributed to the construction of a canvass of prevailing hegemonic discourses on male homicidal violence. In particular, the study is

concerned with the manner in which this collective body of knowledge has resulted in fairly fixed and given sets of causal attributions as to why male homicidal violence occurs. At the risk of provoking the enmity of quantitative researchers in this area who are unlikely to be enamoured by this critique[22], one has to recognise that even in the more critical forms of quantitative research, that there is the tendency to generate stable and continuous binaries, subjectivities and positionalities that do not always allow for alternative readings of the social phenomenon of male homicide, irrespective of whether these are intended or unintended. Quantitative research clearly has broader discursive effects that come to be held as truths amongst populations at large, and therefore also potential ideological effects that accompany them.

In van Dijk's (1992, 1993, 1995) instructive work on the effects of elite discourses, he argues that academic research and writings are forms of such elite discourses, and that they impact on the broader construction, generation and reproduction of social discourses. By elites, he refers particularly to those *"groups in the sociopolitical power structure that develop fundamental policies, make the most influential decisions, and control the overall modes of their execution"* (1995, p. 4), including academics and researchers. He goes on to argue that through research and other academic writings, broader populations' everyday and common sense understandings of the world are also constructed as these forms of knowledge are given greater legitimacy as authentic and true, because of the power base from which they are generated. He notes that although they are *"sometimes delayed by years or decades, many of the beliefs and ideologies underlying or emerging from scholarly work are also communicated and represented by other elites (especially those of politics, education, and the media) […] It may well be that of all the elite preformulations […], those of academic discourse are ultimately, though often indirectly (through textbooks, media, or politics), most influential"* (1995, p. 15). Elite academic discourses therefore have immense purchase power over the collective public consciousness and the ways in which we come to understand and construct our social worlds, partly because of the authoritative legitimacy and power that they

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[22] Here, the work of critical public health practitioners in the area of violence prevention is important to acknowledge, as they have provided more sophisticated and nuanced understandings of proximal and distal variables that may influence the enactment of interpersonal violence. These understandings include a focus on issues of identity, subjectivity, masculinity, femininity, and a range of macro-contextual features that may be conceived of as 'homicide-inducing'.

are bestowed with. However, precisely because of this, they are also appropriated by other elites; sometimes opportunistically distilled and re-interpreted in an oblique and partial manner to tap into popular beliefs, feelings and resentments and in support of ideological agendas. In this manner, academic discourses frequently find ubiquitous resonances in everyday popular understandings within social formations in a manner that establishes them as continuous, taken-for-granted regimes of truth, thereby limiting alternative or discontinuous meanings to emerge from parallel readings or assessments of social phenomena.

With reference to hegemonic discourses on male homicidal violence, they may unwittingly lock us into understandings that are not only tautological in nature, but also serve particularly dubious ideological agendas that reinforce the marginalisation and domination of specific social categories. In other instances, hegemonic discourses may serve the social function of assuaging individuals' culpability for acts of violence. While certainly not attempting to provide a sanguine account or interpretation of male homicidal violence, identifying such discursive networks is perhaps the first step in challenging and disrupting them, thereby opening up the possibilities for not only uncovering these social functions and ideological effects, but also allowing for alternative ways of critically understanding male homicidal violence.

At a discursive level, mainstream quantitative homicide research fundamentally represents a historical continuity of (1) the medicalisation of violent crime, and (2) the socio-medicalisation of violent crime. Foucault (1977, 1980) extensively illustrated that as forms of social organisation progressed away from centralised power bases that rested at the heart of sovereignty and towards greater disciplinarity, the diffusion of power within social formations was expressed through political technologies (Hook, 2004b). Here in particular, political concerns with problems such as criminal violence became addressed through the birth of more specialised disciplines and institutions that then became the focal points of social control and regulation of deviant populations. Specifically, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, criminology and penology emerged and developed rapidly to account for the medicalisation of crime, the psychiatrisation of law and the therapeutisation of rehabilitation. The effects of this process allowed for the medical gaze to extend beyond individuals, to deviant cohorts within institutions such as mental hospitals and prisons. In addition, this facilitated an initial process of not only regulating and patrolling populations through such

political technologies, but also allowed for the emergence of self-regulation and policing within the populations at large. Attributions of criminality and violence to individual and constitutional factors became more commonplace, and contemporary psychological, physiological and sociobiological studies continue this tradition, shaping a set of hegemonic discourses that locate the causal properties of homicidal violence within individuals.

Furthermore, an even greater extension of this process to entire populations was accomplished through the socio-medical gaze, to offer ways of surveilling broader populations in disciplines such as public health and social work. Attributions of causality pertaining to homicidal violence were now centred on social correlates, such as cultural features, economic differences and structural mechanisms that engender specific violent enactments within certain sections of the population. This discursive network increasingly and inevitably became accessible to entire populations through the popularisation of expert knowledge discourses, resulting in greater levels of self-regulation and behavioural patrolling. In this manner, the shift from dominant sovereign forms of power, to more institutionalised disciplinary forms of power and regulation, to self-regulation within populations has occurred. As expert knowledge has come to generate particular subjects in these contexts, and such knowledges have become more accessible, they have been appropriated, reproduced and adapted as common sense, taken-for-granted understandings about the nature and causes of criminality. They have resulted in broadly held discursive templates about the causes of homicidal violence that are frequently adapted through their interactions with other referent discourses, to yield specific social functions and ideological outcomes or effects. The following represents a synopsis of three key distilled discursive templates that are more commonplace and legitimised through much of the mainstream quantitative research into male homicide today. While by no means an exhaustive or comprehensive synopsis, the prevalence of these discourses in everyday talk on male homicide is unquestionably apparent. Despite the plethora of manifestations of these discursive templates within everyday talk, it is important to note that they are all frequently deployed for exculpatory purposes by those involved in homicidal encounters, or serve certain ideological functions when causal attributions pertaining to male homicide are made.

4.1.   The Male Aggressive Drive Discourse: *It's in Men's Nature to be Violent*

The first discursive template that is easily discernable can broadly be defined as one of essentialism. Studies on individual factors that are implicated in male homicidal violence have undoubtedly been translated into more widely held common sense discourses that attribute this form of violence to essential, intrinsic constitutional features of men (i.e. homicidal aggression is in the nature of men)[23], or alternatively, to variant discourses of disease and deficit within the physiology or psychology of men (i.e. homicidal aggression represents a form of mental illness in men). Here, popular accounts of gendered differences that result from our evolutionary heritages have come to hold significant currency in contemporary society. Butler's (1999) work on the naturalisation of gender differences through its association with sex differences is an instructive analysis of this process. In addition, constructions of male homicide as being related to psychopathology, illness, madness and insanity also convey a sense of a constitutional shortfall that then comes to account for why it is that men are more commonly involved in homicidal encounters than women. The resultant effect of this first discursive template is that of a fixed constitutional determinism and social fatalism that thwarts us from reading alternative understandings into the phenomenon of male homicidal violence and its prevention.

4.2.   Discourses of Environmental Determinism: *Violence Stems from Upbringing*

The second discursive template can generally be defined as one of environmental determinism and risk convergence. It essentially refers to the manner in which relational and interactional studies have come to shape our attributions of causality around male homicide in relation to the immediate influences within our environments. Here, popular understandings of the influence of others on us during the socialisation process (e.g. within family members and peer relations), and our exposure to violence within these relational interactions, are posited as the origins of male homicidal behaviour (i.e. homicidal violence occurs because of gendered socialisation processes). An alternative and more sophisticated variant of this environmental-risk discourse can be characterised as a risk-convergence discourse, in

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[23] This is also sometimes referred to as the 'male aggressive drive' discourse.

which the presence of several factors such as previous exposure to violence, alcohol or other substances, and firearms culminate in conditions conducive to the enactment of homicidal violence. The immediate environment and the relational interactions surrounding male homicide are thus seen as the genesis of this behavioural outcome. Common everyday accounts come to include notions of damaged subjects who are exposed to violence and thus re-enact it – the classic understanding of the victim who through victimisation undergoes a process of becoming the perpetrator. In addition, understandings of the genesis of homicidal encounters are viewed not only as external to the individual, but also as exerting an internal impact on their levels of agency (e.g. the presence of alcohol and weaponry may result in disinhibition and the delimiting of choices through which to resolve conflict). Subject positioning in this discourse is characterised by an equally environmentally deterministic subtext that suggests that males who enact homicidal violence are fixed products of circumstance.

4.3. Discourses of Social Determinism: *Society Creates Violent Men*

The final discursive template that is commonly encountered in everyday talk on male homicidal violence is one that is more sociogenic in nature, and can be defined as a form of structural determinism. Extending beyond a discourse of environmental circumstance and risk convergence, it locates male homicide within the realm of adverse social conditions. Research into community and socio-cultural legitimation of violence as a means of conflict resolution has played a prominent role in shaping such a discourse. In addition, the relationship between economic deprivation and poverty has also been instrumental in constructing this discursive network. In both instances the popular representation and reproduction thereof occurs in the form that violent or impoverished communities produce violent subjects (i.e. homicidal aggression occurs because of poverty and marginalisation). Variants of this everyday discourse have also found support in research into structural inequities in social formations that disadvantage certain social groups through some or other form of systemised domination. Here, male homicidal violence is seen as an outcome of adverse social conditions associated with forms of structural marginalisation. By and large, studies that have implicated minorities in homicidal violence have also tended to support this discourse, as 'race' is often seen as a proxy measure for forms of structural inequality. Earlier feminist writings however provided a more sophisticated variation on this

discourse, by suggesting that male violence is a result of patriarchal relations that govern gendered relations. While all of the above may be partly accurate, the utilisation of this discourse tends to be located in rigid forms of structural determinism in everyday talk. Once again, this tends to elide the possibilities for multiple male subjectivities, which may be violent in some instances and non-violent in others, to coexist in adverse social contexts. In addition, it forecloses on the possibility of simultaneously expressing violence as a form of reproducing power relations and resisting them. In so doing, it limits us to a singular understanding of the relationship between masculinity, violence and social context, denies the fluidity of this relationship, and therefore precludes a range of possibilities for change and transformation.

While the above characterisation is perhaps oversimplified and does not necessarily capture the subtle and overt constructions of men involved in homicidal encounters across the different quantitative approaches reviewed (see *Chapter Six*), it is nevertheless important to sketch the potential impact of their discursive effects, their possible social utility and functions, as well as their likely ideological consequences.

With regard to the social functions of these discourses, they often interact with each other to provide a compelling argument for why it is that socially marginalised men are predisposed to violence at an individual, environmental and social level. One of the most common deployments of these discourses is for exculpatory purposes among men who have committed acts of violence. For example, the appropriation and iteration of these discourses through speech acts in the self-narratives of men who have committed forms of violence often serve the functions of minimisation or dissociation from the act itself, thereby enabling a certain degree of deflection of responsibility (see Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004; Lau, 2008). In this instance, positive self-presentation is central to such iterations, operating as a form of resistance to the dominant and negative criminal connotations ascribed to those who have enacted violence. In other instances, these discourses are reproduced through pervasive everyday social commentaries on homicidal violence, allowing for an attribution of blame to an *Other* that allows for distancing from the self, and reinforces the need for the regulation of an *Other* through various interventions. Still further, discourses of environmental and social determinism have frequently been deployed as a means of critiquing unfavourable social conditions and as leverage for lobbying and advocating for social reform and transformation.

The ideological and institutional effects of these discourses are also potentially wide-ranging. They may be drawn into referent discursive networks that then allow for more complex and sophisticated constructions of male homicidal violence. For example, it has not been uncommon to find the intersection of essentialist discourses on male violence and racist discourses, to give rise to racialised discourses of violence that entrench the 'irrefutable' link between blackness, masculinity and violence. As such discourses are reproduced in relation to other referent discourses, they tautologically construct individual subjects, groups of subjects, and entire social categories of subjects as both at risk and simultaneously risky. This self-sustaining circular argument can be seen as blackness (for example) becomes a proxy measure for violence, but violence also becomes a proxy measure for blackness. The mutual reinforcement of marginalisation mentioned above is quite apparent and helps create a discourse of difference, danger and control. More generally the ideological effects of these discourses occur most commonly along the axes of 'race', class and gender, highlighting the dangerous minority, the violent nature of the poor, and the inherent aggression of men (and by extension the subordination of women). Classist, racist and patriarchal ideological effects are thus the key outcomes in many instances in which these discourses are deployed. Social institutions that embody, reproduce and sustain themselves based on such ideological effects are of course maintained in the process as well, thereby re-inscribing historical forms of marginalisation. Even when more socially progressive and alternative readings of quantitative research on male homicidal violence have been proffered, the tendency has been to position minorities as reacting to racist oppression, the poor as responding to their economic exploitation, and males as defending against apparent crises in masculinity. Effectively this has resulted in a further fixing of positionalities and subjectivities as either disempowered (as opposed to empowered) or defensive (as opposed to offensive) – which in both instances restricts our analyses from uncovering subjectivities and positionalities that are more fluid and resilient, and that do not neatly conform to these binaries.

The following chapter examines key qualitative studies that have been conducted on male homicidal violence and explores the extent to which they reveal alternative ways of conceptualising this social phenomenon. In particular, *Chapter Three* focuses on the degree to which male homicide is understood as an embedded social event within these studies, which then in turn allows for an analysis of the social context through the lens of the homicidal encounter itself.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW – QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

We can not silence the voices that we do not like hearing. We can, however,

do everything in our power to make certain that other voices are heard.

(Deborah Prothrow-Stith, 1995, *Famous Black Quotations*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

While the previous chapter focussed on the body of quantitative research into male homicidal violence and the manner in which it inadvertently contributes to a hegemonic discursive canvass for constructing male homicidal subjects, this chapter focuses on the extant qualitative literature base within this area of study. However, it should be noted that studies into male homicide have been dominated internationally and in South Africa by quantitative research, and qualitative designs have only tended to emerge more recently in contemporary social scientific thought in relation to studies into male homicidal violence. Since the onset of second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, theorising on male violence as a feature of gendered relations has increasingly become mainstreamed within social-scientific thought, and alongside this has been the materialisation of more qualitative studies as well (Dworkin, 1981; Greer, 1971). In particular though, these qualitative studies have tended to prominently highlight gendered social differentials that characterise male-on-female violent interactions in interpersonal settings, intimate relationships, and community settings. The resultant outcomes can be seen in the plethora of publications from predominantly feminist perspectives that have illustrated the relationship between violence against women and the discursive networks and ideological systems of patriarchy and sexism. Within psychology, psychoanalytic studies on male violence also emerged, with some having an overtly feminist orientation as well (Chodorow, 1978; Frosh, 1994; Perelberg, 1999). Other studies went even further to include an exploration of male violence and its discursive construction within broader contexts of systemised domination (see for example, Duncan, 1996). Finally, recent years have also seen a development in the research area of masculinity or masculinities in examinations of male violent encounters, and thus a number of qualitative studies have also emerged in this regard (Bourdieu, 2001; Connell, 1987, 2000, 2002). Because many of the above studies have not always foregrounded male homicidal violence as an object of research, this chapter will also draw on broader studies of violence to illustrate the larger relationship between men, masculinities, discourses, gendered relations, social contexts, and violence – all of which no

doubt will have a bearing on understanding the peculiarities of male homicidal violence as well[24].

However, as a method for of knowledge generation or discovery, qualitative research into this area has not been without its critiques. As in the case of quantitative research, Armstrong (1990, p. 1227) notes that, *"initially, the quantitative methodology of social science was deployed to assess the true extent of chronic illness in the community. But it was the advent of qualitative methodology, from Goffman to the most recent naturalistic techniques, which opened up a new facet to chronic illness, namely the experiential. Meanings came to supplement and replace numbers as the crucial underpinnings of knowledge of chronic illness. To the sociological practitioners of qualitative method, these new features of chronic illness were hailed as discoveries. And yet, as with quantitative methods, these qualitative techniques had simply created the objects which they claimed to have found: a study of stigma created stigma; a study of coping created coping; a study of cognitions created cognitions".* In recognising the import of such critiques, even contemporary feminists have acknowledged that many studies from within this perspective have inadvertently re-inscribed women as powerless and men as powerful in studies into male violence against women (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000; Wilkinson, 1996). In attempting to highlight the pernicious effects of certain systems of gendered domination, studies from within radical feminism have tended to reproduce the notion of the vulnerable woman and the predatory man (Wilkinson, 1996). Similarly, the notion of masculinity in crisis (Goldberg, 1987) within masculinity studies has provoked a similar self-reflexive critique, suggesting that it unintentionally re-centres male dominance and undermines the gains of the feminist movement (MacInnes, 1998). While the arguments posited within both radical feminism and masculine crisis theory are not problematic in and of themselves, it is in their fixed construction of gendered subjects that the re-inscription of the dominant binary of gender relations occurs, leaving little or no elbow-room for the possibility of multiple gendered subjectivities and positionalities to emerge within specific socio-historical contexts.

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[24] While there is clearly a qualitative distinction between homicidal violence and other forms of non-fatal interpersonal violence, this is not an attempt to conflate the two, but to suggest that male violence perhaps occurs along a continuum that is underpinned by similar social dynamics.

While Armstrong's (1990) commentary about the contributions of qualitative research to the reproduction of a dominant discursive landscape certainly therefore holds true to some extent, it is also perhaps overly effusive and over-generalised to all qualitative methods outside of the genealogical method. While probably being more applicable to certain theory-driven case studies that are evident in psychoanalytic research, as well as in more interpretive/ phenomenological studies, it does not address the growing critical literature base in qualitative research into gendered violence, and specifically, studies emerging from a critical discourse analytic framework. Many of the studies employing a critical discourse analytic methodology draw to some extent on a Foucauldian tradition, and have critically explored how gendered discourses reflect social power relations, are reproduced and contested through symbolic representations such as language, reflect continuities and contradictions within the social context and within social actors, and how they may serve certain social functions and ideological effects. Researchers using this method have therefore made a compelling argument as to its merits as a critical tool through which to deconstruct and analyse social phenomena such as gender relations and violence. This is therefore an important aspect of research to give voice to, especially since the current study follows in the footsteps of critical discourse analytic studies of male violence.

The following sections highlight some of the salient qualitative research studies from the psychoanalytic and phenomenological perspectives, but also include an examination of the corpus of studies on discursivity and male violence.

2.   PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDIES ON MALE HOMICIDE/VIOLENCE:

Psychoanalytic studies on male violence have tended to cluster around several areas. However, because it is a theoretically-driven form of analysis, the distinctions between qualitative research studies and theoretical expositions are sometimes difficult to articulate in reality, and this section therefore attempts to integrate both of these aspects in a brief critical review. Given the theory-driven nature of most psychoanalytic studies on male violence, the data that has been utilised most frequently to posit certain arguments about deep structures of personality, include self-reports or narratives (in the case-study format), criminal justice dockets, or other collateral and historical accounts. There are several general orientations to the study of male violence from this perspective, the most common of which draws on classic theoretical tenets of the theory to account for hostility and aggression, and either utilises Freudian understandings or later post-Freudian analytical tools (see for example, Freud,

2005; Perelberg, 1999). The second major form that studies in this area of research have taken includes an applied focus on specific forms of murder such as male-on-female violence in the context of intimate relationships and serial murder (see for example, Pistorius, 2002). Finally, several writers have also attempted to link the psychodynamics of homicide perpetration to broader social forms of domination that are then transposed onto such personality predispositions, thereby accounting for the peculiar forms of homicide which occur within specific socio-historical contexts (see for example, Bulhan, 1985; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003). While providing some very useful insights at an intrapsychic, interpersonal and social level, these studies have also nevertheless had inadvertent discursive effects. These include an essentialist and deterministic reproduction of the dominant construction of masculine subjectivity through the propagation of the 'male sexual drive' and 'male aggressive drive' discourses. In addition, many of these studies also reinforce the environmental determinism that characterises discourses of inevitability surrounding differential male and female socialisation processes. Even in instances where more complex and sophisticated analyses of intrapsychic dynamics and social contexts are interwoven, the predominant outcome is a fairly fixed and predetermined way of defining human subjects. Such a definition does not allow for a great deal of variation outside of the positioning of subjects within their predetermined internal personality dynamics, while the violent social act itself becomes a coincidental symbolisation of this dynamic within the social milieu.

More **_generalist understandings of violence_** can be traced back to Freud's (1974) drive theory of personality. In particular, these understandings draw on the relationship between the aggressive drive and the death instinct, as well as the sexual drive and the life instinct. For Freud, these drives were biologically determined and universal, and this view still prevails largely within psychoanalytic thinking today (Perelberg, 1999). He however suggested that violence is not an inevitable outcome of the aggressive drive. Rather he postulated that a breach of the psychical boundary in which aggressive fantasies are often experienced to a point where violence is enacted on the body of an *Other*, may arise in a range of instances. Firstly, when there is an interplay between different drives, these may either inhibit or facilitate each other (e.g. the desire to posses a love object in the context of restrictive social mores may in fact enhance the aggressive drive as well). However, he also points to the facilitating or prohibitive effects of social milieus in which drives become more tempered or are offered a space in which to emerge as concrete actions (Freud, 1974; see also, Freud's letter to Einstein on this in *Why War?*, Freud, 2005). While Fonagy and Target (1999)

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suggest that debates into the innate destructiveness versus the import of environmental influences have distracted psychoanalytic thinkers, it is nevertheless important to note that both play a pivotal role in determining aggressive or violent acting out. In fact for Freud, the centrality of the appropriate resolution of the Oedipus and Electra Complexes is unsurprising. This is largely due to the fact that it is in this psychosexual stage that superego development is crystallised as an internalised representation of the social prohibitions that govern human interaction and that mediate the deployment of drives (specifically the sexual drive) (Freud, 1974, 2005).

More recent psychoanalytic approaches to violence (see for example, Kernberg, Selzer, Koenigsberg, Carr & Appelbaum, 1989; Perelberg, 1999) have also tended to apply an ***object relations perspective to understanding and managing violent individuals***. Glasser's (1985) work on defensive violence suggests that it is a breach of the body boundary that represents an internal phantasy. Fonagy and Target (1999) also utilise this argument and suggest that violent patients may experience early object relations as malevolent and then utilise aggression as a means of defending the fragile ego. Thereafter, self-expression becomes easily intertwined with aggression in a pathological manner, thereby promoting the individual's ability to mentalise the other as devoid of vulnerability. However, they also argue that in instances of meaningless or sadistic violence, that similar early object relations exist, but that in the process of attempting to fuse with a malevolent object, individuals feel trapped and controlled by the malevolent introject. This results in a form of violence which is fundamentally a release and attempt to bring the psyche back into a state of equilibrium and homeostasis, by ridding itself of hostile phantasies.

With regard to specific forms of homicidal violence, several writers have articulated a coherent feminist psychoanalytic understanding of how ***male-on-female violence*** has come to be such a pervasive social phenomenon. Chodorow (1978) suggests that within most contemporary social formations that the primary object of attachment and identification is initially the mother for most children, but that during the Oedipus Complex young boys need to engage in an active disavowal of the mother to avoid castration anxiety and to identify with the father. Thus, not only is there identification with a symbolic aggressor, but also a repudiation of, and devaluation of the mother. She suggests that this template becomes the basis for the hegemonic forms of masculine identity that we see among adult males, often resulting in emotionally disconnected men, who have the potential to engage with women in

a contemptuous manner, and who have the propensity for violent enactments against women. The development of this identity is thus dependent upon an emotional rejection of the feminine, and later even a possible hostile enactment of this rejection within the external world (Chodorow, in Segal, 1990). Similarly, Frosh (1994) draws on Freudian and Lacanian theory and argues that the penis or phallus as an identificatory object is a symbolic representation of power within contemporary social formations, and becomes the key signifier of manliness. Thus, as young men forge their identities, a huge investment in energy is made around mastering this symbolic representation of power, rejecting any representation of femininity, and often involving displays of power through risk-taking behaviours and violent enactments. In this manner, not only is a hegemonic form of masculine mastery attained emotionally, but also displayed socially, performed, and seen by others (Butler, 1999).

Mayseless (1991) examined *violence within intimate relationships* and suggested that men who displayed an obsessive self-reliance were more prone to the enactment of violence within relationships, as were those who displayed an ambivalent anxiety around intimacy with their female partners. In both instances, these findings tend to confirm many of the psychodynamic interpretations referred to above. In extending on the ideas of ambivalence and intimacy, Houel, Sobota and Mercader (2003) note that in their study on so-called crimes of passion where men murder their female partners, that the threat of loss of the partner often provoked rageful responses that reflect an underlying need for fusion and symbiosis, as opposed to imminent loss and separation. The murder of female partners in this instance therefore comes to represent narcissistic control and a form of fusion that offsets the injury that could be sustained by partner loss and separation (Nadelson, 1978). As an alternative to narcissistic partner-choice, Jacobs (1992) also suggests that within intimate relationships, individuals often choose partners based on attachments to early infantile prototypes. In this process there are mutual projections of disavowed aspects or splits of the self onto partners, a simultaneous process of projective identification, and then ultimately a mutual process of introjective identification in which partners return projections in modified forms. However, in instances where partners are unable to hold such projections and to modify them appropriately, or where there is a mismatch in the complimentarity of object relations, relational discord may emerge and the possibilities for violence in addressing this discord becomes plausible (Scharf & Bagnini, 2002; Meissner, 1978). In thinking about this unconscious complimentarity and extending it to additional social analyses that involve

gendered social relations and violence, Moore (1994) notes that intimate relationships are premised upon a similar complimentarity with regard to gendered subject positioning. Where partners resist taking up gendered subject positions in relation to each other, men frequently resort to violence as a means to deal with this crisis or imbalance in an attempt to restore a reciprocal and complimentary set of gendered positions (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004).

While not being the focus of this study, several writers have also provided psychoanalytic accounts of *serial murder*, which perhaps requires some brief consideration. Pistorius (2002) notes that serial murder is often characterised by poor ego strength that results from either poor attachment to primary care-givers or overly enmeshed object relationships that result in a symbiotic fusion. Alongside this, serial murder is often associated with poor superego development in the emotional absence of an identificatory object in the phallic stage of development. Given the individual's resultant ambivalence, limited impulse control and poorly developed moral conscience, Revitch and Schlesinger (1989) note that in instances where there is a sexually motivated murder of women, that rage that is phantasised against the mother is acted out and displaced onto another female object in reality.

Finally, several studies from a psychoanalytic perspective essentially attempt to understand *psychical experiences and violence within context*, either from the perspective of contextual impacts on the psyche and how this then becomes re-enacted within context; or how early childhood experiences shape our psychological responses within particular social contexts; or how fundamental psychic structures intersect with the social milieu to give rise to specific patterns of interaction within the social world. As illustrative exemplars, Bulhan's (1985) account of Fanon's view on violent social formations points to the manner in which conditions of oppression fundamentally create a sense of inferiority, leading to forms of auto-destructive behaviour or intrapersonal violence, capitulation to a social order of oppression, and fundamentally to processes of identification with the aggressor. He argues that under these circumstances, acts of horizontal violence are perpetrated against those closest to us, such as family and community members, all in an attempt to gain some sense of mastery, affirmation and control. This he argues can account for the high rates of interpersonal and homicidal violence that many oppressed communities experience. In these instances the social dynamics of homicidal violence can to some extent be accounted for by the psychodynamics of internalisation. Gobodo-Madikizela's (2003) psycho-history of Eugene de Kock notes that his early exposure to traumatic, humiliating and violent circumstances

within his familial context gave rise to the dynamics of splitting, identification with the aggressor, as well as his pattern of defensive violence. She argues that these underlying psychodynamics found a specific foothold in the social context of the apartheid security forces in South Africa, where defence against the external threat of blackness and communism mirrored his defensive aggressive impulses at a psychological level (that were rooted in hostile threats from significant others experienced within his early childhood years). Finally, writers such as Kristeva (1982) have put forward a theoretical account of abjection as a psychological process in which the developing ego has to protect its fragile integrity and rejects and expels all that compromises its integrity and well-being. As a basic psychological process, it is marked by the separation of self and mother, resulting in a disavowal, repudiation, denunciation and denigration of the abject maternal body - a loathing that is accompanied by physical and psychical reactions of aversion and disgust when confronted with anything that threatens the boundary of the self (Hook, 2006). However, this fundamental building block of *Othering* provides the psychodynamic scaffolding upon which processes of social *Othering* and negation can be overlaid and performed as well. Kristeva (1982, p. 68) notes that it *"is coextensive with the social and symbolic order, on the individual as well as on the collective level [...and...] assumes specific shapes and different codings according to the various symbolic systems"*. Writers such as Hook (2006) have applied Kristeva's concept of abjection to racism and by extension, the possibilities for racialised forms of violence. In her review of Kristeva, Kintz (1991, p. 318) argues that the *"description of the abject, in particular, concentrates precisely on the ways violence is generated against those who are connected to codes of the 'defiled maternal', women as well as whomever else a culture feminises"*. It is therefore in this analytical confluence between the psychical and the social that the psychodynamics of abjection allow for an understanding of social processes of violent *Othering*.

Even at the most basic level of discursive effect, these studies tend to track many of the quantitative studies on male homicide. They tend to unwittingly reinforce a certain degree of psychological and environmental determinism in the constitution of masculine subjectivity, and position these subjects as products of specific psychodynamic personality constellations in an essentialist manner. Even in studies where there are more complex analytic interplays between individual psychodynamics and the social world, the universality and structuralism embedded within this approach suggests a fixed subjectivity in which particular personality dynamics are potentially symbolised within specific social forms of violence. Despite these

criticisms, what remains theoretically apparent and similar to much of the cross-cutting literature on male homicide, are the central roles given to gender identity, sexuality, constructions of masculinity and femininity, and their nexus points with gendered forms of violence.

3. PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDIES ON MALE HOMICIDE/VIOLENCE:

Unlike the more deductive and theory-driven quantitative research discussed in *Chapter Two*, as well as the qualitative research conducted within the psychoanalytic tradition, phenomenological studies into male violence and homicide tend to adopt an experience-near focus (Kelly, 1999). These studies generally focus on thematic content analyses of forms of data produced by subjects in their understandings or accounts of social phenomena, behaviours and interactions. They therefore pivot on more inductive re-interpretations of subjects' existing interpretations of social interactions within context. Because they are derived from such personal accounts, they are thus focussed on the description and analysis of the interiority of subjective human experience. They foreground human agency in the creation of meanings and therefore actions, as compared to the experience-distant approaches to understandings of social phenomena that are commonly found in social constructionist studies (Kelly, 1999).

With specific reference to studies into male homicide, Polk (1994) suggests that the classificatory preoccupation in quantitative homicide research has not been of significant value in developing our theoretical positions, and while some minimal benefits are derived from these studies, that there is a need for research that can generate more meaningful theoretical accounts of male homicide. He furthermore argues that the assumption should always be that the conflict is *"about something"*, is always a *"situated transaction"*, and that thematic content analyses can help deepen our understandings of what constitutes such interactions from the perspective of social subjects themselves. In his study of male homicide, he supports Daly and Wilson's (1988) contention that homicide has a particular masculine character and argues that *"across time and across cultures homicide is a masculine matter"* (Polk, 1994, p. 22). In his Australian study reviewing police dockets containing statements of homicidal encounters, the centrality of gender, sexuality and masculinity were apparent. He firstly identifies scenarios of masculine violence in the context of sexual intimacy and notes themes of masculine possession of female partners, the commodification of women, as well as masculine control and jealousy in relation to these

partners, as drivers of homicide. He further identifies disputes of honour that involve face-saving as a second major theme to dominate homicides, especially between males who are involved in some form of confrontation or altercation. The third major attribution revolved around the use of violence within the context of another crime, and here he notes the instrumental deployment of violence within high-risk situations to attain certain goals. Finally, his study points to how levels of legitimisation of violence within conflict resolution situations also frequently result in homicide. In each thematic instance, scenarios of masculine performance (Butler, 1999) are directly implicated in the homicidal act itself.

Similar findings were reported in a study by Sully and Greenaway (2004) on the antecedents of domestic homicide in the United Kingdom. They noted that in most instances violence had been a common element that had previously characterised the relationship, that the perpetrator often had a history of violence prior to the homicidal incident within intimate relationships, and that control in the context of sexual intimacy featured prominently as an antecedent of the domestic homicide (see also, Dobash & Dobash, 1984, 1998). Vetten (1996), in her study of intimate femicide reports in South African newspapers noted the presence of justificatory narratives drawing on the theme of female provocation of their male partners within men's accounts of their murders. These narratives however pointed to issues of control, sexual regulation of females, the manner in which commodification and ownership of female partners sanctioned such controls, and homicidal violence as an attempt to assert or reassert such controls within contexts where they experienced a loss of thereof. Similar findings on the killing of women by their male partners in a range of contexts have also been echoed by Campbell (1992) and Radford and Russell (1992).

While phenomenological studies of male homicide are far fewer in the literature base, interpretive studies on gendered violence involving men who enact non-fatal interpersonal violence on their partners, abound. While clearly differentiated from homicidal violence in terms of the severity of outcomes, many of the central underpinning dynamics are similar to those revealed in studies on homicide (see for example, Anderson & Umberson, 2001; Dobash & Dobash, 1984, 1998). Many of these studies revealed accounts by men who had enacted violence and who attributed their violence to being socialised into a masculine culture; who suggested that their prior exposure to violence in childhood predisposed them to violence at a later stage in their lives; who argued that the use of instrumental violence was a legitimate means to attaining certain goals; and who disclosed that they frequently used

expressive violence as a means to manage intense emotional responses that they had in relation to others (James, Seddon & Brown, 2002). Heise (1998) also found in her study in the United States of America that rigid, traditional gender roles were linked to male aggression, honour and dominance, and increased the risk for partner violence. In several South African studies, many of these findings were once again confirmed. Wood and Jewkes (2001a, 2001b) in their study in South Africa, found that prominent themes emerging from men who had been involved in the commission of violence against their partners, included masculine themes of entitlement and control, and that successful masculine mastery was bound up with the ability to control their partners – sometimes through the use of physical violence. Vogelman's (1990) South African study on the intersection between masculinity, violence and sexuality, focussed on the narratives of men when talking about the rape of women. Participants described rape as being fundamentally related to power and control, with either the use of physical violence or the threat thereof. Within the encounter, performances of masculinity dominated the event, thereby centralising the role of validating masculinity through the enactment of violence in the context of sexist belief systems. In addition, Vogelman (1990) postulates that the culture of violence within South Africa, community legitimisation of violence and exposure to violence in multiple contexts of social living all foster a climate of tolerance and acceptability of such acts. Haffejee (2003) in her study of South African male youth involved in intimate partner violence noted that their talk about hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity often provided a justificatory reasoning for male violence against their partners. Furthermore, the ownership and commodification of women within the confines of intimate relationships also excused these actions, as the participants defined these relationships in terms of stereotypical gender role ascriptions. Men were thus allowed multiple sexual partners but their female partners were of necessity to be absolutely faithful and monogamous. Violence was also seen as an integral part of relationships, often being conflated with love (see Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003, on this as well). Similar findings were also noted by Lau (2008) in her study of South African men who had been involved in the commission of gender violence in their intimate relationships. Participants described the events as an outcome of either losing control or regaining control and an assertion of self in adverse relational contexts, as being embedded within an act of love, and as a mechanism for dealing with the emotionality of their partners or their own emotional vulnerability and intensity. Furthermore these highly gendered accounts were infused into a range of justificatory and dissociative narratives that allowed men to deflect responsibility and blame for their violence away from themselves to an ostensibly external

point of attribution (e.g. accepting blame but holding their partners responsible for provocation) (see Wood, 2004, on this narrational strategy as well).

In instances where violent enactments by men occur outside of intimate heterosexual relationships, they often take the form of male-on-male interpersonal violence in community settings, and particularly in gang settings. Pinnock (1982a, 1982b, 1997) and Schärf (1986) both point to the breakdown of community and familial structures during apartheid and the negative impact on identity development and negotiation in adolescence for many young South African males. They argue that in the absence of appropriate social mechanisms to allow for healthy adolescent rituals into adulthood (e.g. parental role models and guides; community sanctions and censures), that gangsterism offers a way for young men to navigate their way into adulthood and into a 'successful' masculinity. Ganging under these circumstances involves a range of rituals and is considered a rite of passage. It often incorporates the use of various forms of violence as a means of displaying manhood, belonging and an attainment of social status in conditions that are less than conducive to the achievement of dominant prescriptions of masculine social mobility and success. Similar findings were obtained by Mingo (1999) in his interviews with communities in Western Cape. Emerging themes included poor socio-economic and political conditions, historical conditions of oppression and the failure of the criminal justice system, parental influences, and the legitimisation of violence in strife-torn communities as factors that could account for male gang violence in particular. Polk (1994) also notes that in the Australian context, male violence and homicide in the context of ganging was directly related to protecting and affirming self-worth and masculinity when it was at stake in front of others, raising again the importance of being seen to be performing 'successful' masculinity (Butler, 1993). Vogelman (1990) also noted that in instances where men were involved in gang rape in South Africa, that aspects of masculine performance were heightened in front of others, often escalating the use of violence against women to sadistic levels that were unwarranted as the victims had not needed to be further subdued. Violence in this instance was performed as a masculine spectacle and not as instrumental to the crime of rape itself. Finally, Cooper (in progress) in his study of young male gang members on trial for violent crimes in a Cape Town prison, found that induction into gang violence came to represent a particular form of modified hegemonic masculinity, especially in instances where participants felt unable to achieve successful, normative, white, middle-class prescriptions of social respect and masculine 'success'. Ganging allowed for a space in which toughness and fearlessness could be

achieved, and where any 'weaker' feminine attributes could be disavowed. The use of firearms as a form of weaponry was a highly visible mechanism for displaying the dangerousness of participants and their consequent status as men in the context of environments where gang culture prevailed (see Cock, 2001; Cock & Nathan, 1989; Swart, 2001, later for a more detailed account of the relationship between guns, masculinity, militarism and militarization).

While a significant literature base on male violence and homicide does exist, the above represents a snapshot of the primary findings internationally and in South Africa. Even though Armstrong's (1990) critique of qualitative research of course holds some merit in relation to many of these interpretivist studies, in so far as they contribute to the creation of objects of knowledge and the generation of specific unitary subjects of knowledge, it is important to be mindful of the critical potential embedded within many of these studies as well. Certainly, many of these studies do have the latent capacity to inscribe and re-inscribe notions of a unitary masculine subject, which Field (2001, p. 211) in his studies on masculinity refers to as the myth of a definitive and singular masculinity. He goes on to posit that this mythical construction of a masculine subject as unitary and defined in hegemonic parameters has the inadvertent effect of exposing *men to the possibility of 'failure' and feelings of disappointment"*, when such constructions are unattainable. In so doing, he articulates a more critical view on the 'crisis of masculinity' that has often been portrayed as the basis for violence (Whitehead, 2005), but which has also been much critiqued. However, despite the challenges that many of these studies pose and the manner in which they undoubtedly reinforce the notion of a singular masculinity, several interpretive studies have also been more critical in their orientation. These have frequently been influenced by studies originating within a discursive and post-structuralist framework, and have therefore attempted to highlight the possibilities of a range of masculine subject positions among men who are involved in the enactment of violence. Vogelman (1990) noted the ambivalence that many men experience during and after the commission of rapes by enacting, performing and validating dominant constructions of masculinity on the one hand, but also enacting the role of 'protective lover' on the other hand (see Wood, 2004, on this tension in the construction of manhood). Haffejee (2003) identified contradictions in the ways that young men constructed themselves and their partners in ways that not only reflected dominant stereotypical views of gender relations, but also displayed what would be considered to be more 'feminine' attributes within these relations. Lau (2008) furthermore highlighted men's reliance on

violence as a means to deal with affective vulnerabilities but also their tendency to distance themselves from it as something abject and abhorrent. Finally, Cooper (in progress) noted how men viewed violence as an instrumental vehicle for the mastery and attainment of masculine status, but also that they were reflexive enough to recognise the limitations thereof in broader social contexts in which it was not legitimised as an acceptable form of social functioning in the pursuit of status. Whatever the social functions and ideological effects of these hybridised masculine subject positions (which are addressed later), these studies have all pointed to the possibilities of a fragmented or split subject (Hollway, 1995). In so doing they indicate that subjects at least have access to various positionalities, thereby revealing the possibilities for both hegemonic and subordinated subject positions to be performed.

4. DISCURSIVE STUDIES ON MALE HOMICIDE/VIOLENCE:

Unlike interpretivist studies that are located within phenomenology, discursive studies are firmly embedded within the co-ordinates of social constructionism. Rather than being preoccupied with the subjective accounts of social actors and the interiority of experience, social constructionism is concerned with understanding the manner in which the social world dictates, shapes and is represented in behaviours, actions, social interactions and communications. It is less focussed on establishing the underlying authorial intentions within subjective accounts of social phenomena and more engaged with the manner in which the social itself comes to be reflected within social actors' everyday interactions. Within interpretivist studies, the possibilities of subjective interpretations of the social world are revealed, whereas in social constructionist studies, the possibilities of revealing various facets of the social world are realised through a range of analytical tools. Specifically, discourse analysis is employed to uncover the discursive networks or systemised forms of meaning about objects of knowledge and subjects of knowledge that are conveyed by social actors within various textual vehicles (e.g. language and behavioural repertoires). Discourse analysis has at its core, two main objectives. The first is to examine how social realities are represented within texts. This involves understanding the deployment and performance of discourses by social actors and an examination of their functions and effects. In particular, it is concerned with the manner in which discourses are utilised in relation to power and ideology. The second objective involves a more deconstructive function. It is therefore concerned with the manner in which discourse utilisation reinforces certain power relations by generating certain taken-for-granted regimes of truths, but also to ascertain oppositions

and contradictions that may disrupt continuous understandings of the world and allow for alternative or discontinuous meanings to emerge from parallel readings of the text (Macleod, 2002). By disrupting the notion of a unitary, fixed subject, discourse analysis exposes how in the minutiae of everyday interactions the potential for resistances and alternative ways of being in the world become evident. Stated differently, the anti-transformatory and paralysing power of discourses of the unitary subject becomes less effective when their ideological invisibility is rendered more visible (Foucault, 1982).[25]

4.1. Homicide in the Foucauldian Tradition

Given the Foucauldian origins of critical discourse analytic studies, some consideration of homicide as an object of knowledge as well as the generation of a homicidal subject of knowledge is warranted from this perspective. As a formal subject of knowledge and social inquiry, the study of homicide or fatal interpersonal violence occurring outside of the parameters of war or civil conflict has developed substantially over the past five decades. Here, Wolfgang's (1958) seminal work on *"criminal homicide"* is often cited as the landmark research that ushered in this formalised study of homicide. However, understandings and interpretations derived from this investigation together with many of our current representations, discourses, research and praxis can be historically traced to constructions of homicide within earlier social formations. Despite representations of homicide being contested and varied in contemporary societies, the current hegemonic discourse on homicide has undoubtedly been shaped by historical processes related to the punishment and social control of this perceived form of deviance. In particular, the disciplines of medicine, psychiatry, psychology, criminology, penology and public health have all contributed overtly or inadvertently to the dominant construction of homicide as an aberration of human behaviour requiring social control (Foucault, 1977, 1982, 1994), as it presents a physical, social, moral and economic threat to individuals, communities, social institutions and material practices. While these disciplines have made important contributions to our existing knowledge base on homicide, one of the primary outcomes has nevertheless been the historical establishment of a discourse of

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[25] A further explication of discourse analysis and social constructionism is provided in *Chapter Five*.

difference between the criminal and the law-abiding human subject, and integral to this process has been a preoccupation with examining why certain individuals perpetrate while others do not. This has contributed to limited analytical frameworks that explicitly examine homicide as a socially embedded and subjectively constructed act, but also to the dominant preoccupation of homicide research over the past 50 years. In particular, this focus has been on describing homicidal patterns, identifying at-risk and high-risk individuals and populations, understanding its genesis, intervening with these at-risk and high-risk individuals and populations, and isolating perpetrators from others in society (see Altbeker, 2007, on this in South Africa).

However, drawing on Foucault (1982, 1994, 1997) a rudimentary genealogical analysis reveals that as this object of knowledge has emerged over time, it has functioned as a means to understand fatal interpersonal violence, but has often directly or indirectly structured a discourse of *"dangerousness"* and constituted human subjects who are *"dangerous individuals"*. This discourse was directly linked to an interface between medicine (most notably psychiatry), the law, the penal system and imperatives for understanding social deviance and for managing it. Socially, it functioned as a framework of meaning that justified certain mechanisms of social control over *"dangerous bodies"*, especially when interpersonal violence with a fatal outcome represented a threat to existing social institutions and material practices. Foucault (1994) points to various periods in history and notes that this subject of knowledge emerged alongside the practice of social medicine. In particular, newly formed states were concerned with any features of populations that could potentially weaken their positions in relation to other states, and thus the preoccupation with the violent deviant, anarchist or insurrectionist. With the onset of the industrial revolution, there were of course greater concerns with features of urban life that had the potential to 'contaminate' and destabilise states, and thus the preoccupation with separating the rich from the poor, the healthy from the sick, the insane from the sane, and the criminal from the socially compliant. Still later within the period of capitalism, the emphasis turned towards the labour force, and the underclasses became the focus of attention to ensure stability for the growth of capitalism. The *"dangerous individual"* was therefore examined within the context of the underclasses as a potential threat to material processes of accumulation. In the era of globalisation today, homicide has increasingly been constructed as a potential threat to the expansion of global

investments and consumerist markets, with an emphasis on the costs associated with such *"dangerousness"* to unevenly developed socio-economic contexts, resulting in comparisons between 'deficient' high-risk societies and 'ideal' low-risk societies.

The discourse of the *"dangerous individual"* can be found as early as feudalism, where fatal interpersonal violence was considered a transgression against community and was constructed as a spiritual struggle between good and evil, with the process of punishment being one that attempted to assist the perpetrator to a point of moral purification, redemption and remorse. Both the act of killing and its punishment were thus viewed through the lenses of religion, with confessors exchanging remorse for merciful death. This process served not only to construct a more socially tolerable understanding of the act of killing through the representation of the condemned as an *"exemplary sinner"*, but simultaneously acted as a mechanism of social control over communities. In the very public spectacle of executing the condemned, there were clear reconstitutions of the relations of power that characterised the act of killing as well as a restoration of the dominant power relations within the social formation in favour of religious institutions that were integrally related to political power (Foucault, 1982, 1994, 1997).

Even later within the period of modernity, the act of killing was constructed and represented as one of moral, social and structural alienation. Despite the significant contributions of influential writers such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Fanon (to mention but a few) and their theorising about violence as a consequence of the alienation experienced in the context of asymmetrical social structures, ideologies and material practices, the hegemonic discourse surrounding homicide remained relatively in tact. In particular, fatal interpersonal violence continued to be most commonly represented as a threatening form of social deviance, with the perpetrator being constructed as a 'social enemy' (Bertani & Fontana, 2003). Because of technological and scientific advances, constructions of killing were generated within the context of science rather than religion (e.g. the psychiatrisation of criminality). Doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists and criminologists replaced the clergy and provided detailed causal explanations for the act. Through this process as well, the act became more meaningfully understood and tolerated by society, through reconstituting the dynamics of killing into an understandable 'scientific' form.

However, one of the fundamental functions was to distance the act from dominant segments within societies and thereby to protect the integrity of specific communities, but simultaneously to act as a mechanism for social control through the threat of isolation within implicated communities. Essentially, the act of killing was seen as a deficit within the individual or certain marginalised segments of the population, but this representation also served as an injunction that 'social enemies' would endure the fate of isolation and exclusion. The proverbial 'bad apple' was to be cast out for fear of contaminating others, with rationality determining with definitive and absolute confidence that 'deviance' was a feature of the flawed individual or marginal community, and not of the totality of the social structure and its resultant forms of alienation[26]. Strategic relations of power between dominant and subordinated groups were thus inadvertently re-inscribed to some extent.

More recently, a plethora of studies have attempted to describe the patterns, trends and profiles of homicides, victims and perpetrators. The focus of these studies has been on typologising and describing the act of killing, the circumstances surrounding the killing, victim-perpetrator relationships, the social determinants of homicide, and individual, product and family-related risk factors. While sociology, criminology, psychiatry, psychology and penology have all been instrumental in these studies, public health as a discipline is case in point that has provided a reconceptualised approach to understanding violence in relation to injurious health outcomes and burdens that affect individuals, families, communities, institutions and societies (Krug *et al.,* 2002). While there have been significant contributions to our understandings of violence through the epidemiological analyses of the public health approach, the potential exists in this framework for violence to become extremely medicalised and constructed through a disease framework Furthermore, these studies run the risk of representing violence in an ahistorical and apolitical manner that reduces it to a health outcome that fails to recognise the centrality of its social locatedness. Within the era of globalisation, this approach creates possibilities to insidiously depoliticise, but

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[26] In South Africa, the complicity of many disciplines and professions in structuring a discourse of criminality that was linked to blackness is an example of how science intersected with ideologies of control and domination and supported the development of such ideologies and their associated social practices (see Butchart, 1998; Duncan, 1996).

simultaneously to ensure that as a form and expression of deviance or social dissent that threatens existing material practices, violence can be surveilled at an international level[27] and addressed through international co-operation and agencies (e.g. the World Health Organisation; Interpol). In so doing, understandings of violence have shifted from the *"dangerous individual"* and have been augmented with notions of *"dangerous populations and societies"*. These in turn are construed as carrying the potential to act as an impingement or 'contaminant' to 'global prosperity', and therefore invoke the necessity for some measure of social intervention. Representations of difference continue to prevail in the form of an international discourse of safety and danger in high and low-income contexts respectively, which then reinforces global power relations between nation states at political, ideological and economic levels. Alongside improved global surveillance technologies, the need to monitor and supervise and control delegitimised forms of violence at an individual, population and societal level remains one of the core functions of contemporary research into violence - frequently under the rubric of safety, human security and health promotion. Within the context of a global market economy, discourses of violent criminality have also been appropriated and aligned to market discourses, resulting in an increasing commodification of safety and security that is premised upon capitalising on threat perceptions and prevailing fears of crime within populations at large.

The construction of the *"dangerous individual"* as a social subject (and in this instance, the young, socially marginalised, murderous male subject), represents a discourse that is of course both cause and effect of social control. In the creation of an object of knowledge that examines social deviance and its control the effect is to construct the *"dangerous individual"*, but the *"dangerous individual"* also drives the need for greater social control. However, forms of social control do not only occur in the visible public spaces of societies through the heightened levels of policing and

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[27] Ironically, while surveillance within public health refers to *"the ongoing and systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of health information"* (Holder *et al.*, 2001, p. 11), Bertani and Fontana (2003) have drawn on Foucault's work and argued that all surveillance is ultimately linked to processes of monitoring, controlling and supervising specific human interactions and social relationships that are a perceived to be threatening to social formations, and therefore in need of social engineering or management.

incarceration of *"dangerous individuals"*. They also help to construct other subjects as fixed and binaried in relation to the *"dangerous individual"* – such as the docile and vulnerable woman, and the law abiding citizen – giving rise to much more insidious forms of disciplinary power and self-regulation of populations at large. From this perspective, it is important to not only expose the historical origins of such subject constructions, but also their functions and effects at a social level. Furthermore, if these subject positions can be shown to be discontinuous, ruptures can be made in understanding their effects and functions. Foucault (Bertani & Fontana, 2003) notes that power and resistance is co-extensive and that as power plays itself out at every moment and in ways that we are not always aware of, so does resistance. These points of resistance can likewise be found wherever power is operant, and in deconstructing the relations of power underpinning the construction of the homicidal subject and the homicidal act, we may be able to identify alternative moments of social resistance within homicidal encounters that point us in the direction of possibilities for social change as well.

4.2.   Critical Social Studies on Male Homicide/Violence

Several studies using critical discourse analytic methods have followed in the Foucauldian tradition, by examining the effects of discourses of male violence and homicide and how they intersect with other referent discourses to perpetuate certain forms of social control, regulation and domination. In doing so, they have attempted to expose the ideological processes underpinning the deployment of these intersecting discourses, and therefore to render greater visibility to social processes of systemised forms of domination. Duncan (1996) examined the manner in which discourses of public violence were often also enmeshed with discourses of racism in the South African context. In reviewing newspaper articles, he highlighted how the lexical registers associated with anarchy, dehumanisation, children and irrationality were frequently associated with instances in which blacks were involved in acts of public violence. He argued that these references to violent discourses were appropriated into the dominant racist discourses (and thereby, by default, also classist discourses) of the time and served to legitimise not only racism, but also the repressive forms of social control that were endemic to apartheid South Africa. However, the study also noted that minor discourses that undermined the intersection of racism and violence among

blacks were also evident, although they were much less visible. Importantly, while discourses on violence may be appropriated into the service of other discourses of domination and subjugation, Duncan (1996) does raise the possibility for more critical apprehensions and readings of discourses on crime and violence.

Similarly, Reimers (2006) also examined Swedish newspaper accounts of an honour killing of a Kurdish woman by her father. Within these accounts, the dominant construction of the victim was of a heroine who had perished because of her desire for autonomy and independence, and her death was thus constructed as a senseless honour killing. Reimers (2006) argues that what underpins these media discourses is the notion of an *"us"* and a *"them"* amongst Swedish reporters which allows for a reinforcement of cultural differences and stereotypes between Swedes and eastern *Others*. Not only does the study highlight the racist undertones within these discourses, but also how distancing rhetorical strategies allow for a separation from an *Other* who is constructed as less developed, less rational, and guided by archaic religious and cultural values. Here too, the discursive construction of homicidal violence is integrally related to referent discourses of racism that not only make sense of the act, but do so in a manner that entrenches and reproduces racist forms of *Othering*, and bolster social asymmetries related to the 'race' of immigrants and their alien status.

Hajer and Uitermark (2008), in their analysis of media performances surrounding the murder of a Dutch artist by a Muslim man, showed how discourses of criminality and violence were infused with discourses of anti-multiculturalism, anti-extremism and Islamaphobia. They argued that in this process there was reinforcement and buttressing of anti-immigration and racist sentiments held within the Dutch populace towards outsiders who are racially *Othered*, together with notions of taking a tougher stance against religious fundamentalism and extremism. However, they also showed how this potentially explosive nexus of racist and homicidal discourses was appropriated and modified more critically to reveal a greater problem of Islamaphobia in Dutch society, and also to highlight the importance of integration in ethnically diverse and multicultural societies. They suggest that not only were the underlying social problems of integration revealed, but that certain media protagonists performed rhetorical strategies of wedging and bridging (i.e. acknowledging difference, but

finding points of commonality), alongside emotive rerouting (i.e. rerouting public emotional sentiment towards more collective symbols) to combat the *"us"* and *"them"* dichotomy that was emerging around this event. Of critical importance here is that while discourses on criminality, homicide and violence can be utilised in conjunction with other nefarious discourses of domination to forward certain ideological agendas, that they can also be more critically deconstructed in the public domain to expose social tensions and forms of implicit domination that need to be addressed.

Acland (1995), in his cultural studies of youth involved in murder, argued that constructions of youth criminality and violence were often characterised as a form of crisis among contemporary youth, thereby justifying the need for social interventions to offset such crises. He suggests that what underpins this characterisation is in fact the manner in which youth act as a *"repository for social concerns"* that are then viewed through the *"vectors of class, race [and] sex"* (p. 10). In so doing, adult anxieties about the maintenance of the social order are encapsulated in the notion of the youth crisis, and discourses on youth violence are then filtered through referent discourses on family values, respect for authority, moral degeneration and the general concerns of the new right. The notion of crisis is thus both cause and effect – on the one hand hegemonic ideas about successful youth negotiation gives rise to this crisis, but also then reinforces this hegemony[28]. The spectacle of the 'youth crisis' in the form of murder is therefore both readily consumed and simultaneously constructed as repulsive. Discourses on youth violence and criminality then often support processes of control, domination and social regulation through strengthening discourses around appropriate morality, sexuality, justice, values, 'race', class, gender and authority.

4.3. Feminist Studies on Male Homicide/Violence

Many earlier studies on male violence were profoundly influenced by the emergence of feminist theorising, especially in the context of understanding male violence against women (see for example, Boonzaier, 2006; Whitehead, 2005). Here in

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[28] This dialectic is similar to that evident in masculine crisis theory, which is addressed later in this chapter and in *Chapter Four* (see Field, 2001, on the potential for re-inscribing hegemonic understandings of masculinity).

particular, these studies have focussed on the manner in which male violence against women is entrenched within sexist and patriarchal ideologies and gendered discourses pertaining to the control of women, and the consequent legitimisation of violence as a means to enact such controls. Notions of ownership, commodification and the objectification of women in relation to men are prominent within such studies, suggesting that violence is integrally related to broader social processes involving differential power positions that men and women occupy within societies (see Clatterbaugh, 1990, on this and the distinctions between radical, liberal and socialist feminisms). Discursive studies have thus attempted to highlight and reveal the underlying constructions of gender roles that systematically contribute to forms of domination that preference men over women. James, Seddon and Brown's (2002) study of men's accounts of their violence towards women found that men often resorted to understandings of socialisation into a culture of masculinity and physical aggression to justify their violence against women partners. In addition, they found that discourses of violence as legitimate, as well as violence as a loss of control were prominent within men's accounts of their aggression towards their female partners. Dobash and Dobash (1979) in their seminal study of violence against wives also explored the relationships between uneven gender relations and its significance within the context of intimate partner violence. They argue that violence against women within such intimate contexts are directly linked to patriarchy and the institutional mechanisms that often excluded women from legal and other processes, thereby elevating men to positions of almost absolute control over the lives of women. Similarly in South Africa, Lutya's (2001) study found that an acceptance of rigid and unevenly constructed gender roles within society motivated a desire to resolve conflict within intimate partner contexts through violence. Selikow, Zulu and Cedras (2002) also noted that men's conceptualisation of women as objects predisposed women to greater risks within intimate relationship for violence. In extending on studies that examine the historical relationship between patriarchy and certain forms of gendered violence, Oldenburg (2002) examined certain forms of femicide in relation to the concept of dowry, and noted that this practice was initially an institution managed by women to enable them to establish their status and have recourse to an emergency economic reserve within traditional Indian society. With the onset of colonisation and forms of capital accumulation, the economic and societal conditions shifted considerably away from matriarchy towards patriarchy in which women's social

entitlements were systematically erased, resulting in a devaluing of their very lives – a precursor to the contemporary forms of femicide that we see in relation to dowry murders in the context of patriarchal gendered relations.

Eaton, Flisher and Aaro (2003) found that sexual coercion within heterosexual relationships was linked to discourses of the 'male sexual drive', and therefore allowed for a justification of violence and sexual coercion within these contexts. Similarly, Mokwena's (1991) study also highlighted men's use of a semantic register that constructed their sexual practices as violent, invasive, controlling, contemptuous and dehumanising, thereby reinforcing a sense of masculine entitlement and female submissiveness (see also, Varga & Makubalo, 1996). Other discursive studies have also examined the rhetorical strategies that men deploy in making sense of their violence towards women. Bograd's (1988) analysis of men and women's accounts of violence revealed that both men and women frequently focussed on an external attribution for the violence (e.g. alcohol or drug use; provocation by wives), thereby distancing men from the violent actions to some extent, and reinforcing the popular discourse of the 'out-of-control' man. Eisikovits, Goldblatt and Winstok (1999) also found that in their study, both men and women articulated understandings of the violence as a feature of loss of control among men. In both of these studies, the similarities in the accounts produced by men and women reveal a joint narrative that may in fact function as a means of ensuring the perpetuation of the particular relationship. Furthermore, it serves to reinforce dominant discourses of the 'male aggressive drive' that in turn supports and buttresses intersubjective relations that are premised upon patriarchal gendered relations. Hearn (1998) also explored men's representations of violent enactments with their partners and found both exculpatory and justificatory discourses emerging. These included a focus on attributing their violence to certain distal factors (such as socialisation processes and previous exposure to violence) or on more proximal factors (such as provocation by their partners, or alcohol intoxication). In the first instance, responsibility tends to be deflected, while in the second, responsibility is accepted, but blame is deflected (see Lau, 2008; Wood 2004, on this as well).

More recently, a range of studies on violence against women by men have drawn on a post-structuralist feminist approach. In particular, these studies have focussed on

women's experiences and interrogated violence against women from this standpoint, but also increasingly engaged with the issue of masculinity. Noting the difficulties with fixed subject positioning in more traditional and structuralist approaches to gendered forms of violence (see Hollway, 1995), these studies have also attempted to reveal more contradictory, contested, fluid and duelling subject positionalities that reflect a more complex and nuanced approach to understanding gendered forms of violence and the possibilities for transformation. In arguing that multiple subject positions are available (although not infinite and definitely constrained by the socio-cultural milieu), possibilities for discontinuous and disrupted notions of masculinity and femininity within the context of gender violence also become more plausible.

Anderson and Umberson (2001) in their study of men's accounts of domestic violence found the presence of diverse subject positioning within their narratives. On the one hand men reified the notion of masculine strength and power, but on the other hand constructed themselves as powerless in the context of the criminal justice system. While these contradictions may to some extent represent a performance of vulnerability to offset and pre-emptively dilute potential critiques against men, it nevertheless points to the possible fluidity in masculinities (Connell, 1995).

Shefer, Strebel & Foster (2000) in their South African study on student talk on heterosexual negotiation found that not only did men and women talk about the pervasive coupling of violence and heterosex, but also the centrality of male power and female powerlessness within heterosexual relationships. In addition, discourses of individual essentialism, socialisation and cultural prescriptiveness were utilised to create meaning and to justify violence in heterosexual relationships. However, participants in this study also articulated views that experiences within these relational contexts are not only negative, but can also be experienced as positive, once again pointing to the possibilities of coexisting experiences, positionalities and subjectivities within heterosexual relationships. Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) noted in their study of men's accounts of their violence towards their intimate partners, that they employed justificatory and minimising rhetorical strategies to foster meanings that address issues of blame and severity within and surrounding the violent encounter. However, they also employed the classic gendered discourses of the emasculated male needing to reassert control, the binary of masculine authority and female

subordination, and the normalisation of the control of female sexuality by their partners through forms of sexual coercion. Nevertheless, they also point to discourses of empowerment that were apparent, as men in the study also articulated the possibilities of varied positionalities that contradicted the stated notions of gender embedded within hegemonic masculinity (e.g. support for non-traditional values around men and democratic child-rearing practices) (see also, Boonzaier, 2006).

Wood and Jewkes (2001a) in their study of violence among Xhosa township youth in the Eastern Cape of South Africa noted that same-gender violence among men was often centred on competition for female partners, and was an important aspect of positive self-presentation in the context of attaining a perceived 'successful' masculine identity. In addition, violence against women also frequently occurred as a means to control female partners and was understood as an honourable action that could be taken in response to apparent 'wronging' when women were even perceived to be unfaithful. Thwarting of a 'successful' masculine self-presentation was thus understood as a potential point of genesis for violence, as it was through violent enactments that positive self-presentation was again attained. Discourses of male sexual entitlement and control of women were thus prominent representations of broader ideological processes involving uneven gender relations, but these also occurred alongside hegemonic discourses of 'successful' masculinity. However, their study also points to a number of subordinated discourses on manhood that participants had access to, although the extent to which these were performed remained unclear. These included ideas of social responsibility, non-violence, respect and a delegitimisation of excessive violence against women, highlighting that hegemonic masculinities constantly coexist with subordinated masculinities, and therefore reveal the potential for disruption and transformation. Similarly, Wood (2004) in her South African study of men in prison found that dominant ideological and discursive networks promoting the legitimisation of the domination and control of women were common within the talk of participants. In addition, they perceived violence as a means to express such an entitlement or to enforce it when it was perceived to be under threat from their female partners. However, despite these constructions they also presented alternative or *"duelling narratives"* about men as protectors of women, again highlighting the varied positionalities that may be potentially performed within the broader context of masculine subjectivity.

However, while post-structuralist feminist studies have no doubt opened up a range of fissures within which to explore the non-unitary subject, performativity, subjectivities and positionalities, it is critical to not overstate these findings as inherent evidence for disruption, resistance and transformation of the 'violent subject'. More important, is to understand how these varying positionalities in particular serve specific social functions and continue to have ideological effects. Hearn (1998) and Reitz (1999) both highlight how men construct their violence as an outcome of a dual identity that is violent and simultaneously non-violent. While this certainly represents different positioning, one has to consider the interlocutory social functions of distancing and minimising the severity of violent actions which may be construed as socially undesirable and illegitimate in broader social contexts. In drawing on discourses of duality, and to some extent essentialism and determinism that abound in relation to the 'violent subject', the ideological effects are to maintain and legitimise violence in relation to women and more generally as a mechanism of conflict resolution. Similarly, Wood's (2004) study revealing men's constructions of themselves as both dominant and protective may reveal an attempt at balancing self-presentation, but fundamentally, both positionalities are coupled to dominant and hegemonic constructions of 'successful' manhood. Here too, while the differing subject positions are available, they both continue to reinforce ideological processes related to hegemonic masculinity and unevenly differentiated gender constructions in contemporary society. Therefore, while noting the disruptive and transformatory potential of revealing various subject positions associated with masculinity, realising this potential will of necessity have to involve an uncoupling of masculinity from more oppressive subject positions related to violence, its performative functions and ideological effects. In addition, processes of conscientisation, deconstruction and ideological critique will become necessary if the potential for transformation is to be realised. What this ultimately implies is that even in the presence of such positional possibilities, that agentic performativity is not sufficient for transformatory outcomes, but is dependent upon social struggles that reveal the liberatory potential within such positionalities.

4.4. Masculinities and Male Homicide/Violence

Studies into masculinities and manhood emerged more formally in the 1970s and had a number of influences that differed from that of feminist studies into male violence. In the first instance, there was a growing concern that one element within the binary of gender relations had been almost exclusively focussed upon (female experiences), while the other had only fundamentally been engaged with as victimisers or perpetrators (male experiences) (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007). Cleaver (2002) suggests that this was premised upon overly simplified ideas about gender and power relations, in which the focus on men occurred predominantly as a means of securing benefits for women. Shefer *et al.* (2007, p. 2) similarly argue for the importance of focussing on masculinities as an area of study, as men have tended to be *"invisibilised by their normativity"* and suggest that there is a need to *"acknowledge alternative masculinities and femininities [... if we are to] challenge the dominant mode of gender identities and relations"*. Connell (2002, p. 10) has also proposed a more comprehensive examination of gender that should of necessity include complementary foci on masculinities alongside femininities. He extends on Butler's (1999) work in which she critiques the dominant construction of gender differences as normal because of inherent sex differences, and goes on to suggest that in fact *"gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that brings reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes"*. In this manner, he posits the importance of analysing constructions of both masculinities and femininities in a broader analysis of gender as a social construction.

The second major impetus for this turn towards masculinities ironically emerged from the reactionary counter-attack against feminism. Much of the conservatism associated with male normativity was infused into this backlash and emerged in modified forms such as the men's rights movements and the growing return to masculism (Clatterbaugh, 1990). This prompted profeminists to engage with issues of male privilege more openly and critically, and contributed to the growing understanding of masculinities today.

Finally, the influence of many gay writers suggested that there was the possibility of several versions of masculinity to coexist simultaneously, thus giving rise to the

conceptualisation of masculinities rather than masculinity (Morgan, 1992). Here, studies contributed to the analysis of inequalities and differences among men and thus opened up the possibilities for pluralizing the concept of masculinity to include a diverse range of masculinities (Connell, 2000).

Certainly, while contemporary masculinity studies have drawn on masculinity theory, feminist theory and post-structuralism; and while increasingly being viewed as a distinct area of research and study; owes much of its development to feminist theorising and research. In this regard, contemporary research and theorising in the area of masculinity studies could be conceptualised as profeminist in orientation, and therefore involves aspects of hierarchy and hegemony, but also aspects of pluralized masculinities, the intersection of masculinities with 'race', class, gender, violence and militarization, globalisation and other macro-social processes (Bourdieu, 2001; Connell, 2000).

However, studies into masculinities and manhood have also been critiqued for deradicalising feminism and inadvertently re-centring a male agenda (Braidotti, 1994). This is particularly evident in such areas as the men's rights movement and more contemporary forms of masculism, and to a lesser extent in the uncritical approaches to masculine crisis theory. Nevertheless, despite these ongoing debates, many writers in the area of gender studies would agree that masculinity studies is a critical complimentary component to forwarding feminist ideas and agendas in contemporary society.

As with studies that are more formally located within the feminist tradition, discursivity has come to play an increasingly central role in the analysis of and research into the varied configurations of masculinity, especially in the intersecting contexts of gender and violence. Butler (1999, p. 23) argues that the normativity of gender relations *"is produced precisely through the regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms"*. She goes on to argue that these *"regulatory practices of gender formation and division constitute identity [and] the internal coherence of the subject"*. In this instance, it is fair to read into regulatory practices the concept of discourse, which includes all actions, behaviours and communications that have a relatively internally coherent and systemised network of significations about gender relations and their accompanying

relations of power. Connell (2002) draws on the Foucauldian construct of disciplinary power and argues that these regulatory practices are not only associated with institutional and social processes, but also occur in the form of self-regulation among social subjects themselves. However, where these forms of disciplinarisation fail to regulate the very bodies of men and women along the cleavages of normative gender relations, violence frequently ensues. Violence is utilised as a means of sustaining male dominance over females, but is also deployed liberally between men *"as means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions [... and] a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles"* (Connell, 1995, p. 83). In the failures of disciplinarisation, violence is thus deployed as a means to dominate and punish through overt controls over the body – *"as part of a system of domination, but […] at the same time a measure of its imperfection"* (p. 84). It is thus fair to assume that in unpacking the discursive contours and intersections between gender and violence that certain imperfections in the form of contradictions, discontinuities, disruptions and subversions will be evident, and that the possibilities for resistance to this gendered normativity will also be accessible.

Given the paucity of discursive studies on masculinities and homicide, this section reviews a cross-section of discursive studies that explore the intersections between violence and masculinities more broadly. As with much of the feminist research referred to above, several studies have also highlighted the normativity in men's accounts of their violent interactions, either utilising violence as a means to control, punish or perform (see Shefer *at al.*, 2007, for recent South African studies on this). Morrell (2001) refers to these as defensive responses that attempt to reassert the dominance of males in contexts where such dominance may be under threat or under perceived threat. Harris, Lea and Foster (1995) in their study with men at a South African university found that participants drew on the dominant-submissive binary that characterises normative gender relations as a way of justifying sexual aggression as normal, and furthermore, that in the context of intimate relationships noted that such sexual aggression was so normalised that it precluded the possibility of intimate forms of rape. Sathiparsad (2007) in her study of rural male Zulu youth also noted how male participants deployed the 'male sexual drive' discourse to motivate for why they made sexual demands from their partners, sometimes including the use of violence. In addition, when sexual activity was initiated by their female partners, this

was delegitimised and provided further justification for denigrating women and utilising sexual aggression – a double-bind that always feeds into constructions of hegemonic masculinity and therefore always secures a strategic relation of power for men in relation to women. Similarly, Wood and Jewkes (2001b) found in their study with South African teenagers that male control of female sexuality was frequently considered normative, with men often constructing sex as an integral part of intimate relationships that of necessity had to be penetrative, and that if not acceded to, would be taken by force and/or physical violence. Here too, the deployment of the 'male sexual drive' discourse, binaried conceptions of male dominance and female submissiveness as well as discourses related to sex and relationships all serve to reinforce the uneven nature of dominant gendered relations. Hoch (2004, p. 105) in his study, noted that the relationship between men's sexuality and violence against women could be viewed through the lenses of sexual performance as a defence against emasculation, impotence and the internal vulnerabilities associated with 'the feminine'. He suggests that in order to avoid their own vulnerability, men have to construct women as sexual objects through registers of invasion, domination and dehumanisation. This allows for the control of women through sexual aggression and violence, thereby *"conceiving of one's partner as the sort of mere body or object ('cunt') with whom it is permissible to fuck"*. Here the possibilities for the rape fantasy and the eroticisation of violence also become visible. Violence and sexual violence become mechanisms for performing a hegemonic masculinity that not only preserves masculine self-presentation and reinforces women's objectification and submission, but also ironically traps men in a specific and partial mode of sexuality. Connell (1995) in his study of men involved in the biker subculture also found that violence was normalised and therefore performed a means of attaining a 'hero' status, and that it was always justified and legitimised if it was provoked by another man. He notes that the normativity of violence results in an ethic of an *"obligation to reciprocate violence"* (p. 99). However, it was also extended towards women who within this subculture were of necessity to play second-fiddle to their male counterparts. Given the hyper-masculinity associated with this subculture, women who were perceived as outspoken and not 'knowing their place' were routinely responded to with violence. Violence thus had the effect of not only sustaining a sense of masculinity in front of others, but also simultaneously to control women as a means of further performing this masculinity, especially in public spaces. Bhana's (2005)

study with young school-going boys in South Africa noted the intersection between poverty and hegemonic masculinity and the manner in violence became a central normative mechanism for the survival of the fittest under these adverse circumstances. She argues that the need to attain a 'successful' hegemonic masculinity is heavily influenced by a harsh environment and that young boys either exerted such violence against women to ensure their deference (including forms of sexual violence), or utilised it as a mechanism for jockeying for position, status and honour among their male peers. Similar findings on the normativity of male violence have been noted in a range of diverse contexts across the globe. Thomson (2002) in her review of various studies found that young men are often socialised quite concretely into the use of violence as a means of survival, control, disavowal of weakness, and bravery. She points to young boys in Ethiopia and Kenya who at the onset of puberty have to endure collective beatings as a way of ensuring their strength and bravery. In Jamaica, she points to the limited number of male role models and the fact that young men are then strongly influenced by local 'don men' who control local politics and life in poor ghetto communities. Violence is then perceived to be a legitimate vehicle for attaining the status, money and power that these role models display – a means for attaining a version of 'successful' masculine identity.

While the above studies reveal the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities, the normativity of violence associated with, and the apparent stability and continuity of dominantly constructed gender relations more broadly, this is not necessarily always the case. Even though uncritical approaches to the notion of masculinity in crisis border dangerously on conservative re-inscriptions of hegemonic masculinity through a spiritual re-awakening of essential manliness (masculism) or through a critique of the oppression experienced by men as an outcome of feminism (see for example, Keen's, 1992, *Fire in the Belly*), more critical approaches have acknowledged a crisis but have provided more sophisticated and progressive analyses thereof. These analyses have pointed to the fact that the nature of this crisis is not simply related to a shift away from essential notions of masculinity, but is rather a feature of the very contradictions inherent within the social construction of the supposed stability of gender and masculinity itself. This crisis is therefore one of hegemony, and more particularly, of hegemonic gender relations and hegemonic masculinity that are both simply unattainable by the vast majority of the populace within contemporary social

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milieus. Butler (1999, pp. 184-185) suggests that this hegemony *"effects a false stabilisation of gender in the interest of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain. The construction of coherence conceals the gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual and gay and lesbian contexts [...]"*. Connell (2001, p. 40) also argues that *"normative definitions of masculinity [...] face the problem that not many men meet the normative standards. [...] The number of men practicing the hegemonic pattern in its entirety may be quite small"*. While he recognises that men in general continue to benefit from the overall domination of women through what he refers to as the *"patriarchal dividend"*, he also suggests that masculinities are constructed in multiple ways in various contexts as men attempt to attain this ideal. This allows for various practices and performances of masculinity to occur in different contexts, revealing the presence of both hegemonic and subordinated or marginalised masculinities to coexist, some including the use of violence and others not (Connell, 1995). Not only does this offer the opportunity to examine the fractured and shifting nature of gendered identities (Hollway, 1984), but also allows us to examine the social context of its production. Essentially, this approach to the masculine crisis allows for a critique of the stability of gender and masculinity, its absurd imperfections, its context of reproduction, but also the potential nodes of discontinuity, rupture, resistance and alternative readings of male violence that move beyond gender to incorporate an analysis of the social milieu as well.

In examining the context of masculine production, performance and practice, several writers have noted the internal contradictions within most contexts that do not facilitate an attainment of hegemonic masculinity. Rather, central tenets of this hegemonic masculinity are often appropriated, recast, modified and performed, and frequently involves the utilisation of violence in contexts that are experienced as disempowering. This context can broadly be defined as one in which the impact of feminism has clearly shifted gendered power relations substantially over several decades; where the productive relations have shifted to include significant numbers of women in the productive process and reduced sharper distinctions in the division of labour; where emotional relations are no longer simply governed by heterosex and also include other permutations of intimacy; and where the symbolism surrounding gender allow for elements such as re-masculinisation to coexist more fluidly alongside

constructions of the new-age man and woman (Connell, 2000). In addition, globalisation has had significant impacts on levels of unemployment and poverty, creating increased wealth disparities between the rich and poor, between the 'developed' and 'developing' economies, where technological advancements have resulted in greater levels of deskilling and alienation, and where forms of racial *Othering* increasingly occur (Connell, 2000; Men's Free Press Collective, 2004; Morgan, 1992). Under these circumstances, the masculine ideal of the white corporate executive who is fiercely competitive, has wealth, status, education, material resources, and access to women as sexual companions (to mention but a few attributes), is hardly attainable by the majority of men. Hegemonic masculinity is therefore uneasily located between the local and global milieus and are recast in an attempt to mange these tensions and contradictions. Miller (1991, pp. 265-266) notes that under conditions in which men are excluded from the material basis for maintaining their masculinity, that they defend any semblance thereof pre-emptively and with finality, often callously exercising *"life-taking powers as a means of reclaiming their masculinity"*, and by identifying with the powerful and avoiding conflict with them, only to violate and enact violence on those who may be described as *"fellow victims"*. However, alternative readings of male violence, specifically as forms of resistance in disempowering contexts, are also apparent and evident in several of the following studies.

Connell (2000, p. 135) examined school-going boys' constructions of masculinity and violence and observed the relationship between the educational system and working class boys' narratives. He argues that even though the *"school is a relatively soft part of the state, […] behind it stands the hard machinery of police, courts and prisons"*. In his study, boys frequently spoke about 'getting into trouble' with authority at the school, and in some instances, this translated into assaulting teachers. He suggests that this performance of violence is associated with the masculine construction of defiance and resistance to institutional authority that is in some way representative of the yolk of authoritarianism that many working class people experience daily. Furthermore though, he also notes how these young boys often courted 'getting into trouble', to compete with each other for positions of status and dominance within their peer group. Bhana (2005) found similar narratives among South African school-going youth who articulated understandings of their violence as a form of defiance in

response to their experienced subordination within the authoritarian confines of the schooling environment. Violent masculinities in this instance were also seen as integral to gaining a reputation among male peers.

Similar resistances have also been noted among men in the world of work. Morgan (1992) highlighted how miners who do not necessarily conform to constructions of the ideal man, recast their masculinity as tough, hard-drinking and dangerous, and in fact distanced themselves from surface workers and managers who were considered softer and less masculine. Willis (2004) notes a similar trend among steelworkers in Scotland who constructed themselves as tough, strong, durable, risk-takers, and as men with big thirsts. He suggests this as a form of resistance in contexts of work that were harsh and that were often denigrated by more skilled and elite members of the labour force as menial. In both instances, the discourses of the 'male aggressive drive' are present, but recast as a resistance to class subordination by more skilled and elite members of the labour force. Connell (2002) also reflects on Moodie's work with mineworkers in South Africa, and suggests that with the displacement of rural black men into the more urbanised and industrialised gold mining areas had several effects on gender relations. He argues that proletarianisation had the effect of reinforcing the binary of the male breadwinner and the dependent female who relied on her wage-earner husband. However, not only were normative gender relations inscribed, but many men also needed to redefine their masculinity within the confines of a racist and classist social context. In particular they had to claim a sense of humanity in a social milieu in which they were dehumanised and in which ideal white masculinity was simply not attainable. bell hooks (1992, p. 89) argues that within racialised contexts the dominant conceptualisation of black masculinity is that it is *"fucked up"*, but the response among these men could also be viewed as a resistant configuration of masculinity. Indeed, it included aspects of sexual virility, heavy drinking, toughness, physical dominance and aggression - all of which helped to redefine a sense of a valued masculine identity in a devaluing context.

Constructions of the violent male may also be seen as resistances to larger global forces. Connell (2002) also reviews Novikova's study of Russian masculinity after the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In her study, she notes the speed at which there was a return to archaic models of gendered relations after this collapse towards a

celebration of strong, competitive men (see Morrell, 2001, for a similar description of re-masculinising events in post-World War II Germany). These constructions of masculinity were epitomised in the form of a continued militarised masculinity, but also in the construction of a hyper-masculine mafia. She contends that as an emerging state that was poorer and more dependent in relation to the global forces of capitalism, that these constructions were in part a mechanism to defend against the overwhelming hostility of the global context, and to generate a state of preparedness for engaging with new social co-ordinates that were market-driven. While many of the above studies no doubt still reinforce central tenets of hegemonic masculinity, they also point to the variability in configuring such hegemony, as well as to the problematic social contexts that continue to facilitate its emergence, even if in the form of resistances.

However, masculine violence is not simply a normative gendered response or an act of resistance. It is also fundamentally influenced by the material, social and political conditions that prevail in certain contexts. Dolan (2002) examined masculinities in the context of the weakening Ugandan state and its militarised social context. He reveals how traditional forms of hegemonic masculinity that were tied to male breadwinners, adultist premises, sexism, and economic responsibilities, became increasingly unattainable in the context of a declining state that could no longer ensure adequate levels of education, employment and social service delivery. Alongside this, greater militarization of the state occurred in an attempt to address a growing civil conflict and increasing numbers of factional insurgent groups. Under these conditions, he argues that a greater dividend was possible in conforming to the emerging militarised masculinity, as it brought with it certain economic and social privileges. In addition, he suggests that it was in fact in the interest of the state to encourage this construction of masculinity, as this provided a partial mechanism for sustaining a large military force for operations within other regional African contexts. Not only did this generate increased levels of violence by combatants, but also by non-combatants who utilised violence as a default position of social relating when certain masculine aspirations could not be attained. Barrett (2001) also explored the constructions of masculinities in the United States of America's navy, and found that the organisational culture allowed for a range of masculinities that were defined in relation to their differences to each other. In general, masculinity was constructed through discourses of

discipline, perseverance and toughness, but this varied according to job specialisation. Naval aviators constructed themselves as risk-takers in the face of grave danger, while surface warfare combatants constructed masculinity as an ability to endure hardship and to calmly demonstrate competence in the face of pressure. Supply officers involved in logistics and who were often not involved in direct combat, constructed themselves as the masculine embodiment of technical rationality. While Barrett (2001) does not extend on this analysis, these constructions not only reinforce the normative masculine nature of violence, aggression, competition, rationality and risk-taking, but are also responsible for intersecting with other discourses. Here in particular the implicit connections to discourses of patriotism and nationalism are apparent in the reification of the process of laying down one's life for one's country. In addition, these are supported by discourses of hierarchical accountability, a culture of limited independence and autonomy, and a non-questioning of authority. More broadly in the context of the militarised geopolitical agenda of the United States of America, the functions of reinforcing the nexus between masculinity, violence, weaponry, war, death and unwavering loyalty helps to generate and sustain a readily available and docile population that can implement militarised policies of the state – a veritable political economy of militarization and violence. Similar explorations of shifting masculinities have been conducted in the historically militarised context of South African society. Xaba (2001) examined constructions of masculinity in a post-liberatory context from several anecdotes of informal justice and notes the integral relationship between violence and masculinity in both the period of liberatory struggle and in post-apartheid South Africa. In particular, Xaba (2001) argues that while violence was considered necessary and even noble in the context of militarization during the liberatory struggle, that the shifting social conditions have now created a sense of delegitimisation and criminalisation of this violence that are more consistent with regional and global reintegration. In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, there has been an inversion of the meanings attached to violence and therefore to masculinity. This has resulted to some degree in men who are unable to attain the new ideal of manhood, and therefore recast their violent 'skills and expertise' into a form of criminalised masculinity that ironically still draws on a resistance discourses. Cock (2001) also engages with the history of militarization in South Africa as she reflects on the relationships between masculinity, violence and weaponry - especially firearms (see Cock & Nathan, 1989, for a more detailed discussion of this). She notes that both

the apartheid state and the liberation movements were heavily invested in generating and maintaining a militarised masculine construction, especially during periods of intense armed conflict. Weapons became the symbols of defence, resistance and freedom for many black and white South African males in the construction of their identities. However, as the social terrain has shifted in post-apartheid South Africa, the ostensible demilitarisation of South African society belies the fact that as a country it has continued to invest in military infrastructure. Furthermore, it has been involved in regional military operations, and has actively pursued a seat on the UN Security Council – the organisation that vets the use of war as a global intervention! In this context there is an ongoing but covert militarization, simultaneous criminalisation of illegitimate militarism (e.g. curtailing the activities of former Self-defence Units), as well as a hegemony of corporatist discourses of masculinities. The firearm as an extension of masculinity and as a symbol of manhood, power and status has remained and been recast as the tool of the trade for criminalised masculinities. Similarly, Swart's (2001) study on right-wing Afrikaner masculinity notes the relationship between white men, firearms, masculinity and violence. As with Xaba' (2001) study, she examines the historical construction of the white male as dominant, defender, leader, and associated with symbols of war to mark the historical hardships and struggles of survival. However, given the of marginalisation of this right-wing identity in contemporary South Africa, there are shifts towards even more excessive displays of masculinity in which there is the continued use of symbols and discourses of firearms and militarism in a context that is yet to be fully demilitarised. Morrell (2001) refers to this as a reactive response by men to nostalgically reach back to a past and to overturn any gains that have been made against normative masculinity, which in this instance was bound to white privilege (see Stevens, 2007, for a commentary on the construction of white privilege based on a history of defensiveness). In many of the above South African studies, tensions between the new ideal notions of manhood and the inability of many sectors of the population to attain such ideals are apparent. Certainly what is clear is the impact of context on the construction of masculinities, as many of the central features of these previously militarised masculinities have been reconfigured within the changing socio-political and economic terrain of modern South Africa. Furthermore, all of the afore-mentioned studies reveal the importance of a critical analysis of social contexts as potential incubators for the configuration and reconfiguration of violent masculinities.

Morrell (2001) however notes that constructions of masculinities may also have imparted within them more accommodating and progressive discourses of alternative and subordinated configurations of masculinities. Here in particular he refers to those accommodating responses in which men attempt to foster a sense of non-violence within a male identity that may inhibit overall levels of violence, but without necessarily challenging male dominance at a fundamental level. With reference to progressive responses, he points to articulations that represent a clear rupture with ideologies and discourses pertaining to sexism and heterosexism. Several of the following studies certainly highlight the possibilities of more accommodating discourses that coexist with more normative constructions of masculinities and gender relations, again revealing the post-structuralist possibility of multiple masculinities (Connell, 2001).

Harris, Lea and Foster (1995) found that male participants in their study not only supported the normativity of sexual aggression, but also highlighted the problematic nature of 'normal' gender relations as being imbued with power differentials. In doing so, some participants were able to organically deconstruct the notion of normative male sexual aggression and harassment/predation as being related these power differentials. In addition, they were able to engage with the very language usage that is sometimes exclusionary towards women within broader social contexts, and the manner in which this reinforces and constructs uneven gender relations. Sathiparsad (2007) noted similar counter-discourses in her study of male youth, who on the one hand generally supported dominant views on masculinity, but also provided contested views in their talk. In particular, participants spoke of the importance of accepting and respecting women's choices in relation to sexual engagements and declared a moral injunction against forcing women to engage in sexual activity. Connell (1995) in his study with men involved in the biker subculture also noted how they accepted that violence between men and women in relational and family contexts was a reasonable norm, but that excessive violence against women was disapproved of because of differences in physical strength. Participants noted that women could not always defend themselves and not only was no pride taken in such violent encounters between men and women, but they were actively frowned upon as *"wimpish"* behaviours that actually compromised masculine identity. Cooper and Foster (in progress) also found that young boys on the Cape Flats simultaneously constructed

themselves as violent gangsters as well as respectable men who had intimate emotional interactions with significant females in their lives. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) similarly noted in their study that while young boys often established a sense of masculine identity through the disavowal and sometimes symbolically violent repudiation of women and any representation of the feminine (e.g. gays), that they also enjoyed intimate emotional contact with their mothers. Finally, Wardrop (2001) in his study of policemen in South Africa's elite Flying Squad Unit, also ironically found that even in this vestige of hegemonic masculinity, that violence and the traditional view of the macho policeman were sometimes openly rejected. This was partly due to its potential for generating an increased threat level to the police officers themselves in the course of their duties. Wardrop (2001) cites several extracts from his participants, and the most apt of these to illustrate the above point was captured in a policeman stating that one should *"rather leave that shit (acting flamboyantly and dangerously) [... because] we'd be killed if we did"* and that adopting a macho attitude was *"a fucking quick way to be shot"* (p. 257). While the above reflect some instances in which accommodating responses can be found within discourses of masculinity and violence, it is important to note that a host of studies have also pointed to even more progressive discourses that coexist alongside discourses of hegemonic masculinities (see for example, Hood, 1993, for studies on masculinity in the context of work and family life; and Louw, 2001, on the intersection of masculinity and homosexuality).

In conclusion, this chapter has reviewed some of the most salient qualitative research studies into male violence and homicide. While psychoanalytic research reveals important intrapsychic processes to consider as antecedents of male violence, their inadvertent discursive effects tend to track the constitutional essentialism, determinism and fatalism that is characteristic of many quantitative research studies. However, many of the interpretivist studies have allowed for a deepening of our understandings of social actors' subjective accounts of male violence and homicide within social contexts, and have revealed the possibilities for differential accounts of manhood, womanhood, masculinity and femininity. In addition, these studies have also noted men's exculpatory strategies within their narratives of violence, but simultaneously pointed to contradictions, disruptions and discontinuities in their accounts of violence and gendered relations. Finally, discursive studies have extended on the social analysis of male violence, pointing to its strategic utilisation to reinforce social

difference and to justify processes of social control. Furthermore, male violence has also been integrally related to supporting and reproducing hegemonic forms of masculinity and maintaining uneven gendered relations. However, many of these studies have also illustrated the possibilities of multiple forms of masculinity and configurations of gendered relations to coexist simultaneously, thereby revealing the defensive, reactive, resistant, accommodatory and progressive functions of performing violence as part of masculine subjectivity. The performative multiplicity of masculinities, male violence, gendered relations and its associated social functions certainly highlight the potential for a critical analysis of social contexts as well as for changing and transforming the nature of gendered relations. Tolson (2004) however notes that there are political limits on critical masculinity studies, as *"men's gender-identity is interwoven with ideology"* and the material conditions of our time. *"The challenge [...] is to understand masculinity as a social problem"* (p. 78). Broader social movements and critical social coalitions will therefore of necessity have to become an inevitable part of the social, political, material and consciousness-raising struggles for realising the transformatory potential revealed within some of the studies cited within this chapter. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (2004, p. 162) argue that despite the passing of the historical opportunity for fundamentally challenging normative gendered relations in the 1970s, that *"there are potentials for a more liberating politics [of masculinity], here and now [...] at least in the form of coalitions among feminists, gay men, and progressive heterosexual men that have real chances of making gains on specific issues"*.

Based on the rationale developed in ***Chapter One*** as well as the literature reviewed in ***Chapters Two and Three***, the following chapter distils the most salient conceptual elements as a foundational basis for the current study.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

[I]n the final analysis, history and society – indeed the development of identity – are realized through human praxis. But since practice without theory is blind, the quest for paradigm remains a worthwhile endeavour.

(Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, 1985, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

While the previous three chapters have provided a rationale for the study and reflected on some of the more prominent quantitative and qualitative research studies and findings, this chapter provides a more succinct set of parameters that guided the study at a conceptual level. Many of these conceptual parameters have already been alluded to in the previous chapters, but this chapter focuses on construct definitions that were employed within the study, as well as a stipulation of the broad theoretical co-ordinates that framed the analysis and much of its content in *Chapter Six*.

2.   DEFINITIONS, DEMARCATIONS AND POINTS OF DEPARTURE:

Before embarking on a discussion of the theoretical co-ordinates of the study, several definitional issues are discussed below to clarify and delimit the boundaries of the research study. This includes an expanded discussion on the distinction between homicide and murder and the analytic tensions inherent to these definitions, a focus on disciplinary power and its linkages to violence, and an explication of the differences between discourse, regimes of truth and ideology.

2.1.   Homicide and Murder

Given that the study focuses on fatal interpersonal violence as the primary vehicle through which to conduct an analysis of discourses, power, their social functions and ideological effects, both the concepts of homicide and murder require some extended consideration. While the study employs the construct of homicide, it also simultaneously engages with the construct of murder in the selection of participants as a specific (and convenient) cohort that is partially representative of those involved in homicidal encounters in South Africa. In its most basic form, homicide is essentially the act of killing one or more persons, through whatever means, by another person or

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persons (Daly & Wilson, 1988; Polk, 1994; Wolfgang, 1958). This generic social definition is descriptive in character and therefore makes no implicit or overt attributions as to the nature of the event and its causes, its context, or the meanings attached to it. This of necessity therefore includes fatal acts of violence that would be deemed legitimate (e.g. killing in self-defence; killing in contexts of war), as well as many that may be deemed illegitimate (e.g. intentionally killing during an act of robbery; killing through negligence as in the case of culpable homicide).

However, alongside this we also find definitions of murder, which have their roots in juridical forms of truth and attempts to locate the act of killing within a circumscribed set of moral, ethical and legal codes as defined by a specific social formation within a specific historical period. Foucault (1994, p. 4) argues that these juridical practices come to determine the *"manner in which wrongs and responsibilities are settled between men, the mode by which […] society conceived and defined the way men could be judged in terms of wrongs committed, [and] the way in which compensation for some actions and punishment for others were imposed on specific individuals"*. Juridical forms are thus a recast form of sovereign power, in which the state imposes certain codifications on the nature of human interactions that help to regulate and control them. By its very nature the definition of murder is therefore legalistic in its orientation, defining the parameters of what is considered a legitimate or illegitimate act of killing. The juridical effects and impacts are clear in definitions of murder and even to some extent on the more contemporary definitions of homicide. Daly and Wilson (1988) define homicide as *"those interpersonal assaults and other acts directed against another person (for example poisonings) that occur outside the context of warfare, and that prove fatal"* (p. 14), while De Wet and Swanepoel (1960) broadly describe it as an unlawful and intentional act that causes the death of a fellow person. Similarly in South Africa, Snyman, (1989, p. 421) defines murder as *"the unlawful and intentional causing of the death of another human being"*.

The most glaring distinction between generic understandings of homicide versus the legalistic definitions of murder, points to issues of legality and therefore legitimacy. Not only does the definition of murder delineate acceptable forms of killing (e.g. global legitimisation of killing in warfare; social acceptance of killing in the course of self-defence; socio-cultural legitimisation of 'honour' killings), but increasingly starts

to place emphases on the individual's responsibility, intentionality and culpability within the act of killing if it is considered illegitimate. The act is in some ways evacuated from its social and historical context, and examined as an individual's action in the context of a normalised civil society (i.e. outside of the context of warfare, for example). Foucault (1975, p. 206) notes that *"murder establishes the ambiguity of the lawful and the unlawful"*. Simply adopting such legalistic definitions uncritically de-emphasises the role of social context and assumes that such forms of legitimacy and illegitimacy have a degree of credibility that are unchallenged, but these may in fact be heavily contested both within and across social formations. In addition, while the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence is often defined by the law, it is also supported by a range of discourses on morality that help us to regulate ourselves and others' actions in social spaces where we do not interact directly with the law. This boundary is therefore patrolled by both sovereign and disciplinary power, but neither represents absolute control, regulation and prohibition. Legalistic definitions of murder are frequently resisted and contested to reveal inherent tensions, contradictions and fluidities around constructions of violence. These tensions present themselves concretely across social contexts in which permutations of power vary, where what is construed of as a legitimate form of violence is defined differently as a consequence of these power relations, and where moral injunctions against killing are relativised across such contexts.

Rather than attempting to provide a conclusive definition of fatal interpersonal violence that is responsive to the above challenges, it is perhaps more useful to recognise that there are differing definitions and constructions thereof that have diverse analytical implications. ***In examining participants' varied constructions of homicidal violence, it provides us with an opportunity to explore the social formation and its inherent tensions, limitations and contradictions in constructing and addressing the phenomenon of violence as either legitimate or illegitimate.*** Within the narratives of the participants in this study there was often the recognition of the legal and moral codes that regulate social interactions away from fatal interpersonal violence, but they nevertheless provided compellingly cogent and internally coherent justifications for the act of killing in many instances. Stated differently, through an examination of participants' varied accounts and understandings of fatal interpersonal violence, differences, paradoxes, discrepancies

and dissimilarities within the social formation's constructions of violence may become more palpable. The study therefore keenly examines how participants' accounts of homicide support and vary from legalistic prescriptions, and attempts to tease out the social implications of these differences within the analysis.

2.2. Disciplinary Power and Violence

In *Chapter One*, the centrality of the relationship between power and violence was already articulated, but requires further clarification and specification within the parameters of the current study. While most contemporary analyses of violence certainly cite the importance of power either as a driver or underpinning dynamic, this study focuses more directly on Foucault's (1977) conception of disciplinary power and its relationship to violence. Despite a plethora of ways in which to understand power (see for example, Gramsci's, 1971 work on hegemony and power; Althusser's, 1971 work on the role of the Ideological State Apparatus and its role in maintaining uneven power relations; and Chomsky's, 2002 lectures on both visible and less visible forms of power), Foucault's seminal contributions to understanding the transformation, mechanisms and techniques of power from a historical perspective are perhaps most instructive for this study.

Foucault's (1977, 1994) account of power as it has evolved within industrialised societies in the period of late capitalism is perhaps the most significant analysis of the operation of power in modern societies. In summary, he illustrates how sovereign power in periods of feudalism was slowly supplanted by disciplinary power, which he suggests is integrally linked to changing material conditions and the emergence of new technologies in the medical, socio-medical sciences, and associated disciplines. With the generation of expert knowledges not only were objects of knowledge produced, but specific social subjects were also constituted – subjects who were more 'docile' and able to perform and to respond to the demands of the changing social, political and economic arrangements of modern capitalism (such as factories and military institutions). Increasingly what this implied was a decentring of power away from the sovereign figure into more diffuse, anonymous and invisible techniques and mechanisms within newly formed disciplines and their institutions. It was in these institutions that surveillance of populations, the construction of social subjects and the consequent regulation of social interactions started to occur. Rather than utilising

violence, force or the threat thereof, disciplinary power took effect through continuous forms of observation and surveillance that compelled populations to perform according to the rules and codes of social formations. However, disciplinary power also transcended the realm of institutional practices and expert knowledges that regulated human bodies, but increasingly became appropriated and transformed into forms of self-regulation, even in the absence of overtly visible external forms of surveillance (Hook, 2004b). Disciplinary power thus increasingly became characterised by populations regulating themselves, utilising an internal gaze rather than relying solely on external forms of surveillance, and leading to more diffuse forms of power and control in the capillaries and extremities of everyday interactions rather than in the social centre (Butchart, 1998). Because of its pervasive and insidious influence, disciplinary power has the effect of generating regimes of truth or taken-for-granted ways of understanding and being in the world – it regulates the nature of social relations along certain established cleavages and through certain discourses, which may pertain to gendered relations, sexual relations, 'race', class, age, families, ownership and commodification. It is this characterisation of power that reveals potential mechanisms that underpin processes of socialisation and internalisation that are so frequently utilised in psychological discourses; or that may account for the invisible mechanisms and techniques that are deployed to result in Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony; or that gives substance to Althusser's (1971) description of the role of the Ideological State Apparatus in the process of subject interpellation into differential social hierarchies.

But disciplinary power is not absolute and always acts as a fulcrum for resistance as well. Bertani and Fontana (2003, p. 280) in citing Foucault note that *"where there is power, there is always resistance, and the two things are co-extensive. As soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip [.... The struggle is everywhere ...] at every moment, we move from rebellion to domination, from domination to rebellion [...]. The reason why we have seen the development of so many power relations, so many systems of control, and so many forms of surveillance, is precisely that power has always been impotent"*. It is precisely at this point that the relationship between power and violence becomes more critical. While power is a strategic relation that acts on the actions of others, violence acts on bodies. Violence is deployed, according

to Foucault (1977), as a means to overcome an existing power relation, or to establish a new strategic relation of power. Violence therefore reveals the limitations, impotence and failures of disciplinary power. In instances where disciplinary power is directly related to systemised forms of domination (e.g. gender asymmetries), violence is in one instance the logical extension of domination, but simultaneously implodes on this disciplinary power to expose its self-defeating failure. ***Through an examination of the discursive contours that convey disciplinary power within an act of homicidal violence, it becomes possible to analyse how different manifestations of disciplinary power are reproduced and resisted, but also to critique such manifestations of disciplinary power based on their failures*** (e.g. gender violence reproduces hegemonic gender relations on the one hand, but also shows the failure of disciplinary power related to gendering on the other hand).

However, disciplinary power is not only critical in analyses of violent homicidal encounters, but in reflexive understandings of the manner in which talk on homicidal violence is produced, articulated and how meanings are conveyed. Hook (2004b) notes that central to this reflexivity is the confessional technology of disciplinary power that is often associated with the interpretative sciences. Confessional technologies and disciplinary power certainly played itself out in the research context as well - between psychologist, researcher and expert on the one hand; and criminal, participant and ordinary subject on the other hand. ***Thus, a focus on disciplinary power from this perspective also allows for a critical examination of researcher and participant subjectivities and positionalities within the interlocutory context, the manner in which these are performed, and what their reproductive and resistant functions and effects are.***

By emphasising disciplinary power in the study of homicidal violence, it is possible to highlight the pervasive nature of power both within the homicidal encounter, but also in the research and interlocutory context of narration. Furthermore, it enables us to examine and critique the reproduction of power, but also the points of contestation and resistance to power. Consequently, it may also highlight the possibilities for changing configurations of power.

2.3.   Discourse, Regimes of Truth and Ideology

Given that this study encompasses a discursive analysis of male homicide and attempts to delineate the ideological effects embedded within these discourses, due consideration of the relationship between discourse, regimes of truth and ideology are critical to demarcate how these key elements relate to each other and the manner in which they are deployed within the study.

At its most basic level, discourse refers to those systematic networks of meaning or signification that pertain to objects and subjects of knowledge (Parker, 1990, 1999)[29]. While discourses are conveyed through symbolic forms such as language, they in turn also convey the social content of various manifestations of disciplinary power. Together, disciplinary power and the discourses that convey it, contribute to the generation of, what Foucault (1980) refers to as, *"regimes of truth"*. Regimes of truth involve a construction of the world as a unitary, singular version of reality that is incontestable, naturalised, and taken-for-granted. Foucault (1994, p. 131) argues that truth is *"produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth – that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true"*. As a process and outcome, regimes of truth therefore give rise to a relative stability of understandings of reality, a conformity that helps to uniformly regulate social relations. However, while regimes of truth always have at their centre uneven relations of power, they do not always actively contribute to broader processes of systemic domination. Where they are implicated within broader processes of systemic domination however, regimes of truth come to have ideological effects.

When considering ideological effects, it is important to note that most contemporary writers in the area would acknowledge that the concept of ideology is most frequently utilised in the context of asymmetrical relations of power that are integral to the

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[29] For a more detailed account of the various definitions and conceptualisations of discourses, see *Chapter Five*.

maintenance of systemised forms of domination (Therborn, 1980; Thompson, 1984, 1990). However, most writers also acknowledge that the concept has undergone significant transformations since its emergence during the French Revolution, thereby revealing a lengthy, circuitous and complex history (Foster, 1991b; McLellan, 1986; Thompson, 1984, 1990).

Foster (1991b) and Thompson (1984, 1990) provide synopses of the main conceptions of ideology to date. The first understanding of the concept of ideology was referred to as the ***positive conception***, and literally implied the rational study of the origin of ideas that were free of all religious prejudices. Later, the **conservative conception** of ideology was introduced by Bonapartists and denoted any proponent of democracy who opposed the status quo. The label was essentially negative, and attempted to marginalise such proponents as being extremists, zealots and revolutionaries. Thompson (1990) also refers to the ***neutral conception*** of ideology which he utilises in a descriptive sense to delineate any system of beliefs, which may be accessible to any social actor. In this context, ideology may therefore be viewed as any set of beliefs which is held by an individual or collectively by a social group, and it may either be utilised in a manner which dominates others or in a manner which seeks to challenge such domination.

Most importantly for this study is the Marxist tradition and interpretation of ideology - the ***critical and relative conceptions***. Marxists argued that ideology stemmed from idealism, as opposed to the materialist understanding of history. Cornforth (1963, p. 10) states that social views based on idealist philosophies "*maintain that thoughts, feelings and so on are in no sense products of a material process*". It is in this sense that ideology provides an inaccurate reflection of the existing patterns of social relations, as it separates social relations from its material base. Thompson (1990) notes that ideology according to this conception is viewed as illusory and one-sided and furthermore, that it is a "*system of representations which conceal and mislead and which, in so doing, serve to sustain relations of domination*" (p. 55), or alternatively, that it is a "*system of representations which serves to sustain existing relations of class domination by orientating individuals towards the past rather than the future, or towards images and ideals which conceal class relations and detract from the collective pursuit of social change*" (p. 41). As an extension of the critical conception,

the *relative conception* of ideology refers to all ideas which are class-based, and distinguishes between Socialist and Bourgeois ideology. These ideas serve the interests of that specific class as they express a partial and incomplete view of the world (Kamenka, 1983; Lenin, 1988). Cornforth (1963, pp. 68-69) states that

> *[...] in class-divided society, therefore, ideologies take on a class character. Different views are developed on the basis of the different places occupied by different classes in social production, their different relationships to the means of production, their different roles in the organisation of labour, their different ways of obtaining their share of the social wealth, their different material interests. The different ideologies are thus developed in the service of different class interests.*

These conceptions have certainly had an enormous impact on current understandings of ideology, and to some degree still operate today. Foster (1991b) however points out that there have been several developments with regard to understandings of the concept. Firstly, ideology is seen as being reflected in discursive and non-discursive material practices; secondly, through the working of ideology, humans are transformed into subjects who can function within social structures and who perpetuate the ideology to various degrees; thirdly, that humans have the capacity to act as active agents in the critique and transformation of ideology; fourthly, that ideology provides meaning which serves to sustain unequal social relations; and finally, that Marxist understandings of ideology related to 'race' and gender have not been adequate, and that any analysis needs to be broadened to account for this relative autonomy (Althusser, 1971; Bulhan, 1985; Stevens, 1996; Thompson, 1984, 1990).

This study adopts Thompson's (1984, 1990) reformulation of the critical conception of ideology which conveys a pejorative understanding of the functions of ideology within social formations. He notes that ideology is fundamentally related to the manner in which *"meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination"* (p. 56). However, he also suggests that it is not simply an illusory inversion of social relations that only serves the dominant classes in societies, but may include relations of domination that occur at the levels of gender, 'race' and ethnicity as well. Thompson argues that meanings that are conveyed through symbolic forms such as language are constitutive of social reality as they may actively create relations of

domination, but they also maintain such relations through ongoing processes of symbolic reproduction. It is thus a process that helps to organise social formations along the lines of existing power relations (see Parker, 1990, 1999, on this as well).[30]

In the context of this study, male homicide is fundamentally viewed as an embodied expression of certain power relations operant within society. The examination of the discursive networks emerging from men's accounts therefore allows us to determine the regimes of truth that they generate as well as the potential ideological effects operating beneath them. Given that systemised forms of domination and asymmetrical power relations are major features of contemporary societies within the epoch of globalisation, it is safe to assume that these discourses will in fact reveal certain ideological effects that are operational. However, not only do they reveal how ideology is represented and reproduced within discourses, but also potentially how it is contested and implicitly critiqued.

3.   ESTABLISHING THE THEORETICAL CO-ORDINATES OF THE STUDY:

3.1.   Male Homicide as a Gendered Form of Violence

In establishing the theoretical co-ordinates of this study, the approach adopted is one that argues that all violence is essentially gendered in some manner or another. By gendered, what is implied or referred to is the process of implicating social constructions of gender in all acts of violence, wherever they may occur and between whomever they occur (e.g. in intrapersonal forms of violence such as suicide; interpersonal forms of violence such as homicide; in group or broader social forms of violence such as war). As indicated in the literature in *Chapters Two and Three*, gender features as a prominent element around which violence is constelled in male violence in particular, whether it is enacted against women or other men. While the dominant approach to gender violence has generally focussed on men's violence against women, the approach within this study transcends this perspective and includes men's violence towards other men as a form of gendered violence as well.

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[30] Important to note here however, is that Thompson (1984, 1990) also points to the fact that systemised forms of domination are not only established and maintained through ideological discourses, but also have non-discursive counterparts in the structural arrangements of society.

Even though recognising the ideological and liberatory importance of the dominant approach towards gender violence and the subsequent gains made by the feminist movement in this regard (Walker, 1982; Wilkinson, 1996), Shefer, *et al.* (2007) correctly note that this also reinforces the binary of hegemonic social constructions of gender. This has unfortunately also resulted in a balkanisation of the study of violence, thereby re-inscribing this binary of males as perpetrators and females as victims. In making the argument that male homicide is indeed gendered, three supporting points require further articulation.

The first is that gender is central to all acts of violence as gendered subjectivities are probably the most visible forms of subjectivities that we draw upon and reproduce in social interactions. This does not imply that other subjectivities are not present and implicated in acts of violence, but gender is certainly more omnipresent. As Butler (1999) notes, dominant constructions of gender are premised on it being equated with sex, and are therefore naturalised. As social subjects we are of course therefore interpellated as either male or female, thereby frequently elevating the gendered subjectivity above and beyond those of 'race', class and ethnicity. Given the ubiquitous nature of gendered subjectivities, it therefore stands to reason that they will be implicated in violent encounters, and in the particular context of this study, in male homicidal encounters.

Secondly and related to the omnipresence of gendered subjectivities in social relations, is the centrality of violence and its coupling to gender constructions. The absence of violence as an interpersonal and social style of relating not only helps to define and construct successful ideals of femininity, but is also a pivotal feature of defining masculine identities (Connell, 1987, 1995, 2000, 2002). It is therefore not surprising to witness the rates of violence by men and among men in contemporary societies across the globe. This pairing of violence and gender, either in positive or pejorative terms, suggests once again that that male homicidal violence is fundamentally related to the social construction of gender.

Finally, while hegemonic gendered relations themselves often appear relatively stable, they have historically undergone significant transformations, often resulting in conflictual forms of gendered relating in social contexts (Connell, 2002). Given these heightened levels of tension and conflict, the centrality of gendered subjectivities in

all social relationships, and the integral nexus between violence and gendered constructions of identity; it is appropriate to argue that not only is all violence gendered, but that all hegemonic gendered relations are also imbued with violence at some level.

While this approach may be critiqued as being somewhat simplistic, it is certainly not an attempt to undo the gains made by feminists who have theorised around gender violence in the particular manner that they have. Rather, it is a more inclusive gendered approach that may be characterised as feminist or profeminist in orientation, and attempts to broaden the area of gender violence to include male violence against women and against other men.

3.2. Masculinities and Violence

3.2.1. Earlier Approaches

Given the specific gendered approach to violence referred to above, the relationship between men, masculinities and violence clearly requires some interrogation, clarification and explication as the theoretical basis of the study is established. While much of this has already been alluded to in the literature review in *Chapters Two and Three*, it is nevertheless critical to demarcate these co-ordinates clearly before proceeding with the analysis of the data.

Earlier studies on the *essentialism of male violence* are certainly rooted in part in biological, psychological and sociobiological theories, but have been critiqued for being overly deterministic, reductionist and fatalistic in terms of transforming gendered patterns of violence (see *Chapter Two*). Connell (2000) also refers to these approaches as a form of categoricalism that assumes both men and women to be pre-formed categories, and even in instances when these approaches engage with issues of power, they do so in a limited manner (see Butler's, 1999 seminal critique on the naturalisation of gender categories). Male violence is thus conceived of as an intrinsic component of the human condition or an inherent internal drive of men that requires control, rather than being embedded within social processes. There is therefore very little examination of power more directly as a social driver of violence as enacted by men.

Similarly, *sex-role theory* emerged in social theory and social-psychological theory to understand gender relations and male violence as outcomes of expectations or social norms that are inscribed into our development. While suggesting that human beings are socialised into gendered roles through the social expectations and norms placed upon them in different contexts of everyday functioning and interaction, the issue of power in social contexts was only peripherally engaged with (Connell 2000). Despite providing a social understanding of gender relations and the relationship between men and violence, the analysis of power was not central to it but was rather oblique and implied in many of these writings. While providing a scaffold and platform for much of the feminist theorising and activism that was evident in the middle of the 20th century, analytical problems around power emerged because of its limited sophistication with regard to social theorising. Nevertheless, it provided pointers to researchers to engage in social theorising around gender relations, violence and masculinity from materialist and post-structuralist perspectives.

However, a backlash against feminism also articulated male violence as a reflection of the *crisis in masculinity*, but was heavily criticised as attempting to re-assert male dominance and the naturalisation of hegemonic forms of gender relations. Violence was thus construed of as a panic reaction, but a particular reaction to the privilege of male dominance being eroded (Clatterbaugh, 1990).

The effects of these earlier approaches to understanding masculinity, men and violence lead to several important shifts. The first was a movement away from essentialism; the second was a deepening of social theorising around the social construction of gender relations more generally; and the third was a more robust and critical interrogation of the crisis of hegemonic masculinities.

3.2.2. Materialist and Post-Structuralist Approaches

In the first instance, *materialist understandings* of gendered relations extended on the Marxist and socialist traditions that can be traced back to socialist feminist writers such as Alexandra Kollontai. At the risk of over-

simplifying this approach, it notes the relationship between patriarchy as an overarching system that entrenches male dominance and female subjugation. Furthermore, it suggests that patriarchal relations are integrally linked to changing material conditions in both pre-capitalist and capitalist societies. Under conditions of accumulation in early industrial capitalism, patriarchal relations became more ingrained through the masculinisation of wage labour, thereby generating uneven gender relations on the basis of economic access for men as opposed to women. In addition, social commoditisation, privatisation and ownership as central elements of capitalism were transposed onto institutions such as the family and into areas such as child-rearing and sexual practices. Not only were women and children open to greater measures of control and domination by men due to their commodification and objectification, but violence enacted by men within families was partially sanctioned because of its privatisation within the domestic context. However, this approach also argues that male violence has been deployed as a direct means of retaining certain material interests of men by men, under patriarchy. Alienation was also viewed as a pivotal process and outcome of modern forms of production under capitalism, resulting in the double-bind of certain masculine social expectations, but an inability to attain them for most men. Writers who adopted this materialist perspective therefore often infused an implied critique of hegemonic masculinity and the legitimacy of patriarchy into their work. Violence in interpersonal contexts thus became viewed as an entrenched mechanism for reclaiming a sense of identity under adverse class conditions, frequently enacted among men, women and children who were intimately acquainted and in similar class circumstances. Connell (2000, p. 22) notes that in this approach, *"gender, masculinity and femininity [are] historically specific features of social life in modernity [that] arise from the specific course of development of the large-scale structures of society"*. While noting the importance of social structure and material conditions in shaping masculinities and its relationship to violence, this approach has nevertheless been critiqued for being economically deterministic and structuralist in orientation, and therefore too focussed on stable understandings of masculine identity. Furthermore, because of this, little room was left for conceiving of a range of transformative possibilities beyond the development of social

movements and class consciousness to avoid reactionary expressions of male violence.

Partly as a response to the criticisms levelled against structuralism, ***post-structuralism*** offered ways of thinking through masculinity and violence in the context of non-unitary and split subjects who occupy varying subject positionalities (Hollway, 1984). This approach emphasised the importance of examining discourses or systems of signification as the key determinants of constructions of gender, masculinities and femininities. In this manner, multiple masculinities became possible, highlighting the ability of men to draw on various discourses of masculinity and to perform both violently and non-violently within a range of contexts. Furthermore, it also highlights how men do not all occupy similar positions of power, thereby accounting for why it is that men often commit violence against other men. The issue of the performativity of masculinities is central for Butler (1999) who suggests that it conveys a sense of coherent identity to self and others, but is highly dependent on being seen or visible to others. Certainly violence as a form of masculine performance is a decidedly visibilised mechanism for conveying masculinity, but simultaneously reproduces discourses that naturalise male violence. While most post-structuralists acknowledge that discourses and performativity are bound by the constraints of certain social milieus, post-structuralism has nevertheless also been critiqued for its extreme forms of relativism at some points, as well as its emphasis on meaning-making or signification. In particular, the turn to language as a medium for discourse analysis rather than an equivalent focus on socio-structural features that frame discursive practices, events and performances, has received a great deal of critical attention.

3.2.3. Locating the Current Study: Connell's Gender Relations Approach

In conceptualising gender relations, masculinities and femininities more broadly, Connell's (2000) *Gender Relations Approach* was utilised in this study. In particular, this approach was employed to examine the constellation, practice and performance of masculine identities, as well as their intersection and interaction within violence among the participants within this study. While this approach draws on elements of materialist and post-structuralist

understandings of masculinities and violence, it is a broad conceptual tool that is sufficiently flexible to conduct such analyses across a range of macro and micro socio-historical contexts.

Connell (2000) argues that gender relations, and therefore by extension masculinities and femininities, are socially structured or patterned within social formations. This structuring firstly occurs along *axes of power* within societies. The most obvious of these is the historically patriarchal nature of male dominance and female subordination within modern social formations. Furthermore, globalisation has also resulted in the internationalisation of power differentials across nation state boundaries, resulting in the coexistence of local and global axes of power at an economic level, political level, and military level. However, in a context such as South Africa, axes of power also exist internally and regionally along highly racialised lines, across ethnic cleavages and class fractures, as well as along economic and military levels. He suggests that all of these axes of power need to be considered when we attempt to understand the manner in which masculinities become manifest. What is therefore apparent from the above is that any understanding of the relationship between masculinities and violence has to consider the historical structuring of this nexus along axes of power, as well as the impact of more contemporary axes of power. Stated differently, an analysis of the intersections between masculinities and violence within male homicide requires not only a historical assessment of the influence of broader power relations, but also more current investigation of the influence of the political economy of violence.

Secondly, he suggests that this structuring occurs through *productive relations* and more specifically, the gendered division of labour. He notes that within capitalism for example, wealth accumulation is highly masculinised and therefore directly related to gender relations. In South Africa, this certainly remains true for much of the populace, where men remain constructed as the breadwinners in most households, irrespective of whether this always attainable or not. However, globalisation, technological advancements, increased rates of unemployment, the dominance of multi-national 'corpocracies', the instabilities of the free-market, as well as greater

participation of women within the labour market in various contexts all need to be considered as features that have destabilised gendered productive relations and therefore structured masculinities in a particular manner.

Thirdly, he suggests that structuring occurs along the lines of *emotional relations*, which globally remain predominantly heterosexual, and therefore define sexual roles and positioning primarily in favour of male dominance. Here too however, challenges to heterosexism from gay and lesbian activists have also contested this dominance and destabilised hegemonic gendered relations. Certainly, the impact of these shifts has to be considered in the configuration of masculinities.

Finally, he argues that gendered relations are structured through *symbolism*, specifically in the form of representations that define gendered differences and relations (e.g. language; media representations). He points out that symbols focussing on the normative nature of hegemonic gendered relations are sometimes sharpened in certain historical periods and in certain contexts (e.g. representations of militarism and masculinity in the context of the global 'war on terror'; globalisation and the preponderance of images reflecting the cultural hegemony of the North). However, he also highlights how these images constantly coexist with symbols that reflect an increasing level of accommodatory responses to the gains made by feminism (e.g. men as participative in child-rearing). Symbolism may therefore frequently convey a range of contradictory discourses on masculinity that may have varied relationships to ideologies, and these have to be taken cognisance of in understanding the association between masculinities and violence.

However, Connell (2000) also notes that the structuring of gendered relations extends beyond the levels of beliefs, symbolism and discourses, but also has a direct influence on regulating our bodies, whether this occurs in the area of sexuality, labour, or sport for that matter. Furthermore, he notes that the structuring of gender and its consequent impact on our bodies does not simply play itself out in an arbitrary manner within societies, but are found in systematic practices, performances or configurations of gendered relations. What this implies is that gendered relations are always defined within the

parameters of particular socio-structural and cultural constraints, are visible and experienced in multiple ways that are relatively systematic, and that they can therefore be analysed in relation to context.

At a meta-level, Connell (2000) proposes that in the study of masculinities (and in this instance its relationship to violence), several common threads are likely to emerge. Firstly, he argues that ***configurations of masculinity are always multiple*** (i.e. the concept of masculinities as opposed to masculinity), involving both ***hegemonic and subordinated masculinities***[31,32]. In addition, he also suggests that while there are even differences within hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, that they nevertheless convey central elements that collectively position them as either hegemonic or subordinated. For example, in the context of globalisation and international capitalism, he points to the primacy of what he refers to as *"transnational business masculinity"*. In South Africa, this constellation of masculinity also coincides in most instances with being white, affluent, educated and corporatist in orientation. However, at micro-community levels, violent performances alongside displays of wealth may also be considered hegemonic, despite their differences in form. What cuts across both of these is of course the pursuit of visible status, power and

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[31] Several writers have however raised important debates and critiques surrounding the dichotomisation of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, noting that these are not fixed subjectivities, but are much more fluid, dynamic and ambiguous. For a more detailed discussion and summary of these arguments, see Connell and Messerschmidt (2005).

[32] Connell (2000) draws on the construct of hegemony that was utilised by Gramsci (1971), noting that it is the mechanism for understanding how world views of dominant strata within social formations become diffuse and taken-for-granted as common sense by the entire sections of the population. Similarly for Althusser (1971), hegemony was obtained and maintained by force and consent – through the workings of the repressive and ideological apparatuses of specific social formations. In this way, world views of the dominant strata in societies take root through co-option and rationalisation, and involve processes of persuading subordinated groups of the rationality and inevitability of subjugation that often results in forms of capitulation, consent and acquiescence among those who are subjugated. However, for both Althusser and Gramsci, counter-points of resistance to the process and outcomes of hegemony were also possible and inevitable.

access to resources – all of which help to define more broadly the configuration of hegemonic masculinities.

Secondly, he notes that men are not simply passive receptacles into which such social constructions of masculinity are inserted, but that they *actively reproduce these constructions* in their everyday practices and performances of masculinities.

Thirdly, he argues that *contradictions* are bound to emerge in the social construction of masculinities, given the contradictory nature of social formations and their histories.

Finally, he suggests that this raises not only the potential for a *reproduction of ideology* and its associated non-discursive forms of systemised domination, but also the possibility for a *critique of ideology* and therefore the plausibility of social transformation.

This chapter has attempted to distil a more coherent synopsis of the key definitions, demarcations and theoretical points of departure that informed the study. The following chapter engages with the key methodological issues and procedures that were employed within the study, before moving on to the analysis in *Chapter Six*.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Language can never "pin down" slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn
for the arrogance to be able to do so. Its force, its felicity, is in its reach
toward the ineffable. Be it grand or slender, burrowing, blasting or refusing to
sanctify; […] the choice word or the chosen silence, unmolested language
surges toward knowledge, not its destruction. […] Word-work is sublime […]
because it is generative; it makes meaning that secures our difference, our
human difference – the way in which we are like no other life. We die. That
*may be the meaning of life. But we **do** language. That may be the measure of*
our lives.

(Toni Morrison, 1993, *Nobel Lecture*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

The previous chapters have highlighted the broad rationale, scope and significance of the present study, and have provided summaries of the extant literature and primary conceptual issues and frameworks that have informed this research. In so doing, they have made reference to the research methodology and procedure employed, alluding to the limitations of positivist empiricism and suggested the need for a re-orientation towards qualitative research.

This methodological choice has not been capricious, but is rather premised upon transcending the ontological and epistemological boundaries of positivist research into this specific object of inquiry, namely, power as a central feature of homicidal encounters. However, not only is the epistemic trajectory of this study divergent from that underpinning positivist studies in this research area, but also from that of other qualitative studies into male homicide. Here in particular, the study favours a critical hermeneutic approach rather than a romantic hermeneutic orientation that is evident in interpretivist studies, thereby allowing for a focus on the social construction of power in the personal narratives of homicidal encounters. This furthermore provides the basis for adopting a deconstructionist analytical method in the form of critical discourse analysis.

The chapter attempts to lay bare an extended rationale for such a choice, as well as its relationship to understanding discourses as systems of signification. It engages with the role and function of language as a symbolic form and textual vehicle that conveys discourses, as

well as discourse analysis as a method for deconstructing language. It therefore focuses on an overview of the research methodology employed, and elaborates upon the broad research aims and questions, participants, data collection procedures, analytical frameworks and techniques, as well as the ethical considerations within the study.

2.   OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:

Over the last three decades, debates as to the merits of quantitative versus qualitative research have been commonplace within the social sciences (see Gage, 1989; Huysamen, 1994; Mouton, 1990; Rizo, 1991) and have been premised predominantly on the ontological and epistemological differences pertaining to the nature of the human subject and research data.

However, despite ongoing philosophical skirmishes within psychology, the sterility of these debates has resulted in an apparent impasse and a relatively cautious truce between proponents of these positions. Consequently, there has been a broad acceptance that neither qualitative nor quantitative research methods are in and of themselves more or less valid within processes of knowledge production and discovery, but that certain methods are more appropriate for researching certain social phenomena (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

Instead of entering the fray of this polemic directly, it is sufficient to state that international scholars such as Gergen (1985), Billig (1982, 1996), Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Marshall and Rossman (1995), Potter and Wetherell (1992), Parker (1992, 1999) and Hollway (1989) have all articulated the value of conducting qualitative research within the social sciences, and in psychology in particular. In South Africa, this approach has found greater support since the 1980s, especially given the influence of critical theory as well as post-modernist, post-structuralist and post-colonial studies. A significant number of writers within psychology have reflected this inclination, with a specific focus on the deployment of the discourse analytic method (see for example, Duncan, 1996; Hook, 2001; Hook & Harris, 2000; Macleod, 1995, 2002; Stevens, 1998; Terre Blanche, 1997, 1998; Wilbraham, 1996). Nevertheless, a synopsis of some of the key factors motivating for the utility of qualitative research would be useful, especially since critical discourse analysis is employed within this research study.

2.1.   Anti-Positivism, Phenomenology, Critical Paradigms and Qualitative Methods

2.1.1. Anti-Positivism

As early as the 17th century, the methodological naturalists who supported positivist empiricism and its rootedness in Enlightenment rationality argued that in order to gain scientific respectability, the fledgling social sciences needed to adopt the quantitative research methods employed by the natural sciences (Mouton, 1988). The profound consequences associated with the eventual hegemony of positivism within the social sciences can still be witnessed today. In particular, it can be found in the emphasis on quantifying observable social behaviour; attempts to apply causal models to generate universally valid laws that apply to the behaviours of cohorts or populations; the predictive value attached to such causality; the centrality of 'scientific objectivity'; and the classic experimental research design within this form of social scientific research (Gage, 1989; Huysamen, 1994; Mouton, 1988, 1990; Rizo, 1991).

However, the assumptive underpinnings of this transposition from the natural sciences onto the social sciences have been widely critiqued. Such critiques have either been articulated by those falling into the tradition of anti-positivism and who embraced a more phenomenological paradigm or interpretivist methodological approach, or by those who have argued from a critical paradigm and more deconstructionist methodological approach.

The most common antithetical arguments questioning the appropriateness, credibility and legitimacy of positivist logic within the social sciences, have historically been encapsulated within the phenomenological paradigm. Drawing on anti-positivist critiques as well as on the philosophical works of Hegel (Westphal, 2003), Heidigger (Ricoeur, 1981) and Husserl (Mohanty, 1982), amongst others, these arguments have centred on opposing the elevation of the natural-scientific method to the normative or gold standard within the social sciences (Huysamen, 1994). In particular, these critiques have suggested that claims of universality are based on fallacious and deterministic assumptions that reduce the complexity and uniqueness of social interaction to

a mere set of causes which impact on passive human receptors. Furthermore, these critiques have argued that positivist proponents falsely assume that the quantification of observable behaviour through the operationalising of various complex and multidimensional behavioural and experiential human elements can be conducted. Finally, they have suggested that the underlying intentions and motives of human behaviour are often neglected within positivism, and that completely distanciated, objective or neutral research is simply impossible. In support of this argument, they note that research that is free from the influence of all feelings, values, ideologies, opinions and contexts can never be conducted as these are ever-present in the uniqueness of human interaction (Huysamen, 1994; Mouton, 1988; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Not only have these critiques centred on the problems of the positivist logic, but also on the associated politics of knowledge production and discovery.

In his critique of the pre-occupation with behavioural quantification and measurement within the injury prevention sector (in which research on homicide forms a significant component), Seedat (2002, p. 9) argues that this has given rise to *"delimited appropriation"* which *"is an intellectual exercise designed to restrict ideas and discourse to what is regarded as their appropriate and relevant arena"*. In reality, this has translated into homicide studies traditionally being viewed as the domain of public health and criminological research, emphasising correlates of homicide as well as the mapping thereof (see several South African exemplars by Labuschagne, 2000; Ladikos, 1995; Pistorius, 2000, 2002; Snyman, 1994). Studies on power and discourse have however often been viewed as being specific to the domains of literary studies, linguistics and disciplines such as political science. He goes on to state that the preoccupation with quantification has also had a *"communicentric"* outcome, *"as some researchers and theoreticians […] make their own communities the exclusive centre of the universe and in turn the only source for the development of methodological and conceptual tools"*. This is certainly true in research on homicide, where the solipsistic tendency to view alternative methodological tools as inappropriate and of lesser value, either exists implicitly or overtly within these disciplinary boundaries.

Other critiques directed against positivist empiricism relate to the politics of knowledge production in the context of gender and violence, and have also been well articulated elsewhere (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding 1987). These have often focussed on the limited examination of the relationships between ideology, power, discourse, gender and violence, and have argued for the importance of studying points of disruption and discontinuity by emphasising subjectivity and positionality (Wilkinson, 1996).

2.1.2. Phenomenology

As an alternative, the phenomenological paradigm suggests an ontology in which social reality is in fact the outcome of social subjects' negotiation of meanings of actions, behaviours and events within contexts. The subject is agentic, knowing, intentional, and through perception of experiences, comes to interpret the world and re-constitute it (Mohanty, 1982; Ricoeur, 1981; Westphal, 2003). Social reality is therefore not a given definitive truth, but relative and dependent on the different ways in which social subjects may come to interpret their environments, and language is employed by subjects as a medium through which to intentionally convey such interpretations. While context is an important component of the meaning-environment ontological dialectic, it is the subject's interiority that is foregrounded in relation to understanding this context and interpreting it (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Rather than social reality and meaning being based on a materialist conception (Cornforth, 1963), this paradigm defines social reality, meaning and the subject from an idealist perspective in which there is the centring of the subject within the meaning-environment ontological dialectic.

Epistemologically, such an idealist approach also suggests that knowledge is attained through examining, describing and interpreting the everyday meanings and perceptions of social actors or subjects, with the researcher entering this domain and attempting to uncover the intended meanings that the social actors are attempting to convey. The knowledge uncovered is considered valid, and while some degree of re-interpretation occurs on the part of the researcher, social actors' interpretations of their worlds are not contested. It presupposes that in order to know and understand meaning, social

actors' perceptions and knowledge need to be examined within the context of social action, and that meaning can not be taken-for-granted as part of an empirical analysis (Walsh, 1972). Furthermore, while 'objectivity' is opposed, there is also some measure of distanciation or bracketing of researcher subjectivity implied, but there is a reflective acknowledgement of the value-laden nature of research and an acceptance of the Hegelian dialectical between humans (as researchers and/or social subjects) and their environmental context. Huysamen (1994, pp. 18-19) states that *"[...] man is unlimitedly bound to his environment so that the researcher and the researched form an inseparable unity. Human experience, which is the object of psychological research, can not be separated from the person who is experiencing it"*. Mouton (1990) argues that these forms of social theorising and research are in themselves social practices and are influenced by norms, morals, value systems and indeed, other social practices. By acknowledging this, one has to consider the limitations of positivist objectivity as well as the potential role that social theorising and research have in either maintaining or challenging existing social relations. Those claiming that 'scientific objectivity' (as defined within positivism) is indeed possible within research in the social sciences, are nullifying and concealing the potential power of social theorising and research as an agent of social change, and are reinforcing the static and detached notion of social research (Mouton, 1990). In fact, even Mouton's (1990) alternative suggestion of understanding 'objectivity' within the qualitative research framework as being related to constructs of validity, appears to be a somewhat placatory gesture at ingratiating qualitative research with more mainstream positivist empiricism. Rather, the phenomenological paradigm assumes that social theorising is fundamentally a re-interpretation of social reality by social scientists, after social actors have already interpreted their own reality – thus its interpretivist label. In essence, social theorising is therefore an academic analysis of commonsense explanations of social reality held by social subjects. Schutz (in Mouton, 1988, pp. 5-6) succinctly argues that

The thought-objects constructed by the social scientist, in order to grasp the social reality have to be founded upon the thought-objects constructed by the commonsense thinking of men, living their daily life within their social world. Thus, the constructs of the social sciences are, so to speak constructs of the second degree; that is constructs made by actors on the social scene, whose behaviour the social scientist has to observe and explain.

Ultimately this translates into methodological approaches within a qualitative framework that include data collection techniques such as ethnography, participant observation, case study research, the acquisition of a range of textual data forms, and analytical methods that include grounded theory and thematic content analysis, to mention but a few (Huysamen, 1994; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999)[33].

Given that this study focuses on the narratives of participants' experiences of homicidal encounters, it is concerned with their meaning-making or patterns of signification surrounding the event. In its literal sense, signification refers to that which is conveyed or signified, or in this instance, a set of meanings that are conveyed through symbolic forms such as language. Thompson (1990, p. 13) notes that symbolic forms are *"meaningful phenomena which are both produced and received by individuals situated in specific contexts"*; and more specifically, that an analysis of these forms includes *"meaningful actions, objects and expressions of various kinds, in relation to the historically specific and socially constructed contexts and processes within which, and by means of which, these symbolic forms are produced, transmitted and received"* (p. 136). Furthermore, these symbolic forms are also performative in nature, as they occur within fields of interaction and involve both transmitters and interlocutors who may have varied access to resources. This performative aspect may therefore have certain power relations infused within them. In

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[33] A perusal of theses, research reports and dissertations generated at South African universities, as well as the NEXUS database, provides a plethora of studies using these methodologies, especially in studies on gender and violence in South Africa.

addition, the expression of these forms generally involve the application of certain rules, codes and structures in their articulation, and are typically referent in nature as they pertain to phenomena. Through hermeneutics as a study of the interpretation of meanings, symbolic forms that are utilised in the determination of signification can therefore be analysed to reveal certain characteristics of the socio-historical terrain (Thompson, 1990). The phenomenological paradigm has generally deployed what we today refer to as 'romantic hermeneutics' within interpretive analytical processes. Romantic hermeneutics can be historically traced to forms such as biblical hermeneutics, in which there was an attempt to interpret the intended meanings that were being conveyed by speakers within their context. It implies a certain agency within subjects and valorises and privileges the subject's intentionality as an ontological centre and source of meaning-making and deployment of symbolic forms within context. Rose (1990) notes that the irony of such an approach is that we believe that *"in making our subjectivity the principle of our personal lives, our ethical systems, and our political evaluations, that we are, freely, choosing our freedom"* (p. 11), but that in fact this notion of individual freedom is an illusory form of liberal humanism and that the character of the social context actually comes to determine and constrain this notion of 'individuality'. Similarly, the notion of a measure of distanciation or bracketing on the part of the researcher in describing and interpreting the intended meaning behind the symbolic forms of others does not adequately take into account that as researchers we are also embedded in the very same context and can only render interpretations based on our own positions with fields of interaction and socio-historical contexts (Ricoeur, 1981).

2.1.3. The Critical Paradigm

Extending beyond the phenomenological paradigm, the critical paradigm within the social sciences has also relied on similar critiques of positivist empiricism, and has been influenced by a range of theoreticians' work including Marx and Engels (1967), the neo-Marxists (McLellan, 1979), Horkheimer's (1993) writings characteristic of the Frankfurt School, as well as the work of Habermas (McCarthy, 1978) and Foucault (1966). Given this

spectrum of influence, the critical paradigm is more an amalgam of central tenets associated with critical social inquiry or *critique*, rather than a homogeneous or unitary paradigm. Fundamentally, it suggests that reality is socially constructed, but also includes the central concepts of materiality, historicity and a philosophy of suspicion and emancipation. Contestations within the critical paradigm and in particular, social constructionism, have occurred along cleavages of modernity and post-modernity, structuralism and post-structuralism (Callinicos, 1999; Eagleton; 1996; Lyotard, 1989) and along the continuum of relativism and realism (Burr, 1998; Collier, 1998; Gergen, 1998).

From a realist perspective that incorporates elements of dialectical and historical materialism, the critical paradigm assumes that what is often construed as reality has historical and material roots that are concealed or dissimulated by ideologies that can at times give rise to a 'false consciousness'. The aim of a critical paradigm is to reveal or deconstruct these concealments in the interest of emancipation from various forms of domination (Collier, 1998; Cornforth, 1963; McLellan, 1979). In addition, post-structuralist and post-modernist thinking have also been significant influences, in so far as they have introduced the possibility of an infinite relativism that allows for the subject to occupy many different positions simultaneously within socio-historical contexts. This results in the potential for multiple social realities that are not absolute in essence, as well as the possibilities for discontinuity and disruption of power relations (Foucault, 1977). While the relativism-realism debate is often polarised, both Burr (1998) and Gergen (1998) suggest that this need not always necessarily be the case, and a synopsis of this discussion is detailed later on in this chapter.

Epistemologically, knowledge of reality is a socially constructed product and therefore can be analysed to reveal certain underlying social mechanisms or historical antecedents of such knowledge within our realities. In addition, the researcher is hyper-reflexive (Bauman, 1991; Giddens, 1990) of the impact of his/her own particular position within the context of the research process. Social actors' meaning-making about reality occurs through systems of

signification or discursive practices that are rooted in context, and language is seen as a key (but not the only) symbolic vehicle through which and in which discourses are conveyed, reproduced and contested. Therefore, through an analysis of discursive practices, aspects of the socio-historical context can be revealed, highlighting the dialectical relationship between discourses and contexts. It is also via language as an exemplar of a discursive vehicle that the social comes to 'speak' through the subject to reveal aspects of context, rather than subjects speaking independently through the intentional deployment of language (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). This paradigm therefore opposes the idealist illusion of pure thoughts that occur independently, and suggests that all thought and language gain meaning and simultaneously create meaning in social practice (Cornforth, 1963). In this sense, language is conceived of not simply from a structuralist standpoint as a set of signifiers relating to certain signified objects, and governed or regulated by the structural limitations of the language itself (Holdcroft, 1991), but from a post-structuralist perspective. Here, language usage *is* a social practice in and of itself (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In citing Bakhtin, Mkhize (2004, p. 53) states that: *"Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue, a person participates wholly and throughout his […] whole life. […] He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium"*.

Methodologically, Thompson (1990, p. 274) states that there is *"a constant temptation to treat social phenomena in general, and symbolic forms [such as language] in particular, as if they were natural objects, amenable to formal, statistical and objective analysis [...]. While various kinds of formal, statistical and objective analysis are perfectly appropriate and indeed vital in social analysis generally and in the analysis of symbolic forms in particular, nevertheless these kinds of analysis comprise at best a partial approach to the study of social phenomena and symbolic forms"*. This paradigm therefore includes examinations of textual data ranging from archival sources to interview transcripts, and relies on various forms of analysis such as critical discourse analysis and the genealogical method as tools for the purpose of

deconstruction (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). However, despite many contemporary writings displaying a complete preoccupation with the 'language machine' in both data collection and analysis, this is a partial and egregious misreading of historical application of this paradigm, as it has also been instrumental in critiquing structural social conditions more broadly from a materialist and realist perspective. Not surprisingly, this paradigm has been well-utilised in studies that have focussed on the deconstruction of meaning systems within uneven social relations and systemised forms of domination in the context of gender studies, critical 'race' studies, post-colonial studies, investigations of ideological effects, critiques of neo-liberalism, and thus forms the ontological and epistemological basis for the current research endeavour.

In contrast to romantic hermeneutics, this study favours a critical hermeneutic approach to interpreting meanings that favours an understanding of all meaning and knowledge as not only being interpreted within context, but as deriving from and in relation to that very context. Rose (1990) argues that even though *"thoughts, feelings and actions may appear as the very fabric and constitution of the intimate self, they are socially organised and managed"* (p. 1). This approach suggests that all meaning is therefore socially determined and constructed, and through a careful deconstruction of meanings and knowledges, certain trajectories back to the social context are traceable, allowing us to make critical commentary on the elements of the social context itself. While not rejecting the idea of human agency entirely (Burr, 1998), this approach certainly does not subscribe to the essentialist, agentic humanism embodied in romantic hermeneutics. Rather, it proposes that social actors' understandings of the world are generated, conveyed, reproduced and contested through systems of meaning or discourses that are already operant within these social contexts. It is with this that the study is most concerned, in an attempt to identify the manifestations of power within narratives of homicidal encounters; ultimately tracing them back to their socio-historical roots.

Furthermore, reflexivity and positionality become central for researchers utilising critical hermeneutics, as it presupposes that all knowledge derived in the process of research is also partly a social construction of the researcher. Reflexivity in this context refers to the idea that even researchers' interpretations are influenced and biased by their values, beliefs and socio-historical experiences, and need to be reflected upon as they will be represented in their work. It is a process by which the researcher's interpretations bend back on themselves in a circular feedback loop and may partly account for or even alter the nature of the interpretations. However, such reflexivity is also premised on the acknowledgement of the researcher's positionality. Maher and Tetreault (1994, p.164) argue that it is how we come to define ourselves and others *"not in terms of fixed identities, but by [...] location within shifting networks of relationships".* Stated differently, it refers to an interactional context of negotiated meaning production, transmission and interpretation. Within this interactional context, our (and others') locations and presentations are imbued with social value, status, power, and differential access to resources, and therefore influence the nature of meaning that is co-constructed (Boonzaier, 2001).

This study utilises Thompson's (1990) *Depth Hermeneutics* as a meta-analytical framework for critical hermeneutics. He suggests that various analytical tools for the study of the interpretation of meaning can coexist and relate to each other meaningfully within this framework. While this is elaborated upon later in the chapter, the essence of *Depth Hermeneutics* encompasses three levels of integrated analysis. These refer to (1) an articulation of the socio-historical context in which discourses are produced, (2) a more formal discursive analysis looking at thematic content, rhetorical strategies and repertoires, and (3) a cyclical process of interpretation/re-interpretation of the functions of these discourses within the socio-historical context of production and transmission. Thompson (1990, p. 21) suggests that the value of this idea lies in the fact that it is a framework *"in which different types of analysis can play legitimate and mutually supportive roles. It enables us to see that the process of interpretation is not necessarily opposed to types of analysis which are concerned with the structural features of symbolic forms*

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or with the social-historical conditions of action and interaction, but that, on the contrary, these types of analysis can be linked together and construed as necessary steps along the path of interpretation”. Thus, the current study relies not only on critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Parker, 1992, 1999), but also on aspects of narrative analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998) within this *Depth Hermeneutic* framework, and both of these are further elucidated later in this chapter.

2.2.   Social Constructionism, Relativism and Realism

Given that the study is positioned within a critical paradigm, it is also framed by certain central tenets of social constructionism. Therefore, some extended discussion on the contemporary debates around social constructionism would be useful to locate the analytical tools utilised for the interpretation of data within the study. The central problematic within these debates over the last decade revolves around the extent to which the world is constructed by, through and in language, rather than by the material and structural conditions of society (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In so doing, the debates have become concentrated on relativism versus realism (Parker, 1998), and often in the form of contestations pertaining to post-modernism versus modernism, or materialism versus idealism (Bauman, 1991; Eagleton, 1996; Giddens, 1990).

Social constructionism within psychology can be tracked in the key writings of Gergen (1985), Billig (1996) and Burr (1995), to name but a few. For Gergen (1985), social constructionism is premised on the idea that what we experience the world to be is not necessarily a direct map of reality. In addition, he argues that understandings of the world are social artefacts that are “*products of historically situated interchanges among people*” (p. 267), that they are continuously evolving, and that the notion of a definitive truth can therefore not be adhered to. He furthermore posits that varied understandings of the world are negotiated in social life and therefore constitute social actions in and of themselves. Similarly for Burr (1995, 1998), social constructionism assumes that we create reality and that these realities reflect our values, perception and experiences of the world, rather than an accurate or essentialist depiction of *the* world. She suggests that knowledge of the world only occurs in relation to others in

social interaction, and that language is a crucial vehicle for establishing this negotiated knowledge.

Given the above perspectives, it is therefore not surprising that social constructionism has been hotly contested by both realists and relativists alike, and even less surprising that it has increasingly become viewed through the relativist lenses of post-modernism. After all, social constructionism implies relativism as a fundamental conceptual pillar. Certainly post-modernism assumes that the world is more decentred and not as systematised and coherent as previously conceived of. In addition, social subjects are considered more fragmented and their identities are viewed as more plural and ephemeral. Discursive repertoires are also not represented as grand narratives but rather as discontinuous and simultaneously contradictory. Furthermore, the concept of positionality becomes more critical within this frame, as it defines one's location within the social world, and determines potential subjectivities and discourses that can be accessed. These discourses become central in attempting to understand how others interpret the social world and are frequently foregrounded as a point of analysis in the 'absence' of a social centre. Through these assumptive underpinnings, post-modernism offers different ways of thinking about power and resistance. It allows us to think of a micro-politics that involves resistances in the capillaries or margins of society, and to be suspicious of binaries and absolute truths. It postulates that the confluence of material conditions, historicity and extant discourses are integral to contributing to certain conditions of possibility that shape social worlds in ways that are in fact discontinuous. It is therefore often focussed on issues of subjectivity, suggesting that subjects can occupy multiple positions that may not only be reproductive of such extant discourses, buy that may also be disruptive and subversive within the crevasses of discontinuity. In this sense, the relativism of post-modernism is a logical extension of social constructionism, and a perusal of contemporary social scientific writings within academe reveals that it is bulging at the seams with post-modernist epistemology (Eagleton, 1996).

Contrasted with the above position, is the realist view that contests this extreme relativism within social constructionism. In particular, Eagleton's (1996) scathing, yet lyrical materialist critique of post-modernism raises several points of divergence. His thesis centres on sketching a socio-historical period in which post-modernism finds its

foothold – an epoch in which there has been an ideological retreat of radical critique, and in which there are greater preoccupations with aspects of the social that are more ambiguous. He suggests that radical critiques have frequently retreated into and onto themselves, rather than have to focus on the nature of exploitative social realities that appear to be unbreachable by forms of resistance. He therefore posits that we have come to devour post-modernism in the historical context as a replacement strategy for the radical critique that pre-dated it. Secondly, he suggests that the ambiguity within post-modernism tends to act as a double-edged sword - that it has capacities for emancipation and resistance, but simultaneously becomes co-opted into oppressive systems because its contradictory nature allows for relativism to be employed in all manner of conservative and oppressive ways. Thirdly, his thesis opposes the view that history is simply an 'accidental' set of convergences, but rather that it displays remarkable continuity in patterns that reveal a social, structural and material centre – one of exploitation and uneven sets of power relations that generate systems of domination. Fourthly, he argues that the nature of the human subject as ephemeral and fragmented within post-modernism implies that we do not experience reality in certain consistent and collective ways, but he contests this by making specific references to collective experiences of social class. Similarly, Burr (1998), in her review of realist perspectives also suggests that within this position, the real world exists and pre-dates our experience of it, and that there is a 'real' that is not necessarily discursive, but located independently in the material and structural conditions of society. While language may be a vehicle to assess the nature of society, it is not the only discursive form, nor does it imply that extra-discursive analyses can not be done. Therefore there is no privileging of language itself. Collier (1998) extends on this argument in his reflections on Bhaskar's work on critical realism, and argues that if we are to examine the repeated failures of history in promoting equity and egalitarian human well-being, then these failures do in fact point to a system or set of patterns in the social world that are 'real' and evidenced in the recrudescent nature of exploitation. Willig (1998), in her reflections on critical realism also suggests that it focuses on deep structures within society, but is non-reductionist about such structures and is also always provisional about truth, and thereby avoids the vulgar, dogmatic and deterministic approaches to materialism and historicity.

While the above polarisations within these positions highlight certain key differentials and extreme points of divergence, they also illuminate the possibility of re-calibrating our thinking to employ aspects of both positions within the framework of social constructionism. Giddens (1990) and Bauman (1991) have already articulated such a need for recalibration and respectively argued that *"postmodernism is modernity coming to terns with its own impossibility"* and that it represents a *"radicalisation of modernity"*. Eagleton (1996, p. 24), despite his critical approach to post-modernism, has also articulated that it is a *"paradigm shift which has accordingly been brought to birth, a veritable revolution in our conception of the relations between power, desire identity, political practice – [and] represents an immeasurable deepening of the fleshless, anaemic, tight-lipped politics of an earlier era"*. He goes on to suggest that it is *"radical in so far as it challenges a system which still needs absolute values, metaphysical foundations and self-identical objects; against these it mobilises multiplicity, non-identity, transgression, anti-foundationalism, cultural relativism. The result, at its best, is a resourceful subversion of the dominant value-system, at least at the level of theory"* (p. 132). Burr (1998), in her review suggests that at points these debates are framed as dichotomies and that indeed the differences may not be insurmountable. Davies (1998, p. 135) also argues that the realism/relativism dichotomy is in itself a discursive act and *"as long as [… it] is understood as the only, or even the primary, binary then its capacity to generate obscurity is vast"*. Similarly, Gergen (1998, p. 153.) also notes that if these positions *"are viewed as cultural resources – then we may ask whether it is necessary to set them against each other. For what reasons would we want to submit them to the traditional rituals of argumentation in which one must subdue the other?"*

Such a re-calibration may entail an acknowledgement of the importance of both materiality and historicity as setting the context for meaning-making that is constructed, reflected, reproduced and contested; that subjects are ambiguous and contradictory; that understanding and meaning-making is relative and at best provisional truths can be ascertained; that social formations may be comprised of both centres and margins; that while certain patterns and structures may exist within social formations, that these are not necessarily definitive, essentialist and absolute in nature; that discourses are social practices that help to construct and convey understandings of reality; but that language is only one such discursive practice that may illuminate

aspects of social formations; and that extra-discursive elements and analyses can coexist outside of such discursive elements and analyses. Despite this perspective frequently being described as a heretical or 'weak' brand of social constructionism by those who stridently prostheletize the virtues of more purist approaches to social constructionism (see Armstrong, 1990; Butchart, 1998; Hook, 2001, for examples), it is the particular view that this research endeavour subscribes to. In so doing, it articulates with both a *Depth Hermeneutic* approach to the interpretation of meanings, as well as with a critical discourse analysis of participants' narratives of homicidal encounters.

2.3.   Discourse, Text and Language

As the study focuses on the pivotal concept of discourse and its analysis, some elucidation thereof is necessary, especially because of the heterogeneous manner in which the concept has come to be used in psychology today. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) note that discourse has become increasingly fluid in its definition and utility, indicating the evolving nature of the concept. Willig (2001) highlights the fact that the relationship between discourse and psychology can be traced back formally to seminal publications such as those of Potter and Wetherell's (1992), which represented a tipping point and signalled a turn to language in psychology (Parker, 1990). However, this had of course been preceded by work on social constructionism, as well as work in the 1950s on the performative nature of language (Willig, 2001). This section attempts to modestly summarise some of the key views pertaining to discourse today, and thereby delineates the particular understandings of discourse utilised within this study.

Two of the key strands out of which discourse arises are (1) the areas of linguistics, communication studies and ethnomethodology, which focus on language as social performance; and (2) the Foucauldian tradition that understands discourse as both productive and constitutive of objects and subjects. However, in both instances, discourse is viewed as socially embedded and is therefore a reflection, reproduction and constituent component of social reality. Furthermore, in many respects these distinct strands are often incorporated into a single analysis, and indeed, Potter and Wetherell (1995) as well as Thompson (1990) argue that these should ideally be synthesised into a more comprehensive analytical process.

In the first strand of thought, Potter and Wetherell's (1992, p. 7) definition of discourse as *"all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds"* suggests its clear connection to linguistics, communication studies and therefore the centrality of language. Within these developments, language was no longer conceptualised simply as sets of binaried signs in which the possibilities for meaning are marked (Macdonell, 1987), but was rather *"re-conceptualised as productive; that is, language was seen to construct versions of social reality and to achieve social objectives"* (Willig, 2001, p. 88). This linguistic construction of social reality implied that *"a better understanding of social life and social interaction from [the] study of social texts"* (Potter & Wetherell, 1992, p. 7) could thus be attained. Elements such as rationalisation, categorisation, attribution, naming, blaming, face-work, hedging and distancing (Antaki, 1981, 1988; Giles & Robinson, 1990; van Dijk, 1997) all became prominent features of how meanings of social reality were negotiated through particular rhetorical devices and repertoires within language, in the service of the speaker's social objectives within context. This action or performative orientation towards talk has also been extended upon by others such as Billig (1982, 1988, 1996), Williams (1993), and van Dijk (1987, 1993) in the examination of the discursive transmission of ideology within written and verbal language. Language is an integral form of social interaction and impacts on our social cognitions as well as the acquisition and confirmation of our opinions, attitudes and ideologies. The relationship between language, ideologies and counter-ideologies is pivotal, as language *"plays a crucial role in the enactment, expression, legitimation, and acquisition"* of ideologies and counter ideologies (van Dijk, 1995, p. 2), and thereby contributes to the interpellation of subjects into society. In other words, individuals become subjects of a particular society in which various dominant ideologies operate, and are not only products of these ideologies, but also reproduce and contest them to a greater or lesser degree through language. Jaworski and Coupland (1999, p. 47) argue that *"construing language as discourse involves orientating to language as a form of social action, as a functioning form of social action embedded in the totality of social processes"*. Consequently, this particular approach to discourse within psychology has often focussed upon conversation, narratives, speeches, and media representations within socio-historical contexts, and the meanings that are generated and constructed about the world that we occupy.

While the Foucauldian tradition acknowledges the importance of language, it views it as one exemplar through which discourses are conveyed. Discourses are those systemised ways of understanding, making sense, acting within, acting on and being acted upon by social reality, through a range of 'texts' or social practices that extend beyond language to include everyday social interactions and institutional practices (Hook, 2001; Parker, 1992; Willig, 2001). Thus for Young (1981), it is hard to imagine a world outside of discourse. Derrida (1976, p. 158) also argues that *"[t]here is nothing outside the text"*, and this view is central within this approach to discourse. But access to discourses is implicitly dependent upon differential power relations, thereby creating an enabling and constraining effect for social subjects (Hook, 2001). Within this relationship to power, discourses offer us certain subject positions from within which we may come to act or speak. They are thus imbued with power (Sheridan, 1980), are never neutral (Macdonell, 1987), and their meanings, functions and effects are altered depending on the positions from which they are used (Pêcheux, in Macdonell, 1987). Duncan (1993, p. 56) notes that *"dominant groups [...], by virtue of their control over existing ideological or discursive apparatuses, have the power to ensure that the meanings which they give to social phenomena [...] are the ones that gain dominance and widespread acceptance"*. In this sense, it is both productive of certain objects of social inquiry, but simultaneously creates subjects who occupy certain positions within social formations at given points of interaction. Willig (2001, p. 107) notes that because discourses *"make available ways-of-seeing and ways-of-being, they are strongly implicated in the exercise of power",* and they frequently result in the naturalisation of hegemonic discourses as *'common sense'*. However, as Foucault (1977) notes, wherever there is power, there is resistance and Willig (2001) also points to the possibility of discontinuous, counter-discourses to emerge in all contexts as well. Discourses are always generated in historical and material contexts, and all discursive repertoires are therefore always a product of a pre-existing and pre-established historical discursive domain (Young, cited in Hook, 2001). Finally, not only are discourses reflected in language, but discourses are also instrumental in generating effects in the material realm of social life. This implies a dialectic between materiality and discourses that mutually reinforce each other, most notably in institutional and everyday practices that legitimate uneven relations of power (Hook, 2001).

Following in this tradition are several writers who have also drawn on a Foucauldian understanding of discourse, and a brief outline of Parker's (1990, 1999), Macdonell's (1987) and Fairclough's (1992, 1995) accounts of discourse are provided below.

Parker (1990, p. 192), in his initial focus on language suggests that discourses are systems of meanings and that *"the statements within a discourse can be grouped, and given a certain coherence, in so far as they refer to the same topic"*. This emphasis on content deviates from the morphological approach by Potter and Wetherell (1992), but he also acknowledges that discourses are realised in texts, whether in the form of language or any other set of symbols that convey meaning. Thus, discourses refer not only to language but to meaning-making practices that may be *"visual, spatial, that may comprise face-to-face interaction or the organisation of national boundaries"* (Parker, 1999, p. 3). However, Parker (1992, p. 34) does suggest that their may also be an extra-discursive and extra-textual space when he notes that *"objects can both be inside and outside of texts"*. Furthermore, he asserts that discourses reflect on their own way of speaking, and thus within discourses, we can find the possibilities of rupture and discontinuity. Parker (1990, p. 194) notes that *"at these points, the discourse itself is folding around and reflecting on its own way of speaking. The devices employed to bring about this reflection range from the uneasy phrase 'for want of a better word' through disingenuous denials of a position being advocated ('don't get me wrong') to full-blown analyses of the implications of a worldview"*. Discourses are also referent in so far as they draw on each other to convey meanings in instances when there are discrediting questions and contestations about their legitimacy (e.g. 'race' talk is couched in the discourse of ethnicity). In addition, when they are ineffectual these references strengthen the coherence of the meaning system (e.g. Islamaphobia is combined with nationalist discourses to facilitate support for war). Discourses also make reference to social objects within our worlds (e.g. war; motherhood; homicidal encounters), but also contain subjects who are transmitting and receiving these discourses. Based on the power and access or lack of access that social subjects have to resources and discourses within a given context, we are positioned differently within social, relational and interactional exchanges. Discourses are fundamentally historical phenomena, as they are not only reflective of a specific space, place and time in history, but also draw on discursive antecedents that are pre-established (e.g.

discourses in the narratives of homicide today also draw on discourses of homicide over the last 50 years). Similar to Foucault's work, Parker (1990) also argues that discourses support institutions, that their effects are experienced in material social practices within institutions and sustain these practices and institutions (e.g. discourses on marriage and parenthood often support the institution of the family). Finally, discourses tend to reproduce power relations within social formations and therefore have ideological effects. This of course does not imply a unidirectional process, but suggests that discourses can either sustain power relations or give rise to resistances to them. In following Thompson's (1990, p. 58) work on ideology, it is the *"ways in which the meaning mobilised by symbolic forms serves to establish and sustain relations of domination"*. In this sense, discourses are subservient to ideologies and may have ideological effects but may also serve as a critique of ideology. They are therefore relatively open, indeterminate and not only a means of reproducing existing power relations, but also an instrument of resistance (Duncan, 1993; Thompson, 1984).

For Macdonell (1987), discourse is always an action within social context, a dialogue through which meaning is reflected, contested, negotiated and constructed. She states that the *"statement made, the words used and the meanings of the words used, depends on where and against what the statement is made"* (p. 1). Duncan (1993) supports this idea of the dialogical nature of discourse, when he argues that words in and of themselves do not generate meaning outside of sentences, and that these invariably occur within a dialogical interaction. Discourses for Macdonell (1987) are also notably found within institutions (although not only here), and these institutions reflect hierarchies of discourses - some hegemonic and others subordinated. In so doing, discourses refer to specific objects at the expense of others, and delimit the language and social practices that are possible for social subjects to engage with depending on their positions within power relations. Finally, she notes that discourses are not only inscribed in language, but also in technical processes, behaviours and institutions, thereby expanding the conception of the text to that which acts as a conduit for systemised forms of meaning-making about objects and social subjects in our social lives.

Fairclough (1992, 1995) provides a useful analytical complex of three key and inter-related elements in defining discourse. While he recognises that discourses represent, construct and constitute our social worlds, and position us in varied ways as social subjects, he also notes that they evolve through historical periods and combine under particular social conditions to produce new and more complex discourses that are reflective of these socio-historical conditions. He suggests that discourse can always be found in an integrated, triangulated model called the discursive event, and includes social practice, discoursal practice and text. The discoursal practice refers to those discourses that are drawn upon and combined within interactions, while the text dimension refers to vehicles for discursive conveyance such as language. The social practice dimension refers to the social location of these texts and discourses. Thus, he views discourses and social practice as separate, but integral. These three levels within the triangulated model are therefore continuously interacting in the production of meaning-making and social practices.

From the above approaches to discourse, it is evident that texts may be found in various forms outside of the realm of language, and include social phenomena such as utterances, actions, and pictorial representations (Fairclough, 1992; Hodge & Kress, 1988). Parker (1999, p. 4) refers to texts as *"any tissue of meaning which is symbolically significant for a reader"*, but does however emphasise written and spoken language[34], as these are most *"easily […] caught and pasted into a research study"*. However, while not privileging language, it is certainly the most common form of text or medium through which discourses are analysed. This is in part a result of the relative accessibility of language as a delimited analytical object of focus, but

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[34] Duncan (1993) summarises differences between written and spoken language and their relationship to discourses (Brown & Yule, 1983; Thompson, 1984), but concludes that these distinctions are perhaps to sharply drawn in the literature. These include arguments that spoken language is less retractable, tempered and censored than its written counterpart, that written language is more decontextualised, and that spoken language has a more direct interlocutor or audience. However, he contends that spoken language can also become easily decontextualised through technology and transcription processes in research or reporting, and that all language usage always has an audience, irrespective of its spoken or written formats. Therefore, he suggests that while some differences pertaining to the spontaneity of language usage and discursive production may exist between these two forms, that we should view them as complementary.

also because of the pervasive nature of language as a symbolic form through which meanings about the social world are produced and conveyed. Thompson's (1990) work on symbolic forms such as language, pictorial representations, texts and art suggests that they are not simply collectively held symbols that homogeneously reflect the socio-historical context, but also vary from interaction to interaction. Language as a symbolic form has five main features, namely that they are intentional, conventional, structural, referential and contextual (Thompson, 1990). It is therefore produced and constructed by a subject who intends to convey meaning through the forms produced; it is conventional in so far as the recipient of the discourse is utilising a certain number of rules, codes or conventions to make sense thereof; it displays an articulated structure that can be conveyed and understood; it represents or refers to some social object; and finally, it is embedded in socio-historical contexts. Because of this, language is open to linguistic analyses of its performative functions through elements of social semiotics. In addition, it is also open to analyses of the discourses that permeate it, thereby offering insights into the socio-historical character of the landscape in which it is embedded. In thinking about discourse in the context of language as text, Candlin (1997, p. ix) offers us a comprehensive integration of these elements and a rationale for the focus on language in discursive analysis when stating that *"'discourse' […] refers to language in use, as a process which is socially situated. However […] we may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of […] discourse in structuring areas of knowledge and the social and institutional practices which are associated with them. In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the social formation".*

2.4. On Types of Discourse Analysis

Given the above distinctions in the definitions and conceptualisations of discourse, it is therefore understandable that varied approaches to the analysis of discourse also exist. Within psychology, Willig (2001) notes that two main trajectories are present, namely, discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis. These approaches have become more distinct in recent years with the plethora of studies embarking on

such discursive analyses, but additional distinctions have also become more apparent within the area of Foucauldian discourse analysis in particular. Work by Bowman (2005), Butchart (1998) and Hook (2001) have all distinguished a more purist approach to understanding discourses from a Foucauldian perspective, in the form of archaeological and genealogical analyses, and have argued that it should be separated from what has come to be referred to as critical discourse analysis (CDA) espoused by proponents such as Parker (1990, 1999) and Fairclough (1992, 1995).

However, several writers have argued that in conducting analyses, there are often points of overlap and integration between these diverse approaches. Potter and Wetherell (1995), Wetherell and Edley, (1998) and Wetherell (1998) all suggest that focussing on rhetorical devices, interpretative repertoires and broader social discourses simultaneously, is not only possible, but desirable. Thompson (1990) also suggests that in analysing symbolic forms such as language, that multiple forms of analysis that focus on form and content should be combined and synthesised into a more comprehensive analytical process. Fairclough (1995) supports this approach when he argues that the form-content distinction in analysis is often arbitrary, as these two areas are inter-dependent on each other. He states that the *"challenge is to convince the increasing number of discourse analysts whose disciplinary base is outside linguistics or language studies that textual analysis should mean analysis of the **texture** of the texts, their form and organisation, and not just commentaries on the 'content' of texts which ignore texture"* (p. 4). Kress (1985) also argues that rather than being concerned only with its form and structure, discourse analysis also deals with the content, function and social significance of language. In South Africa, Macleod (2002, p. 17) has provided an account in which she has drawn together various aspects within the diverse approaches to discourses analysis, thereby cautioning against a methodological hubris and emphasising *"that there is no definitive method of discourses analysis, and therefore any methodological discussion or practice contributes to the constant construction and re-production of the intellectual research activity called 'discourse analysis'"*. Notwithstanding the above views on integration and synthesis, the following section summarises the key differentials that distinguish discursive psychology from critical discourses analysis and genealogical analyses, thereby building argumentation that will justify and

elucidate why particular analytical tools are utilised, as noted in the *Data Analysis* section of this chapter.

2.4.1. Discursive Psychology

For Willig (2001, p. 93) discursive psychology focuses on how participants use discursive resources and the social effects that such usage has. She suggests that discourse analysis in this sense is based on *"a particular **way of reading** – reading for action orientation (what is the text doing?) rather than simply reading for meaning (what is the text saying?)"*. The socially performative functions of utilising discursive resources are thus sought, and there is not simply a focus on the surface or referential content of the text. Discursive resources include both interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1992)[35] used to construct social reality (and thus has a focus on specific and delimited thematic content used in our expressions) (see for example, Billig, 1982, 1988, 1996; and van Dijk, 1987, 1993, for their work on ideology and racism), as well as specific rhetorical devices to manage social and personal interests. These include metaphors, analogies, direct quotations, extreme and graphic illustrations, and disclaimers (Potter & Wetherell, 1992; Willig, 2001). In their edited volume, Giles and Robinson (1990) also highlight the use of non-verbal behaviours, distancing techniques, face-saving strategies, justificatory and dissociative techniques used in interpersonal accounting, and self-disclosure and self-presentation, to mention but a few. While these rhetorical strategies may be fairly distinct from interpretative repertoires as objects of analysis, they are integrally bound to each other in conveying meanings about social reality and the social interests and effects that underpin them. While certainly offering us a critical approach to understanding the construction, constitution and reproduction of social reality through language and its social effects, this form of discourse analysis has been criticised for running the risk of relegating resistance and critical politics

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[35] Potter and Wetherell (1992, p. 149) define an interpretative repertoire as a *"recurrently used systems of terms used for characterising and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena [… which] is constituted through a limited range of terms used in particular stylistic and grammatical constructions"*.

to a form of gymnastics in the realm of linguistic textuality (Burr, 1998; Hook, 2001). Nevertheless, in the context of this study, it remains an important element not only in understanding the production of specific social interests through language, but is particularly utile in analysing the rhetorical strategies that may be employed and deployed within interactional micro-processes relating to subject positionality, self-presentation and self-management. Furthermore, while discursive psychology has focussed on interpersonal communications, reporting, conversations and everyday explanations (Antaki, 1981, 1988), the focus of this study was on narrative production of men who had been involved in a homicidal encounter and the discourses embedded within them. Here in particular, a significant amount of work has been conducted on the analysis of narrative form, structure and content (see for example, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Gergen, 1988; Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985; Kerby, 1991), and these are further explicated in the *Data Analysis* section.

2.4.2. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

In contrast to the discursive psychology and its linguistic emphasis, Foucault's (1997) pivotal conception of discourse as constitutive and productive as well as being inter-dependent on and historically located within practices within society and it institutions, has had a profound influence on the social application of discourse analysis today. It encompasses a much more social analytical process that is focussed upon the *"'rules of formation' which define the possible 'objects', 'enunciative modalities', 'subjects', 'concepts' and 'strategies' of a particular type of discourse"* (Fairclough, 1992, p. 38). Using the archaeological method, Foucault (1997) suggests that discourse analysis is then concerned with *"specifying the sociohistorically variable 'discursive formations' (sometimes referred to as 'discourses'), systems of rules which make it possible for certain statements but not others to occur at particular times, places and institutional locations"* (Fairclough, 1992, p. 40). It is a deeply historical analysis of the particular forms of (expert) knowledge that are possible within certain socio-historical periods, within certain material conditions, located within pre-existing and pre-established forms of

knowledge. Thus it implies tracing the history of certain objects of knowledge, subjects and positionalities, and understanding how they have come to be what they are in any given context (i.e. analysing processes of formation, descent, emergence, exclusion, limitation and appropriation)[36]. However, this process was later augmented by Foucault's genealogical method (Fairclough, 1992; Hook, 2001), which suggested a turn towards understanding discourse in relation to power and social practice. While not as explicitly referred to as a method by Foucault himself (Hook, 2001), Rabinow (cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 49) draws the distinction between these two when he states that in the archaeological method, *"'[t]ruth' is to be understood as a system of procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements"*. However, in the genealogical method, *"'[t]ruth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A 'regime of truth'"*. Thus, by examining contemporary discourses as an evolving process through the lenses of history, materiality, power relations and pre-established discursive networks, the conditions of possibility for determining sets of discourses in the here-and-now are generated.

2.4.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Within Parker's (1992) approach to discourse analysis, seven criteria for defining discourses can broadly be referred to as the structural elements thereof, and the three auxiliary criteria could be construed of as more functional or deconstructive (Macleod, 2002). However, in the analytic process these elements are inter-related and inseparable, and he accordingly identifies 20 steps for the analytical process. While not focussing on the preliminary steps of textual generation, in summary he proposes that the analyst needs to reflexively highlight the objects being referred to in the text; specify the subjects in the texts and their respective positioning; highlight the relationship of discourses to the broader social context and how it manages contradictory

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[36] Also, see Therborn (1980) for his translation of the latter three concepts into *restriction, shielding* and *delimited appropriation* in the ordering of discourse.

discourses; examine contrasting ways of speaking and how they come to create similar meanings; name the discourse and connect it to other texts for the purposes of elaboration; examine the historical origins and evolution of the discourse; identify institutions that are supported or subverted through the use of this discourse; examine which subjects benefit and experience detriment from the discourse and therefore either promote them or pursue their dissolution; and show how discourses sanction oppression and facilitate a dominant view of history, while silencing others.

While showing some significant differences, Willig (2001) nevertheless similarly summarises an approach to discourse analysis that should highlight discursive objects; show how these discursive constructions feed into larger social discourses within a particular social context; identify what the functions of these discursive constructions are within context; determine what subject positions are created through this process and how it enables or limits access to resources; examine how social actions are inhibited or promoted by these constructions and subject positions; and finally, illuminate what kind of subjectivities are generated by this process.

Finally, for Fairclough (1992) the analysis of discourse occurs across three domains, including an analysis of discoursal practices, to an analysis of the texts, to an analysis of the social practices of which the discourses are a part. He argues that most analysts generally begin with an analysis of the social context and practices within which discourses are embedded. They then examine the nature of the discourses that are evident within the text, followed by a description of the textual elements and their functions that help to convey the discourses. Finally, they engage in an interpretation of both the textual elements and the discoursal practices within the context of these social practices – thus an analytic process that moves from interpretation to description and back to interpretation (see Thompson's [1990] *Depth Hermeneutics* for a similar characterisation). Furthermore, Fairclough (1992) states that at the discoursal level, the analyst is concerned with interdiscursivity (i.e. what broader discourses in the social formation are the sample discourses drawing upon?); intertextual chains (i.e. does the sample

discourse involve an evolution or shift, or are they relatively stable?); coherence (i.e. are discourses homogeneous or heterogeneous, hegemonic or subordinated, contested or uncontested?); conditions of discourses practice (i.e. what are the contexts of discourse production and consumption and their effects?); and manifest intertextuality (i.e. does the text being analysed draw on other texts?). At the level of analysing text, he suggests that the analyst is focussed on interactional control (i.e. is the textual production negotiated or controlled and what are the effects?); cohesion (i.e. what are the rhetorical strategies employed in the text?); politeness (i.e. what is the degree of socially desirable responses and their functions?); ethos (i.e. what are the features that construct self or subjectivity?); grammar (i.e. what is the extent of transitivity and agency, thematic structure and modality?); word meaning (i.e. what are the key words used within the text and what are their cultural significances?); wording (i.e. what are the array of ways in which meanings are worded and what are their significances?); and metaphor (i.e. what are the choices of metaphors and the effects thereof?). Finally, in the analysis of social practice, he focuses on the social matrix of discourse (i.e. what are the relations and structures that frame this discursive instance and their effects?); orders of discourse (i.e. to what extent are the discourses represented hegemonic or subordinated or a combination of both?) and finally, the ideological and political effects of the discourses (i.e. what are the effects on social relations, identities or subjectivities and systems of knowledge and belief?). Certainly, one can see the nexus between Parker's (1992) views on the structural and deconstructive components of discourse analysis and the similar points of connection in Fairclough's (1992) work. However, unlike Parker who does not always focus on the explicit linguistic components of a discursive event, Fairclough incorporates this and extends on Foucault's work in this sense. Furthermore, he also does not separate the extra-discursive from the discursive, but rather views them as inter-related. Pragmatically this represents a way of putting *"Foucault's perspective to work"* (Courtine, cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 38). More specifically, it enhances the analytic process with a focus on textually-oriented discourse analysis within discrete discursive instances or events, but in a manner that is *"theoretically adequate as well as practically usable"* (Fairclough, 1992, p. 37). Thus, the focus of discursive

analysis is not only on the evolution of expert knowledge and its relationship to power and regimes of, but also allows for an analysis of the appropriation of these discourses for a variety of functions and effects in more everyday interactions. The consequence is that Fairclough's method creates an elbow-room for the analysis of textual forms 'outside' of the domain of expert knowledge, including interview data, which come to represent specific discursive instances.

Within the meta-framework of *Depth Hermeneutics* (Thompson 1990), this study therefore utilises elements of narrative analysis as approached from within discursive psychology, but also draws pivotally on elements of Fairclough's (1992) and Parker's (1992) methodological approaches to critical discursive analysis.

3.   AIMS OF THE STUDY:

Given the paucity of South African qualitative studies on homicide, this study examined the narrational accounts emerging from 30 individual interviews with men who have all been convicted of murder. At the time of the study, the participants were all serving penal sentences and were incarcerated in a Department of Correctional Services facility in Johannesburg, South Africa. The study focussed on a critical discursive analysis of this textual data, with a view to eliciting articulations of power that are reflected in the accounts of the homicidal interaction.

The study therefore aimed to:

(1) elicit and uncover *discursive networks* pertaining to power in the personal narratives of homicidal encounters of male participants who have been convicted and incarcerated for homicide in South Africa.

(2) illustrate the *social basis and significance* of these discourses by highlighting how they come to reflect, reproduce and contest relations of power that are operational within the broader social context within which the homicidal encounters are located.

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(3) highlight the *functions and effects* **of these discourses, both within the broader socio-historical context as well as within the narrational context or immediate interlocutory space.**

4.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Even though the use of hypotheses is not entirely consistent with the qualitative approach, this does not preclude the use of certain research questions that may function as a guide to the researcher and the research process (Potter & Wetherell, 1992). The following broad research questions were utilised in the study, in order to provide some degree of focus for the researcher when facilitating participant disclosure of information as well as in the analysis of the transcribed texts.

More specifically, the research questions resulting from these aims were:

(a)   **What are the forms of power reflected in the discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(b)   **What is the social or thematic content of power reflected in the discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(c)   **What are the linguistic structures within the narrational talk of participants that convey the form and content of power reflected in discursive networks emerging from the personal narratives of homicidal encounters?**

(d)   **To what extent and in what ways do these discourses serve ideological functions associated with systemised forms of social asymmetry or domination within the broader socio-historical context?**

(e)   **To what extent and in what ways do these discourses act as critiques of ideology in so far as they contest ideological functions associated with systemised forms of social asymmetry or domination within the broader socio-historical context?**

(f)   **What are the functions and effects of these discourses for participants within the broader socio-historical context?**

(g) **What are the functions and effects of these discourses for participants within the interlocutory context of narration?**

From the above research questions, three distinct analytical areas of coverage can be determined. The first relates to the concept of power as reflected within participants' discourses (i.e. its form, social or thematic content, and the linguistic structures and rhetorical strategies that help to convey it). The second refers broadly to the social significance of these discourses (i.e. the manner in which they come to reflect larger discursive networks within the social formation), and the third area pertains to the functions and effects of these discursive articulations within the social context as well as within the research process as a form of social interaction (i.e. the way in which subjects and interlocutors are positioned, and the relationships between discourses, power and ideology).

In the first instance, the study is concerned with forms of power that may be reflected within discourses, and here the work of Foucault (1994) is particularly informative. While sovereign forms of power may be represented within these discourses (see Mitchell & Schoeffel's, 2003 edited volume on Chomsky's varied illustrations of these forms of power), the study primarily examines disciplinary power and its associated manifestations. In addition, self-regulatory mechanisms or technologies of disciplinary power in the form of confessional narratives are also explored. The emphasis on disciplinary forms of power is indicative of the more pervasive, ritualised and 'naturalised' forms of power that exist obliquely in everyday social life in contemporary society, and that often intersect, coexist with, and reinforce sovereign forms of power. At the level of social or thematic content, power is often articulated as an interaction that occurs in the course of everyday human activity. Thus, it is often attributed a certain social or thematic content along various axes of difference that tend to 'naturalise' power as a given within the social formation. Furthermore, with regard to linguistic structure, the very nature of syntax, semantics and morphology of language becomes central to assessing how systems of meaning are being conveyed within language as a text (Williams, 1993).

In the second instance, the research illustrates the social significance of these discourses by examining the extent to which they reflect and reproduce power relations within the social milieu. However, the study also examines the degree of social contestation of these power relations within the discourses. Here, the focus is on uncovering hegemonic and subordinated

discourses, thereby reflecting discontinuity and the potential for disruption and resistance within social contexts.

Finally, in an effort to understand the social functions and effects of these discourses as they are deployed, the study explores their potential ideological effects in contributing to systemised forms of social asymmetry or domination (Parker, 1992), as well as their role and function in organically critiquing ideology (Thompson, 1990). However, such effects and functions should also be understood in the micro-context of textual and discursive generation. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) suggest that in the latter instance of interlocution, there are always shadowy and omnipresent listeners and speakers for whom meaning is being constructed. In this research study, participants are invariably speaking to a wider audience through the researcher, and the researcher is similarly speaking through the research findings to other audiences. The performative functions for both the researcher and the participants are critical to understanding meaning-making under these circumstances, and so not only allows for an interpretation of subject positioning among participants, but also requires ongoing reflexive examination of the researcher's positionality.

Important to note in relation to the above, is that these research aims and questions are of course conveniently separated within this section of the dissertation, but the actual analysis simultaneously combines and comprehensively integrates these aspects within the ***Report Chapter***.

5.   PARTICIPANTS:

In ***Chapter One***, a brief rationale for focussing on males who are presently incarcerated for murder within a Department of Correctional Services facility in Johannesburg, South Africa, was articulated, and the following serves to augment this by noting participant characteristics and inclusion procedures.

5.1.   Initial Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

Given that the study was of a qualitative nature, sample size, characteristics and selection did not require the strict control procedures utilised within quantitative research (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995; Mouton, 1988). However, this does not imply that participant inclusion and selection was a non-issue. Because of the constraints pertaining to the researcher's language proficiency, the peculiar nature of

the potential participant pool, and the research environment of a prison setting, several inclusion-exclusion criteria were broadly adhered to in the identification, invitation and inclusion of participants. Initially, the intent was to include an undifferentiated and non-stratified group of males who had been convicted for their first and only murder and who had been incarcerated within the previous year. Furthermore, the study sought to include only those who had acknowledged participating in a homicidal encounter, and who were at the time of conducting the research not appealing their convictions for murder.

The reason for the focus on males convicted and incarcerated for first-time and single homicide encounters is that serial or repeat homicide offenders[37] may require separate scrutiny, given that our existing knowledge base for these cohorts is relatively poor (Canter, 2005; Fox & Levin, 1999; Pistorius, 2000, 2002). Also, the study adopted an approach that views homicide in South Africa as a fairly pervasive phenomenon, and was therefore keen to focus on more 'common' instances of homicide. In addition, the initial intent to focus on participants who had been incarcerated within the previous year was an attempt to minimise the impact of master narratives being generated within the data, in the context of a prison setting (see Steinberg, 2004, on prisoners' appropriation and incorporation of a range of common discourses and narratives to construct their life stories). Mironko's (2006, p. 68) study on incarcerated genocide perpetrators also found that *"the same words, ideas, narrative structures and framing devices come up again and again in the accounts [… and] it is tempting to wonder if this is the result of these people having lived together in prison for six years, with plenty of time to discuss their actions and, consciously or unconsciously, to develop a kind of 'master narrative' about what happened"*. Furthermore, the study also aimed to include only those potential participants who had acknowledged their participation in a homicidal encounter and were therefore not appealing their convictions or sentences. This was partly to avoid generating interview data that did not elicit

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[37] This terminology is used guardedly, as it is in part a discursive construction in and of itself that positions subjects in a particular manner. While being cognisant of this, it is used here to represent and reflect a differentiated group of men who are also involved in homicidal encounters, but who are generally understood as a distinct sub-category within the extant literature base, and in no way implies a non-reflexive acceptance of the construction.

narratives of homicide because of claims of innocence by participants, but also to circumvent the research enterprise being placed at-risk for being drawn into appeal processes as a form of currency at a later stage.

5.2.   Access

Once approval for the study was gained from the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa and ethical vetting was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services, data on convicted and incarcerated males who were serving sentences for murder were requested from the specific Correctional Services facility in Johannesburg. A spreadsheet of all males currently fitting this profile was provided to the researcher, but only included partial information such as registration number, surname and initials, date of birth and age. Because the spreadsheet was generally compiled in chronological order, it was used to invite potential participants to participate in the study and was worked through retrospectively (i.e. starting with the most recent males who were incarcerated and working backwards in temporality). Once the study had been explained and all ethical issues had been addressed (see section on *Ethical Considerations*), interested volunteers signed informed consent forms for both participation and audio-recording of interviews. Thirty interviews with these purposive and conveniently drawn volunteers were conducted and yielded approximately 500 pages of transcribed textual data. This provided sufficiently rich and varied data, and at that point no further incarcerated males were invited to participate in the study.

5.3.   Selection and Participant Characteristics

Participants in the study were therefore secured through a purposive technique and a convenient method. A purposive technique refers to selection according to criteria of relevance to the research problematic – in this instance all the participants were involved in a homicidal encounter. Willig (2001, p. 58) suggests that this technique implies *"that the group of participants is homogeneous to the extent that they share the experience of a particular condition, event or situation […], which they are asked to describe to the researcher"*. The method was convenient in so far as participants were simply accessed via an already established database, and based on a retrospective chronology of incarceration, until sufficient data had been generated

within the study. Despite the initial participant characteristics that were sought, in reality this differed slightly from the final cohort. While known repeat and serial murderers were not drawn into the sample, and the participants consisted mainly of males who had been convicted and incarcerated for a first and single homicide, there were a marginal number of instances in which participants had been involved in an event with multiple homicidal outcomes. These participants' interviews were utilised within the study, partly because it could not be determined that they were in fact a distinct sub-category requiring special consideration as research participants. Also, while attempting to stay within the boundaries of the one-year period of incarceration, it soon became clear that the spreadsheet information was partial and did not include the total period of time incarcerated within this or any other facility. Many of the volunteers had thus spent extended periods in prison awaiting trial, and so the final group of participants included several who had in fact been incarcerated for longer than a year. In addition, even in interviews with participants who had been incarcerated for less than a year, master narratives were still apparent, thereby partly nullifying the importance of this temporal distinction. Those potential participants who either disavowed any participation in a homicidal encounter or who were lodging appeals, all automatically deselected themselves from the study. Finally, volunteers who agreed to participate were selected based on their languages spoken, and due to the researcher's proficiency in English and Afrikaans, were therefore fluent in one or both of these. While not differentiated or stratified by 'race', socio-economic status or age, participants were from previously designated 'racial' categories including 'White', 'Coloured' and 'African' and between the ages of 22 and 48 years old. All of the participants had been residing in predominantly working class areas of Gauteng Province at the time of committing the respective murders, with an equal number being employed and unemployed at the time. The person who had died in the homicidal encounter was most frequently known to the participant, either as partner, friend or acquaintance within a community, but in a minority of instances, was unknown to the participant. Sentences among participants ranged between ten years and two life terms of incarceration, with the period of incarceration at the time of the research varying between several months up to eight years. The above information was particularly pertinent as it assisted in establishing the authorial positionality of the participants within the context of narrative production.

6.   **THE IN-DEPTH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW METHOD:**

6.1.   In-Depth Interviews and the Generation of Rich Textual Data

The method of procuring data within the study was through the face-to-face, one-to-one, semi-structured, in-depth, individual interview. Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) note that the defining features of this data collection method lies in its flexible structure, its interactive character, its ability to access rich and detailed textual information that has depth, and its generative nature. Thus the researcher is able to cover pre-determined topic areas and to engage in clarification and additional exploration; is able to encourage spontaneous talk; engages interactively to follow-up on particular topic trends; can pursue deeper meanings and narratives; and facilitates new thoughts through a guided process.

Schurink (1988) also suggests that optimally, interviews in the context of qualitative research need to reflect spontaneous and natural responses of participants, and should therefore be relatively unstructured. Willig (2001) notes that it is the most widely utilised method of data collection within qualitative research, partly because of its compatibility with various methods of data analysis such as discourse analysis, thematic content analysis and grounded theory. Semi-structured interviewing is a data collection method that is still driven by the researcher, but is flexible enough to contain an open-ended questioning approach around broad topic areas identified as relevant to the research problematic. While these are broadly adhered to, the precise phrasing and order of questions may vary from interview to interview and are in part shaped by the interactional exchange between the researcher and participant. Generally, the interview begins with more public forms of questioning to help establish rapport and comfort, and then evolves into more personalised questions that often require disclosure from participants (Breakwell, Hammond & Fife-Schaw, 1995; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999; Willig, 2001).

Semi-structured interviewing, as means of data collection, has been well-established and utilised practically and effectively in qualitative research in South Africa. Given that the aim of the study was to elicit and interpret discourses from participants' personal narratives of homicide, this specific style of data collection was opted for. Schurink (1988) suggests that this approach is useful in circumstances when highly

unique, intimate and/or personal reflections or information is being sought from participants and a group context is likely to inhibit disclosure. Under these conditions, a spontaneous one-to-one situation together with semi-structured, open-ended questions facilitates greater interaction, discussion and stimulation, especially with regard to topics that may be more difficult to elicit information on in formal focus group contexts. In contrast to focus group interviews, this method of data collection offsets the possible effects of group interactions in prison settings around the topic of homicide, which may have either inhibiting effects on personal disclosures, or result in a confabulated bloating of narratives for currency purposes.

6.2.   The Semi-Structured Interviewing Guide

In this study a semi-structured interviewing guide or schedule was loosely utilised to ensure that the interview process covered relevant topics in a relatively systematic manner (see Appendix D). In addition, follow-up questioning was frequently employed to clarify and explore emerging issues of direct interest to the research questions, but were also selectively pursued based on the literature review. Once the initial introductory questions had been dispensed with in the interview, the primary question centred on a narrative about the homicidal incident with a beginning, middle and end, thereby attempting to educe participants' understandings of what happened before the incident, during the incident and immediately after the incident. The discrete temporal nature of the questions contained the narrative to the incident itself, and prevented lengthy historical accounts of life narratives. This allowed for a focus on the event, without having participants generate meaning-making and commonsense master narratives about their actions based on their own interpretations of the impact of their life histories. Also, the blend of structure and flexibility allowed for certain comparisons to be made across participants' narratives, but also for an opportunity to construct unique and more personalised narratives though their expressions (Williamson, Karp & Dalphin, 1977). Other domains covered by the semi-structured interviewing guide included participants' understandings and meanings attributed to the core conflicts within the event, precipitants, victim characteristics and involvements, the role of weaponry, the use of violence as opposed to other conflict resolution methods, the relationship between masculinity and violence, and the context of the violent encounter. The interview schedule followed similar lines of

questioning to a range of previous quantitative and qualitative studies on homicide perpetration. However, in this instance the research process did not utilise the standard quantitative research approach of criminology and public health to focus on elements such as precipitants/triggers, victim characteristics and location typologies, in and of themselves, but rather as vehicles for the expression of discourses.

7.   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

7.1.   Initial Institutional Contact

Once the initial proposal had received content and methodological approval from the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa, it was submitted to the Research Directorate for ethics approval within the National Department of Correctional Services. Upon ethical approval, an internal guide was appointed to assist the researcher in navigating the Correctional Services' system. Contact was then made with the relevant personnel at a regional level, and thereafter with the area level staff at the prison facility itself. After being provided with a basic description of the organisational components within this facility, the researcher was referred to the relevant section head of the prison in which potential participants were being housed. This initial institutional contact also helped to build rapport and familiarise the researcher with the contact people and the context of research process. It involved scouting visits (Lewis, 2003) which highlighted potential pragmatic obstacles (e.g. the days and times that were not conducive to conducting interviews) that could then be addressed appropriately and factored into the research procedure.

7.2.   Initial Participant Contact

Upon request, a spreadsheet of all current males broadly fitting the required profile was provided to the researcher, but unfortunately only included partial information such as registration number, surname and initials, date of birth and age. A staff member was then allocated to invite potential volunteers to a briefing session with the researcher, and they were generally accessed in groups of 5-10. This process was not always consistent, and there were instances where identified males could not be accessed due to other scheduling clashes within the Correctional Services' system (e.g. medical care needs; personal visits; engagements in prison activities). While there were therefore periods where the initial contact with potential participants had

gained a fair momentum, there were other occasions when this process slowed considerably, especially given the challenging time of year at which the research was being conducted within the prison (i.e. the end-of-year period is generally more securitised, but also involves personnel changes due to the proximity of the vacation period). Groups of potential participants were collectively seen within an office, provided with information sheets in English and Afrikaans that explained the nature and purpose of the study. In addition, they were briefed on what would be required of them, alongside their rights (see section on *Ethical Considerations*). The research process was also verbally explained to potential participants and questions of clarification were addressed by the researcher. The researcher was positioned as someone interested in understanding the homicidal encounter, and references to the disciplinary background of psychology were consciously omitted in an attempt to minimise the positioning of participants in relation to the researcher. However, despite careful avoidance of this, prison staff often provided participants with this information when they were asked by participants to clarify the reasons for being invited to speak to a researcher. In addition, by the end of the data collection period, it was also clear that the 'prison grapevine' had already positioned the researcher as a psychologist prior to even meeting potential participants. This process undoubtedly had an influence on the narrative production within the interviews (as discussed in the ***Report Chapter***). Those who deselected from the study were thanked and returned to their prison section, while those who elected to participate were then individually taken through the process once more. They were asked to sign informed consent forms for participation and audio-recording, thereby acknowledging that they had been informed of the nature and purpose of the study, and allowing the use of data emerging from the study by the researcher. In general these processes were all conducted on the same day for logistical purposes, as participants could often not be accessed easily over separate contact sessions.

7.3.   The Interview Process

Office space was provided within the relevant section at the Department of Correctional Services' facility, and individual interviews were then meant to be conducted with participants *"out of earshot, but in sight"*, although this did not occur in all instances. While some interviews were conducted behind one-way-mirrors,

logistical demands within the facility meant that interviews were sometimes conducted in alternative office environments, but with Correctional Services' personnel available immediately outside of this interview context. In each case, interviews were therefore conducted confidentially and in privacy, but with personnel available upon request. Individual interview times varied from 45 minutes to 1½ hours, but generally the cut-off point was determined by a time at which no significantly novel information was being disclosed by the participant in the interview. This variance was in part a reflection of the relative poverty of content emerging from some interviewees, as opposed to more elaborated accounts by others. Interviews were conducted over a three month period between November 2005 and January 2006. Each individual interview commenced with fairly innocuous and benign introductory questions on the participant's name, age, reason for sentencing and sentence received. This served to settle the participants, helped build rapport, and allowed for an organic transition into the more central questions of the interview. This was then followed-up with an open-ended question that requested the participant to provide a narrative of the homicidal event - with a beginning, middle and end - to relate what had happened prior to the murder, during the murder and in the immediate aftermath. Because of the semi-structured and open-ended nature of the interviews, follow-up questions were utilised to explore and clarify particular aspects of the narrative. Here, in order to remain attuned to the interviewee, parsimonious responses and direct reflections of interviewees' language usage were employed, thereby deepening disclosures and the degree of detail within the participants' narratives (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). Any topics not extensively or spontaneously covered by the participants in the interviews were addressed by asking open-ended questions from the semi-structured interviewing guide. While not consistently used across all the interviews, these were generally used to explore, deepen and clarify understandings and meanings expressed by participants. More specifically, these questions focussed on the core conflicts within the event, precipitants, victim characteristics and involvements, the role of weaponry, the use of violence as opposed to other conflict resolution methods, the relationship between masculinity and violence, and the context of the violent encounter (see Appendix D). Furthermore, this approach allowed for the interview process to evolve from one interview to the next, with each acting as a 'pilot' for the next. In so doing, each individual interview therefore attempted to facilitate the disclosure of participants' narratives of the homicidal

encounter in as much detail as possible. By engaging in this form of interviewing, there is thus a transparent and reflexive acknowledgement of the importance of the mutually negotiated, interactional, and co-constructed nature of textual data that is generated under these conditions. Throughout the process, the researcher also made additional notes on the interview process that included personal reflections on the experience, potential analytical instances, and of course follow-up questions. At the point of terminating the interview, participants were generally asked whether they had any additional information to contribute, or had any further questions pertaining to the process. Once these had been addressed, they were all asked to reflect on the process of disclosure, to determine whether there were any immediate affective responses or reactions that the researcher needed to be aware of as an unintended consequence of the interview. The opportunity to engage with the resident social worker or psychologist was always provided, and participants were then thanked for their participation. Throughout the process, digital audio-recordings of the interviews (with the assistance of lapel microphones) were conducted for the purposes of analysis at a later stage. In addition, personal notations were made by the researcher of interesting features that would be of possible importance in the analysis process.

7.4. Post-Interview Processes

Digital audio-recordings of the interviews were downloaded onto a computer via a specific software programme, saved and stored in a password protected directory that was only accessible to the researcher. After each interview, the recordings were listened to and brief notes about the process and spontaneous interpretations were generated, as an augmentation to the notations that occurred within the interview. Thereafter, recordings were transcribed verbatim, using the minimal conventions for transcribing audio to written data. Transcriptions were then also saved and stored on a computer in a password protected directory that was only accessible to the researcher for later analysis.

8.   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The study was conducted within the parameters of basic ethical guidelines for research and adhered to the principles of autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Steere, 1984). Furthermore it was conducted within the ethical guidelines of the Health Professions Council

of South Africa (HPCSA) and the Health Professions Act of 1974 (alongside its associated annexures), with specific reference to informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Once content and methodological approval had been obtained from the University of South Africa, a full research proposal was submitted for evaluation to the National Department of Correctional Services' Research Directorate. Upon ethical approval, a contract was signed with the Department and the research study was allowed to proceed (Appendix A).

8.1.   Informed Consent

Once potential volunteers for participation within the study had been accessed, a subject information sheet (in English and Afrikaans) was provided to them (Appendix B), and the nature of the study was verbally explained in both languages. Questions of clarification were addressed, and potential participants were informed that the study would entail a frank account of the homicidal encounter in which they were involved, an audio-recording of this interview, and the use of direct quotations from the transcribed interview data. Given the captive nature of this population and therefore its vulnerable status in terms of perceived coercion associated with institutionalisation, potential volunteers were also notified that participation was completely voluntary. Finally, participants were informed that the research findings would be disseminated in the form of a research report and possibly published after approval from the Department of Correctional Services, and that research summaries would be available to them upon request.

8.2.   Participant Rights, Risks and Benefits

Potential participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, as well as their right to refuse to answer any questions. In addition, it was explained that the voluntary nature of the study involved no direct benefits (i.e. no *quid pro quo* incentivisation would be infused into the research), but also that there would be no foreseen risks associated with participation in the study. However, while no residual challenges were faced by the interviewees after the interviews, they were provided with access to the social workers and psychologists within the Correctional Services' facility for further debriefing if necessary. In previous research on homicide, there have been instances in which re-telling traumas were at times accompanied by post-disclosure acting out or a symbolic re-enactment of the trauma within the prison

setting (Houel, Sobota & Mercader, 2003), and therefore this contingency was a necessary ethical consideration.

8.3.   Anonymity, Confidentiality and Researcher Disclosures

Given the qualitative nature of the study, the limitations of both confidentiality and anonymity were explained to the potential participants. Not only would the anonymity of participants be compromised by the interview method of data collection, but in all likelihood, these participants would be known to each other and to certain members of the facility's personnel who had been involved in their accessing and transportation. Furthermore, confidentiality could also not be strictly maintained, given that certain direct quotations would be utilised within the final research report. However, potential participants were assured that the data would be sanitised and stripped of all identifying features, and that their names would at no point be made public. The original data and transcripts were only accessible to the researcher, were digitally stored on the researcher's computer in a locked office and password protected, and will be digitally archived by the researcher for five years after the study has been concluded.

With regard to researcher disclosures in the form of breaching confidentiality, this proved to be a slightly more difficult ethical dilemma to manage. In previous research studies focussing on violent social behaviours that were considered criminal (Vogelman, 1990), some participants advertently or inadvertently revealed information that implicated them in the enactment of additional crimes for which they had not been charged, arrested and/or convicted. In such instances, Vogelman (1990) noted that researchers did not have a legal obligation to disclose information of unconfirmed crimes, and a breach of confidentiality would compromise the process of eliciting data for this critical psychosocial priority. Therefore, he argued that the relationship of trust between researcher and participants should be maintained as far as is ethically possible, so as to ensure the integrity of this relationship as well as the integrity of future research in socially sensitive areas. However, the legislative, mandatory and ethical frameworks have certainly shifted since the above study, and while agreeing fully with Vogelman's (1990) sentiments, the researcher needed to accommodate for these shifts. Certainly, the fact that the Department of Correctional Services did not require participant identifiers from the researcher aided the process of

confidentiality. Furthermore, the participants were explicitly informed that the interviews were focussing on their homicidal encounter for which they were convicted and incarcerated, thereby limiting the possibility of inadvertent disclosures of related criminal activities on their part. Based on the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity as far as possible, and the utilitarian approach of acting in the interests of the public at large, when peripheral disclosures of potential criminal activities (e.g. assaults; thefts) were made by already incarcerated participants in the course of interviews, these were not explored further and were not disclosed to the Department of Correctional Services or any related arm of the criminal justice system.

Once the above ethical considerations were thoroughly explained to participants, interested volunteers were requested to individually sign separate informed consent forms for participation, audio-recording and for the use of direct quotations from the data in the research report and associated publications (Appendix C).

9.   ANALYSIS OF DATA:

9.1.   Depth Hermeneutics as a Meta-Analytic Framework

In line with the overall approach of critical hermeneutics, discourse analysis was employed to interpret the data from the transcriptions of the interviews. Thompson's (1990) *Depth Hermeneutics* meta-approach for interpreting the meanings attributed to symbolic constructions such as language was utilised as the primary framework in which the actual analysis of discourses was undertaken. As a meta-framework, *Depth Hermeneutics* focuses on the study and interpretation of the meanings conveyed by social actors through their symbolic constructions, and in particular, allows for a diverse number of analytical tools to be incorporated into a more comprehensive analytical process. More specifically, the *Depth Hermeneutics* framework consists of three levels of analyses, namely, providing the socio-historical context of discourse production, highlighting the social actors' interpretations and constructions of this context within their symbolic forms, and interpretation/re-interpretation of these symbolic forms by the researcher. These three levels of analysis constantly interact and influence each other. The social actor generates certain symbolic forms which are determined by both the socio-historical terrain, and more importantly, by his/her interpretation and construction of this terrain. These symbolic forms may themselves

then maintain or transform the very socio-historical context in which they find themselves, resulting in further interpretation, construction and generation of symbolic forms that are infused with meanings.

Thompson (1990) states that the first level of analysis needs to sketch the socio-historical terrain in which the symbolic forms are implanted. Fairclough (1992, p. 231) supports this approach and suggests that all analysts of discourse generally begin with *"some sense of the social practice that the discourse is embedded within"*. The analysis was thus located within a description of the socio-historical context in which fatal interpersonal violence is produced in South Africa, a reflection of the prison setting as context of textual and discursive production, and a reflexive account of the researcher/participant positionalities within these context of discursive and textual generation.

Once this level had been completed, the second level focussed on a specific analysis of the symbolic forms which not only reflect this terrain, but also reflect the social actors' understandings and constructions of this terrain. It is in this intermediate level of analysis that the socio-historical context and the social actors' interpretations thereof converge. Finally, the third level involves an interpretation of the social actors' meaningful symbolic constructions by the researcher. However, the object of interpretation is often an interpretation in itself. Thompson (1990, p. 275) argues that *"the analysts are offering an interpretation of an interpretation, they are re-interpreting a pre-interpreted domain [...]. The subjects who make up the subject-object domain (the intermediate level of analysis) are, like social analysts themselves, subjects capable of understanding, of reflecting, and of acting on the basis of this understanding and reflection"*. More importantly, the second and third levels of analysis in this framework are frequently combined in the analytical process itself and involved a reading and repeated re-reading of the transcribed interview data as part of the analytical process.

9.2. Examining Narrative Form

Given the narrative orientation of the interview process, elements of narrative analysis were then employed as the first analytical tool. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p. 2) note that narratives can either *"be the object of research or a means for*

the study of another question" – in this instance, they were a means for studying the nature, functions and effects of discursive networks emerging in accounts of homicide. While narrative form, content and structure generally consist of a specific series of events that have occurred in the past relative to the time of narration, they also involve a story that contains transformation or change, involve animate participants, and employ certain linguistic structures (Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985). While form, content and structure obviously intersect constantly in the process of meaning-making, this study initially focussed on narrative form. Here, using the work of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p. 33), narrative form refers to *"the structure of the plot, the sequencing of events, its relation to the time axis, its complexity and coherence, the feelings evoked by the story, the style of the narrative, the choice of metaphors or words […] and so forth"*. It is for all intents and purposes, the thematic meta-story (Boonzaier, 2001) that emerges (e.g. narratives of transformation, decline, progress, stability and continuity, erring and growth). Narratives were read and re-read and coded for meta-themes that characterised their forms. The importance of this analytical tool is that it allows for an examination of broad functions and effects of narratives within their contexts of generation, as narratives are interactional process between a narrator and a listener, interlocutor or audience that is either overt or implied. The process is one which is imbued with power, and therefore the narrative as a source of discursive material allows for an analysis of the effects and functions of subject positionality as well as self-presentation strategies on the part of the researcher and participants (Elliot, 2005; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Maher & Tetreault, 1994). Examining narrative form was thus conceived of as a useful analytic tool to understand processes within the interview space between the speaker and interlocutor. It therefore provided a frame for reflexively considering the interactions of power, subjectivity and positionality within the process of textual generation.

9.3.   Employing Critical Discourse Analysis

The second analytical tool employed was Fairclough's (1992) *discursive event* triad. This allowed for a focus on the *discoursal practice* evident within the narratives, and given the similarities with Parker' (1992) seven initial criteria for identifying discourses, these were focussed upon within the textual data. Thereafter, the *textual*

elements that helped to convey the discourses were examined, relying on a body of work that has been conducted within discursive psychology (see for example, Antaki, 1981, 1988; Fairclough, 1992; Giles & Robinson, 1990; van Dijk, 1997). Finally, the relationship between the discoursal practice, textual elements and *social practice* was explored. In exploring the political and ideological effects of discourses, again the similarities with Parker's (1992) three auxiliary criteria can be seen, and these were specifically utilised within the study. In reality however, this analytical process did not occur in a linear fashion. Because of the general length of transcriptions, coding of the data was first completed as a means of reducing unwieldy information into more discrete and focussed areas for actual analysis, as this process allowed for the jettisoning of any information that was not of direct relevance to the study. This essentially involved a filtering out of recurring themes and systematic networks of meanings from the transcripts, and the choice of themes and networks were based on repeated readings of the transcripts, the theoretical orientation of the researcher, as well as background reading on previous research findings (Levett, 1989; Potter & Wetherell, 1992). Parker's (1992) seven criteria were then applied to these categories to elicit the discoursal practice. In addition, the textual data were analysed to determine the rhetorical strategies that were deployed by the participants to convey these meanings. While lexical character was examined in relation to certain individual words, there was also a broader focus on sentences and sets of utterances. With reference to the latter, Duncan (1993, p. 66) notes that in the field of discourse analysis within psychology, there is *"a growing trend [...] to go beyond single sentences [and to] focus [...] on extended sequences of sentences and statements"*. Finally, the analysis focussed on the deconstructive process and examined the political, social and ideological effects of the discourses in relation to social practice. Here again, Fairclough's (1992) work and Parker's (1992) three auxiliary criteria share significant similarities. In applying these three criteria, the study drew on Derrida's (1976, 1978) work, and attempted to destabilise the apparently continuous nature of meanings within the corpus of texts. This was done through identifying oppositions within the texts as well as their relative positions of power and effects, subverting these oppositions through revealing how they are historically located and not given, thereby sabotaging the continuous and taken-for-granted nature of the *regimes of truth* that are conveyed by the discourses (see Macleod, 2002). Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) similarly point to several ways of seeking out the

functions and effects of discourses, through identifying binaries, the objects being spoken about, and the subjects who are speaking, being spoken about, and being spoken to. They argue that these point to important ways in which meanings are constructed as given and continuous, and that by critically analysing texts in this manner, we can not only uncover their ideological effects, but also allow for alternative or discontinuous meanings to emerge from parallel readings of the text. In so doing, the analysis focussed less on the surface content and more on the less easily manipulated discursive contours of the participants' narratives of homicidal encounters.

Through the use of this integrated approach, discursive networks within the narratives, their social embeddedness, as well as their functions and effects were highlighted and analysed. The findings of this process together with an elaborated discussion are detailed in the ***Report Chapter*** that follows.

CHAPTER SIX: REPORT

*[M]emoir and murder [are] not ranged simply in chronological sequence
– crime and then narrative. The text does not relate directly to the deed; a
whole web of relations is woven between the one and the other; they
support one another and carry one another in ever-changing relations.*

(Michel Foucault, 1975, *Tales of Murder*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

Unlike quantitative research in which the results and discussion sections are often separated, qualitative research combines these elements into a single report section. Potter and Wetherell (1992, p. 172) suggest that it is *"more than a presentation of the research findings, [and] it constitutes part of the confirmation and validation procedures itself. The goal is to present the analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher's interpretations"*. Thus, this chapter uncovers discourses within the narratives of participants and examines the ways in which they reflect, reproduce and contest existing power relations within the context of discoursal production. It explores the manner in which these discourses represent a synchronicity with broader discourses within society that in turn have certain ideological effects (i.e. the degree to which discourses are homogeneous and contribute to systemised processes of domination, subordination and subjugation), but also searches for instances in which these discourses act as an overt or implied critique of ideology (i.e. the extent to which discourses are heterogeneous and offer alternative readings of the social context).

However, important to note within this study is that narratives are never pure reflections of deeds, behaviours and events. Analysing the homicidal narrative can not yield a pure analysis of the homicidal event itself, as the narrative is always a site in which the personal investments of speakers and listeners, and the influence of the social context on our interpretations of the world, converge to give rise to a constructed version of the event. Foucault (1975, p. 204) argues that narratives allow for speakers and their actions to be elevated from *"the familiar to the remarkable, the everyday to the historical"*, and allows for a degree of immortality and/or infamy for the speaker. It draws on vocabularies of motive and justification, provides an opportunity for impression management and a negotiation of self-

presentation, draws on exculpatory[38] strategies, and utilises certain propitiatory and rehabilitatory lexical registers and tropes to convey a constructed version of the event. Nevertheless, while they provide us with partial and oblique understandings of the homicidal event, they can also provide us with insights into the operation of a range of referent discourses that support, reject or contest male violence within a particular social context. Analysing the narratives of participants therefore involved a focussing of the analytic lens onto emerging discourses and the manner in which they represent broader socio-historical features and fractures of contexts; but also onto the interlocutory interview context in which the narratives are co-constructed between the speaker, listener and audience as part of the operation of confessional technology (Hook, 2004b).

2.   ANALYSING THE CORPUS OF TEXTS:

Before presenting the actual analysis of the corpus of texts, some delineation of the actual process that was undertaken requires clarification in order to orientate the reader. Once the interviews had been conducted, they were initially listened to and the researcher augmented notes that had been generated during the interview process. This served as a mechanism for refining future interviews, but also allowed for the identification of interesting emerging content and potential themes within the interviews. Thereafter, interviews were transcribed verbatim over several months and yielded approximately 500 pages of transcribed text for the 30 interviews. Given the specific audio-technology that was being utilised, the quality of the interviews was generally good. During the transcription process, minimal transcription conventions were utilised so as not to interrupt the flow of narrative production and communication. This included the identification of the interviewer's speech as well as that of the participants as P1, P2, P3, and so forth, to sanitise the data and to remove overt identifiers. In addition, vernacular expressions, colloquial speech, slang and shifts between English and Afrikaans were all transcribed verbatim. In instances where audio-recordings could not be transcribed, the (???) symbol was used. Where there was doubt about the

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[38] Exculpatory strategies refer to forms of communication that prevent blame and guilt from being easily assigned to those who enact violence. It is used in a slightly different manner to the way in which Cavanagh, Dobash, Dobash and Lewis (2001) use the term, and is more closely associated with their understanding of *"excuses"*, Wood's (2004) concept of *"dissociation"*, and is essentially a *"neutralisation strategy"* that Hearn (1998) refers to.

accuracy of the transcription, the transcription was placed in parentheses followed by questions marks (word???). When utilising extracts from the transcriptions as illustrative exemplars within the analysis, additional conventions were also employed. These included the use of italicised words to highlight the researcher's emphasis, the use of square parentheses to illustrate omissions […], and the placing of additional joining or clarification words or phrases within square parentheses [word][39].

The generation of themes within which discourses were embedded involved a reading of the transcripts, an initial identification of potential thematic categories, and several re-readings of the transcripts to refine these categories. In so doing, there were instances where thematic categories were elaborated upon and extended, and at other points it involved a collapsing or conflation of themes. This elaboration and conflation is a necessary part of thematising large data sets, and invariably involves an ongoing process of refinement within discursive analyses. Potter and Wetherell (1992, p. 174) note that

> *on some occasions a discursive organisation which seemed clear-cut breaks down and leads the researcher back to coding, or even the 'raw' documents and transcripts. […] the process of writing helps clarify analytic issues […]. More generally, this reminds us that these stages are a conceptual scheme rather than a rigid temporal narrative. Discourse analysis involves fluid movement between the different stages, with coding, analysis, validation and writing each leading back to earlier phases and ultimately to the talk and writing that were the original point of departure.*

Important to note is that once thematic categories had been finalised after this process, it did not represent a definitive or conclusive analysis of the narratives, but rather one set of plausible analytic outcomes. By its very nature, the analytic process within discourse analysis is a socially constructed account itself, and is therefore not exhaustive nor *the* singular

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[39] See Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) on forms of transcription conventions that have been adapted for this study. Also, others such as Govender (2006), Durrheim and Mtose (2006) and Lau (2008) have applied aspects of such minimal transcription conventions within their qualitative studies in South Africa more recently.

interpretive outcome that could be generated. As Thompson (1990, p. 290) notes, "*the process of interpretation is necessarily risky, conflict laden, [and] open to dispute*".

With regard to the actual analytic process that was undertaken, Thompson's (1990) *Depth Hermeneutics* was employed as an over-arching meta-framework for analysis. The first level of analysis involves a sketching of the socio-historical terrain in which discourses are produced, generated, circulated and apprehended. This normally involves an overview of features of the social terrain such as the structural, institutional and historical conditions that allow for the production of certain discourses. The second level of analysis involves a more formal discursive analysis of the textual data. Here in particular, internal structure of the text and the manner in which it functions to convey certain meanings or interpretations of reality in an orderly fashion becomes central to the analysis (e.g. narrative analysis; conversational analysis; syntactic analysis). The third level of analysis revolves around the researcher's interpretation of the participants' already interpreted version of reality in relation to the context of discursive production and generation. At this level, it becomes possible to explore how social contexts constrain and determine what discourses can be reproduced and conveyed, but also how discourses can contest our taken-for-granted understandings of the social terrain (i.e. what orders of discourse are operant and how are they resisted). The text therefore becomes a vehicle for understanding how its own internal structure conveys meaning, but also to understand the nature of the social context in which the text is produced in the first place. Within the actual process of analysis, levels two and three occur simultaneously. In addition, these three levels constantly feedback into each other in a reflexive loop, thereby allowing for alternative understandings of socio-historical context, discourses and participant interpretations to emerge.

More specifically in relation to the analysis of this corpus of texts, it involved (1) a sketching of the socio-historical terrain in which discourses were produced; and (2) an analysis of the internal structure of the discourses that were produced within participant narratives as well as an interpretation of these discourses in relation to its social context. Within this phase of the analysis in particular, elements of narrative form were explored as a particular analytic tool for understanding discursive production within the interlocutory context (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), followed by a critical discourse analysis of the overall narrative content that drew on Fairclough's (1992) and Parker's (1992) work.

3. THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF DISCOURSE PRODUCTION:

3.1.   The Global Context

While much of the global context of discourse production surrounding male aggression, violence and homicide has been alluded to in *Chapter Two*, *Chapter Three* and *Chapter Four*, some additional illumination and summarisation of this context is perhaps necessary.

Firstly, the elasticity of the uneven system of global capital as evident in the current epoch of late industrial capitalism has generated increasing levels of wealth disparities within and across nation states. Unprecedented levels of inequality, poverty, and differences in human development indicators can be seen in the snapshot study of United Nations Member Countries (UNDP, 2007). Associated with these levels of inequality are a range of intersecting forms of power differentials based on economic vulnerabilities (e.g. imposed structural adjustment policies; fiscal discipline and debt associated with the Brettenwood Institutions) that furthermore form a nexus with referent manifestations of domination, subjugation and resistance. These of course include 'race', gender, religion, the integral mechanisms of structural violence implicated within contexts of systematic inequality, and the use of violence as a pervasive tool for social and interpersonal control, resistance and acts of terror within and across such uneven contexts. Central to the system of global capitalism is the shifting economic, military and ideological configurations across the globe in the past 20 years. The dominance of western, and in particular American, cultural forms, ideological positions, military might and economic supremacy (Mitchell & Schoeffel, 2003), has resulted in a global context that can be characterised as fundamentally unipolar and overwhelmingly unequal. Furthermore, this has also resulted in a shift away from ideological contestations and proxy wars that characterised the Cold War, to more overt forms of conflicts between nation states (Mamdani, 2004). Levels of conflict in the form of regional and global wars have increasingly become manifest (Zwi, Garfield & Loretti, 2002), with ideologies of militarism, masculinism, nationalism, racism and patriarchy intersecting with one another. The integral relationship between violence, weaponry and the market economy has also been well illustrated by Chomsky (Mitchell & Schoeffel, 2003) in his writings on the military industrial complex. Across the globe, violence as a form of social relating has become

commonplace, often manifesting as an endemic interpersonal, intergroup and international conflict resolution mechanism in a period of global crisis (Krug *et al.*, 2002).

A further feature of globalisation that extends beyond the market economy includes the rise in technological advancements which has also resulted in greater levels of atomisation, alienation and the production of cultural forms of hegemony through access to information technologies. The penetration of information and communication technologies has in part facilitated this greater level of cultural and ideological hegemony across the globe, especially as it pertains to the normalisation of violence. In this regard, such advancements have bolstered orders of moral discourses that either legitimise or delegitimise violent enactments.

However, most social theorists would balk at viewing the effects of globalisation solely in this manner. The globalisation of capital, culture and social relations has clearly also brought into sharp focus the levels of inequality, the possibilities of different cultural forms to co-exist, has given voice to marginal perspectives, and in fact created counter-points of resistance to this prevailing hegemony as well.

Secondly, productive and sexual relations have also seen significant shifts away from male dominated forms of labour to an increasing number of women entering the world of work. This together with the gains of the feminist movement has resulted in greater fluidity in the nature of gendered productive relations, often altering the balance of power that has so pivotally centred on the economic fundamentals that characterised gendered forms of domination. In addition, sexual relations have also undergone shifts and challenges to hegemonic understandings of sexual relations have been shaped by gay and lesbian relations and activism, and changes in kinship relations away from the classic nuclear family model (Connell, 2000). What this has allowed for is the opening up of possibilities to reconfigure femininities, masculinities and sexualities in a manner that uncouples it from the normativity of violence.

The above structural, ideological and cultural contexts have on the one hand therefore raised the prospects for challenges to hegemonic gendered relations and their associations to violence through for example, de-masculinisation effects. However, on the other hand, it has also resulted in an increasing entrenchment of normative

gendered relations and their associations with violence, as well as the reactive re-masculinisation of social formations, especially when perceived to be under threat from external sources (e.g. the re-masculinisation projects underway in the United States of America post 9/11; the re-masculinisation in the former Soviet Union states since reintegration into the global market economy). This clearly illustrates not only the potential for changing gendered relations and the normativity of violence associated with hegemonic masculinities, but also the recrudescence of hegemonic gendered relations and masculinities. While the possibilities certainly do exist for actively resisting militarism and militarization, and uncoupling violence from gender (and masculinities in particular) (see for example, Cock, 2001; Krug *et al.*, 2002), the global balance of power does not unfortunately favour such resistances at present. Despite organic dissenting social movements emerging from time-to-time across the world to contest this dominant worldview, there needs to be an attentiveness to their political limitations (see ***Chapter Three*** and ***Chapter Four*** on this). Rather it appears that the global context is destined to remain a contested terrain in which change and stability will co-exist, will be negotiated, and will constantly battle each other for positions of dominance. The global context of discourse production is one that is fundamentally contradictory in its relationship to violence, through delegitimising certain forms of violence and reifying others. To paraphrase Rostand (1962), *"if you kill a man, you are a murderer, if you kill a million you are a conqueror, and if you kill everyone, you are a God"*. This sentiment aptly conveys the paradoxical nature of orders of moral discourses that govern our understandings of violence, but this ambiguity also suggests reasons for its apparent recalcitrance and mutability even in the face of endeavours to reduce it.

3.2.   The Context of South Africa and the Gauteng Province

With regard to the South African and provincial context of discourse production, this has already been stated in some detail in ***Chapter One***.

One of the most enduring features of this context is that of a history of racialised domination, social contestation and resistance to subjugation, civil conflict, and violence as a pivotal tool for managing social relations. While there have been many efforts directed towards reducing this historical impact on contemporary social relations (e.g. legislation away from corporal punishment and the death penalty; social

campaigns against violence), South African society remains a context with excessively high rates of criminality and violence (see *Chapter One*). However, given the levels of public dissatisfaction with the state's apparent impotence at managing such levels of crime and violence, recent writings (see for example, Altbeker, 2007) have captured the public imagination and argued for more conservative measures to address this psychosocial problem. Altbeker (2007) has suggested that a historical argument can no longer be hailed as entirely valid to account for the high rates of violent crime. Furthermore, he argues that an appropriate response should include harsher sentences, policing and criminal justice interventions. Even though high levels of crime seem unstoppable at present, this view inadvertently generates a coterminous possibility of an increasing spiral or trajectory of violence to address and suppress criminal violence.

As further elements that support the above-mentioned historical continuity of violence, the ideology of militarism and processes of militarization have also been endemic to South Africa and continue into the present day in increased military expenditure and regional interventionism on a military scale (Cock, 2001; Cock & Nathan, 1989). Violence, conflict, militarism, militarization and securitisation have been central to the development of the social formation and continue to pervade South African society today (Vale, 2003), with the relationship between masculinity and weaponry being very well articulated as a normative feature of subjectivity (Cock, 2001; Swart, 2001; Xaba, 2001). While gender gains in favour of a feminist and profeminist agenda have certainly been made in South Africa alongside changing productive and sexual relations, aspects of traditionalism, patriarchy, violence against women and re-masculinisation also co-exist in this context. Even though projects to redefine masculinity have been embarked upon (Morrell, 2001; Shefer *et al.*, 2007), they have not become sufficiently diffused into the public domain and public consciousness to represent a generalised alternative way of configuring masculinity and its normative association with violence (as evidenced by the failure of social movements to capture the ideological high ground in this regard and to roll back the hegemony and normativity of masculine violence).

This particular historical and contemporary context of violence also intersects with the politics and economics of the transition in South African society, giving rise to new

permutations and possibilities for violent enactments. In post-authoritarian, post-apartheid South African society there has been a breakdown in authority structures, a consequent breakdown in civil obedience and disciplinarisation, and a lack of faith in the social system's ability to ensure social justice in many instances. Indicators of anomie are of course evident in the high levels of criminality that appear unbreachable by various arms of the criminal justice system (see *Chapter One*). In addition, indicators of population well-being reveal significant disparities in access to capital and other social resources. In 2002, the total poverty rate in South Africa was 48.5%, with the Gauteng Province revealing a rate of 20% of the population below the poverty line. Black South Africans were most significantly represented within the cohort who fell below the poverty line. Between 1995 and 2001, the Gini-Coefficient for South Africa had increased from below 0.6 to below 0.65. During the same period the Gini-Coefficient for the Gauteng Province increased from approximately 0.525 to 0.625, thus indicating that levels of inequality had not only increased in South Africa, but also substantially within the Gauteng Province. Poverty and inequality indices were also directly related to gender, the rural-urban divide, and 'race' differentials, with women, blacks and urban dwellers being most at risk for effects such as increasing unemployment (UNDP, 2003). South Africa's political transition has also resulted in a reintegration into the regional and global economies, and levels of disparity and inequality have in part been driven by the burgeoning of oligarchies and multi-national 'corpocracies' who have re-invested within the economy. Thus, the social formation is characterised by an increasing level of poverty and inequity, but simultaneously by a culture of individual entrepreneurship, a frenzied economic feeding for self-enrichment, corporate competition and aspirational values based on the potential for economic and social mobility (Bond, 2000; Desai, 2002; Terre Blanche, 2006). Under these conditions, aspirations frequently outstrip the possibilities for their attainment within large sections of the population. Given the economic and social conditions referred to above, it could be argued that the moral economy has ground to a halt in many ways, with a sense of social justice being absent from the lives of many South Africans. The historical proximity of violence and therefore its availability as a default mechanism of social relating is therefore not surprising as a response to these conditions (Thompson, 1971). However, while the underlying power dynamics of the structural violence of South African monopoly capitalism are similar to those underpinning homicidal violence, these discourses are

ordered differently in favour of the former and antagonistically towards the latter. Here too, the contradictory and ambiguous manner in which the social formation responds to violence may in part be responsible for its ossification within contemporary South Africa. As Tawney (1926, p. 184) comments on the tension between morality and capitalism,

> *To argue, in the manner of Machiavelli, that there is one rule for business and another for private life, is to open a door to an orgy of unscrupulousness before which the mind recoils, […] and to expose the idea of morality itself […] to an almost intolerable strain.*

3.3.   The Prison Context

While the broader global, South African and provincial contexts provide sweeping brushstrokes that facilitate and constrain particular discursive productions pertaining to men and violence, the prison setting is much more immediate and corporeal in this facilitation and constraint. The immediacy of control over subjects' bodies creates simultaneous conditions of capitulation and resistance within prescribed and circumscribed sets of discursive possibilities.

Studies conducted on prisons in South Africa have revealed high levels of overcrowding, poor prisoner health that includes high rates of AIDS-related deaths (Goyer, 2001; Oppler, 1998), and inappropriate staff prisoner ratios to manage penal institutions. While such overcrowding has in part been a function of the breakdown of the parole system, inadequate diversion programmes, and a reluctance by the state to utilise large scale amnesties, harsher sentencing within the criminal justice system has also resulted in lower rates of clearance from prison settings (Steinberg, 2005). Statistics obtained from the Department of Correctional Services in Gauteng in 2005 indicated that the facility at which the research was conducted had extended it capacity for accommodating prisoners to between 127%-230% (Department of Correctional Services, 2005). Under these conditions, the rehabilitative functions of prisons are severely impacted upon, and prisoners frequently articulate a sense of boredom, tedium and monotony about the highly surveilled, regulated, patrolled but ineffective rehabilitative penal environment. In addition, they display a sense of hopelessness and a foreshortened sense of future. Not only does this constitute a *de*

facto negation of the residuum principle[40], but the environment may also act as an incubator for ongoing criminal activity in the forms of an informal underground economy, ongoing prison gang activity and influence, and therefore increased levels of recidivism (Dissel, 1996; Steinberg, 2004, 2005).

Given the institutional surveillance and regulation of prisoners' bodies through the fundamentals of panopticism (Foucault, 1977), as well as the above-mentioned characteristics of South African prisons by and large, it would not be an overstatement to suggest that prison is a 'hostile' environment at both the level of its functioning as an institution as well as at the level of prisoner relations. Such conditions result in de-masculinisation, compliance and capitulation to authority on the one hand, but also in forms of re-masculinisation through the actual use of violence, and through discursive performances of violence to resist authority and to ensure safety and status in potentially perilous conditions. It is therefore a context in which there is a tenuous relationship and an ongoing negotiation between the docile subject and the resistant subject – the latter often enacting and drawing on violence as a means of resistance in many instances. While this vacillation occurs in the form of actual behavioural repertoires, it was certainly also apparent in the discursive networks and tropes that were deployed by participants within the interview process in this study.

4.   NARRATIVE FORM IN THE INTERLOCUTORY CONTEXT:

Given the above characterisation of the socio-historical context of discourse production and its influence on the authorial nature of the participants' emergent discursive networks, the following section provides a more formal interpretation of their narratives and examines their specific effects and functions within the interlocutory context. While recognising that discourses operate fluidly and simultaneously within the immediate interlocutory context as well as in the broader social context, these two contexts of analysis have been separated for the purposes of convenience within the study. In examining the overall narrative form and its effects and functions (Gülich & Quasthoff, 1985; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), it is important to first reflexively account for researcher positionality, participant

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[40] The residuum principle essentially argues that even when incarcerated, prisoners are entitled to basic human and constitutional rights (Steinberg, 2005).

positionality, and the nature of the interview context as a space in which *"confessional technologies"* and power relations are enacted (Hook, 2004b).

4.1.   Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

Using Maher and Tetreault's (1994) definitions of reflexivity and positionality cited earlier in **Chapter Five**, reflexivity essentially refers to the process by which the researcher becomes cognisant of the impact and influence that his/her contributions have on the research process and the outcomes of such research at an analytical and applied level. This is particularly important in research conducted from within a social constructionist frame, as all research is also then understood as a socially constructed product. The researcher's contributions therefore have a direct bearing on the nature and outcomes of the research process itself. Alongside the construct of reflexivity, the concept of positionality also requires interrogation within reflexive research. It refers primarily to the manner in which the researcher locates himself/herself within shifting networks of social relationships in relation to others (such as research participants) that are imbued with varying degrees of status, power and access to resources. Being reflexive about positionality is critical if we are to understand the unfolding nature of research, the peculiarities of research data, and the findings that can be concluded from them.

My own position within the research study was motivated by a deep dissatisfaction at the vilification of the poor and the marginalised, who so frequently have been at the receiving end of taken-for-granted associations with violence and therefore social blame as it is attributed to male homicidal violence in South Africa. I was interested in understanding how male homicidal violence reflects a social fabric that essentially acts as an incubator for violence. My ideological position was rooted in a materialist understanding of the nexus between violence, poverty, masculinity and other forms of social differentiation. While I had initially drawn on such a materialist perspective, I had not significantly engaged with much of the theorising on masculinities and gender that has emerged from a post-structuralist frame. However, this changed during the research process and I increasingly started to draw together these elements within an over-arching theoretical understanding of male homicidal violence, that is cognisant of both the impact of material conditions and social structures as well as the concept of multiple subjectivities in making sense of narratives on male homicidal violence.

To this end I had made a conscious effort to be more open to the narratives of participants, despite having read and heard about the spectacular nature of violence that was sometimes enacted within instances of homicide. My initial entry into the research process was therefore characterised by greater openness to participants' tales of murder. In addition, I had tried to minimise my role as a clinician in the process and to even conceal it from the prospective participants, as I was concerned about the impact of this positioning on the nature and outcome of the research process. In attempting to avoid the inevitable confessional that so characterises relationships between psychologists and those with whom they interact professionally as clients or patients, I positioned myself as a researcher with an interest in understanding male homicidal violence and also attempted to distance myself from my own preconceived notions of male homicidal violence as frequently being gratuitous in nature.

However, tensions soon arose around this initial positioning. Prison personnel often divulged to participants that I was in fact a psychologist and in many instances this fact became common sense among participants. The effect was to alter my positioning in relation to these participants. I was constructed as the expert, they were constructed as patients, and the interview was characterised by confessional processes quite frequently. Not only was this determined by the participants, but I increasingly felt this slippage in my own positioning as I took on the mantle of expert. Within a very short period of time, I was associated with the prison personnel, I merged quite smoothly into the institutional culture and hierarchy, and came to represent and embody disciplinary power as epitomised by socio-medical science practitioners within prison environments. The interview process was therefore undoubtedly imbued with differential access to power, with participants often entering the interview in a one-down position.

While I attempted to negotiate these two positions and always to remain cognisant of my point of departure, this was extremely difficult. The slippage referred to above clearly had an impact on the nature of the interview processes and the data that emerged as well. In several instances, my positioning as a critical psychologist created a genuine concern for the participants. I viewed them as victims, but I also recognised the manner in which I was drawing on socially deterministic discourses to understand their actions. In other instances I found that through this positioning and the fact that I

was a male researcher, that I felt that they may have been victims of circumstance and that this could so easily have been any male's fate (including my own). Here, my reliance on discourses of risk convergence and environmental determinism also came to the fore. More importantly though, it represented a form of disciplinarisation that I too was being subjected to – their narratives acted as a mechanism to discipline me as a male and to generate a sense of self-regulation by myself as a 'potentially violent male'. While I, as researcher, was fulfilling a disciplinary role, they were thus also able to invert this process to some extent. Furthermore, my positioning as a clinician generated responses by me that were more consistent with clinical encounters. At times I was horrified by the details of the murders, but simultaneously mesmerised by the spectacle. I experienced a sense of being drawn into a world previously not known to me, of being regaled by participants' tales, and had to be cautious of being seduced by their narratives. There was no doubt a voyeuristic component to this process, as I attempted to understand what drove these individuals to commit such acts. This positioning generated a desire to elicit fundamental truths about the participants, and consequently also raised my concerns about the validity of their accounts and whether the proverbial 'wool was not perhaps being pulled over my eyes'. In addition, my own reliance on essentialist discourses of male homicidal violence underpinned my sense of horror at some of the accounts, as I was constantly trying to understand what would drive someone to these ends. Throughout the research process, I vacillated between these various subject positions, but the tensions that emerged remained and I attempted to negotiate between them and to manage them as reflexively as possible.

While I was able to reflexively engage with these varying positions that I occupied more easily after the data collection had been completed, there were several fundamental effects during the data collection process. Firstly, the power differential was generally always in my favour at the commencement of the interview. I controlled the pace and the time of the interview, the questions that were being asked, and the content that was being covered. Despite the participant information sheet and the questions being broad and open-ended with the stated purpose being to allow participants to speak freely about their experiences, this power differential was clear. Participants in turn responded in several ways. At times, prospective participants simply resisted the process by refusing to participate, while at other times the interview appeared to be used as a means to renegotiate this power differential and to

put across views to me and to an invisible audience, which had not previously been articulated and heard. Participants saw it as a means to give voice to 'their side of the story'. This renegotiation also occurred in instances in which participants sometimes made reference to me and suggested that within the interview process they were less powerful, but that in others circumstances 'on the street', that I would be less powerful. In several instances I also had the impression that participants were participating to use the process as currency during their stay in prison, while others appeared to participate out of a feeling of being compelled to within the prison setting. In all of these instances, there was a clear distinction between 'me' and 'them', and this no doubt had an impact on the nature of the narrative forms that emerged within the interviews.

4.2. Participants' Positionality

While the above section reflects on my own positioning, there were also clear instances in which participant positionality within the interlocutory context could be delineated. In locating themselves within the relational network of the interview process, participants fundamentally positioned themselves in relation to three primary markers. The first was as incarcerated men in relation to other 'free' men; the second was in relation to my assigned role as expert in some way or another; and the third was in relation to the content matter being discussed within the interview, namely homicidal violence. These positions were all characterised to some degree with uneven relations of power within the interview context, but participants did not always accept this power differential between themselves and the researcher. Rather, narratives were variably infused with an acceptance of these power relations, a re-definition and renegotiation of these power relations, and an inversion of these power relations within the interview process as participants provided accounts of their homicidal encounters to me as a researcher and to any other potential audience to whom they may vicariously have access to through the research process.

At times narratives were characterised by either an ostensible indifference to the interview process, and even a sense of despair around their incarceration. Participants sometimes acceded to participating in the study as a means of 'killing time' and varying the routine and boredom of prison life. At other points they positioned themselves as rehabilitated and normal men, suggesting that the interview was an

opportunity for them talk about their crime, to set the record straight about the events surrounding the homicide, to try and understand themselves and their actions better, and as a way of accessing help from a mental health professional. Exculpatory, justificatory, propitiatory and rehabilitatory lexical registers were frequently deployed as a means to offset the inherent power relations that disadvantaged them in the context of pervasive moral discourses, injunctions and censure directed against homicidal violence. These were similar to what Scott (1990) refers to as public versus private transcripts. Public transcripts generally refer to public performances that are designed to placate those in positions of power, and represent a masking of what happens in private transcripts away from the public eye. He suggests that public transcripts serve the purpose of ostensibly capitulating to the regime of power that is operational within any context, but in fact also serves to subvert this power regime at some level.

In other instances, power was negotiated differently within the interview context. Participants sometimes positioned themselves as hypermasculine and through their narratives recounted their violence in a positive manner and as performance within the interview context. Here there was even a tendency to inflate and to brag about the homicidal event, thereby challenging directly the moral discourses that are utilised to vilify men who commit acts of murder. The point here was clearly to offset the taken-for-granted relation of power within the interlocutory context and to generate a sense of infamy around their actions.

Finally, in relation to me and their perceived positioning of me as a researcher who was also a male psychologist, several interesting relational positions also emerged among the men to address this power imbalance. As a researcher from a university, and a mental health professional, they made inferences about my level of education and my access to knowledge resources. Here, participants often positioned themselves as helping me to understand violence and constructed the interview process as a way for them to 'school' me around issues of homicidal violence. In addition, given that the participants and researcher were all male and that we were directly addressing the issue of male homicidal violence, they sometimes attempted a generate an identificatory collusion with me that placed us on an equal footing when discussing matters such as the normatively of men's need for power, their use of violence, men's

drinking habits, and normative gender relations in the context of intimate relationships with women. These attempts to comply with, renegotiate and unbalance the power relations within the interview context were evident in the narratives that will be discussed later.

4.3.   Confessional Technology and Power in the Interview Context

What was apparent from the above reflections on researcher and participants' positionalities was the centrality of what Hook (2004b) refers to as *"confessional technologies",* that were operant within the interviews[41]. Hook suggests that within psychology in particular, confessional technologies represent an intimate form of surveillance that is based within disciplinary forms of power, and that ultimately allow for subjects to reveal the possibilities for self-regulation and an introspective ability to know themselves. However, in speaking to an expert the subject not only gets to know themselves, but their understanding of themselves is also regulated by an *Other*. It is through this interaction with the *Other* that the subject enters into a process of persuasion that attempts to convince the *Other* that they are sufficiently insightful, self-regulated and socially well-adjusted. In turn, the expert provides a 'clean bill of health' if the client responds in a manner that is considered socially well-adjusted. While this power relation is often insidious, it is not always complied with. Subjects within the study constantly attempted to unhinge the dynamic at the fulcrum of power. While there were certainly points of acquiescence among participants, there were also distinct points of disruption, and both of these constantly played themselves out in the interview. While this was not a clinical interview by far, it certainly resembled the confessional technologies that are so frequently associated with mental health professionals' dealings with patient populations. However the confessional was not simply a unidirectional relationship. It was also a transaction in many instances. Through the confessional, participants appropriated the discourses of confession, but also had an opportunity to give voice to their side of the story. This was not only for my benefit, but also for the omnipresent listeners that Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) suggest are always in attendance in the narration of accounts.

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[41] See Foucault (1975, 1977) on this as well.

4.4.   Emerging Narratives

Narrative analysis certainly in part allows for an examination of the ways in which subject construction, positionality, masculine negotiation, and power are worked through within the interlocutory context and also come to reflect the broader social context of narrative production. As mentioned earlier, narratives are essentially a connected succession of events that are told in some sequential manner by a narrator to an interlocutor, listener or audience. However, the assumptions within this study follow those of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) who argue that narratives are never absolute, but are always relative and pluralistic. While narratives sometimes imitate life, they are not equated with it, but are rather constructions and co-constructions of events that occur between the narrator and the listener and reflect aspects of subjectivity, social phenomena and the social world in which the narration is produced. As Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p. 8) posit, narratives should not be taken

> *at face value, as complete and accurate representations of reality. […] stories are usually constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, […] emphasis on, and interpretation of these "remembered facts". […] They contain "narrative truth", which may be closely linked, loosely similar, or far removed from "historical truth". […] When a particular story is recorded and transcribed, we get a "text" that is like a single, frozen, still photograph of the dynamically changing identity [of the narrator] […] which is […] constantly in flux.*

The two primary dimensions across which narratives may be analysed include content and form. While content refers to the explicit substance of the story and is dealt with later in this chapter, form refers to plot and overall style of the story, and is the immediate focus of attention in this section.

In the context of narratives of violence, specific functions and effects can also be determined from an analysis of form. However, narrative form, functions and effects are never singular or uniform in nature and often include hesitations and

contradictions within and between them. These tensions reflect the contradictory nature and response of the social milieu to issues of power and male violence and are therefore encapsulated within various narrative forms.

At the level of social functions, narratives provide an opportunity for impression management and positive self-presentation in a prevailing context in which male homicide is often viewed negatively against the backdrop of pervasive moral discourses that delegitimise it (Boonzaier, 2001; Hearn, 1998; Lau, 2008). In addition, Polk (1994) notes that most men who are asked why they committed a murder in the immediate aftermath of the encounter often respond with a sense of derealisation in which they can not account for there actions. Narratives therefore provide an opportunity to construct a version of events, to generate personal meanings associated with the homicidal encounter, to rationalise actions, and to do so in a manner that allows for a maintenance of the integrity of subjectivity. While a significant amount of research has shown the use of neutralisation strategies in the form of dissociative and justificatory meta-stories emerging from men who have committed acts of violence against their intimate partners (Boonzaier, 2001; Hearn, 1998; Lau, 2008; Wood, 2004), these were not the only registers and associated rhetorical strategies that were evident in the narrative form of participants within this study. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) highlight three types of narrative form that are frequently present within life stories and these include narratives of stability/continuity, decline, and transformation/growth. Each of these narrative forms were present in some way or another within the data and often included registers that were justificatory, exculpatory, propitiatory and incorporated aspects of regret, remorse, atonement and rehabilitation that allowed male participants to construct and position themselves in relation to the interviewer and the enactment of violence in ways that were positive. However, narrative forms were not always as salubrious in nature, and also conveyed noxiously normalising and even bombastically reified registers within more stable accounts of homicidal violence. Importantly at a meta-level, the functions of narratives therefore always involved a performance (Butler, 1999) and the use of these performances for currency purposes in relation to others who fulfilled the role of audience. Virtually in all instances, this currency pertained to neutralising negative or hostile attributions from an external audience, maintaining positive self-presentation, facilitating impression management, elevating participants' personal status, and

fundamentally offsetting the power relation of the interview process (Hearn, 1998; Willig, 2001).

At the level of effects, narrative forms were sometimes more acquiescent and sometimes more resistant to power relations within the interview context, and thus sometimes reproduced and at other points challenged these relations of power between the interviewer and the participants. At an ideological level, narratives most frequently buttressed and reinforced normative positions around male violence. Through essentialist, deterministic and fatalistic views of male violence as well as *post facto* rejections and renunciations of male violence, participants reproduced dominant orders of moral discourses that legitimise the normativity of male violence in general, but also specifically rejected male homicide as an illegitimate form of social relating, violence and conflict resolution. However, the elevation of violence to a desirable and 'successful' form of masculine performance in some instances also provided an implicit disruption and critique of dominant orders of moral discourses that govern the legitimacy and illegitimacy of masculine violence. Varying narrative forms thus revealed the contradictory manner in which society responds to male violence – on the one hand embracing it at certain structural, institutional and socio-cultural levels and on the hand denouncing it when it occurs in the pernicious manifestation of homicide.

4.4.1. Stability and Continuity: Murder as an Extension of Everyday Life

One of the most common but more complex narratives emerging from participants' talk included a form that can best be characterised as one of stability and continuity. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) refer to this as a steady narrative in which the events described are not constructed by the speaker as out of the ordinary, and where there is a normalcy within the account. In these particular instances within the data set, the trajectory of the plot surrounding the homicidal encounter was frequently constructed by participants as a logical extension of a pre-existing pattern or history of criminality and/or violence. The primary lexical registers deployed included that of continuity and normalisation (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), but also extended to a reification of violence as an instrumental tool for personal gain of some sort. Justifications (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004;

Hearn, 1998; Lau, 2008; Wood, 2004) and rationalisations (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990) were thus the most significant rhetorical strategies utilised within these narratives. Responsibility within the homicidal encounter was therefore accepted by participants, but blame was attributed to an external source (Hearn, 1998). While participants made some concessions about their involvement in the killing of another person, justifications and rationalisations formed the primary basis for constructing meaning and qualifying their level of involvement in the homicidal encounter. However, there were distinct intertextual shifts in these narratives that revealed an evolution of the story to include minor exculpatory and expiatory registers. These served to buttress and reinforce their initial accounts through fairly sophisticated argumentation, and were premised upon rhetorical strategies that included excuses (Dobash, Dobash & Lewis, 2001) and claims of dissociation (Wood, 2004), a denial and loss of control within the act, appeals to accidental killings, distancing strategies (such as disclaiming and hedging) to reduce the moral judgements potentially directed against them, references to their own victimisation within the post-homicidal context, and minor attempts to articulate morality lessons that had been acquired through their experiences (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990).

The following extended extracts serve as exemplars of the primary narrative form referred to above.

> Okay, I'm like a guy that depends or makes a living on crime, like it's my lifestyle […]. But then we just decided to just take a drive to Rosebank and you know I'm actually into hijackings, so we just decided to go hijack a car that morning. […] It's about business. […] Right, the cop himself, […] wasn't on duty on the moment, he just pulled up, hit the brakes next to us, got out of the car, pointed my friend that was sitting in the hijacked motor vehicle, pointed him with a firearm. Okay, but that stage he told my co-accused to get out of the car and he was very like you know, paranoid and shaking, he didn't want to get out of the car and so on. […] Okay my friend got a bit shaky and he tried to get out of the car to run. And that's the time when he pointed my friend to shoot at him and he told him to stand or else he'll shoot. And he just ran and he shot one warning shot and that is when I took out the firearm and shot him.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

So we robbed his boss, you see but when we robbed his boss he ran away with the money, you see it was quite a lot of money […]. We'd like get a base of operations there selling drugs and having stolen stuff, parking stolen vehicles. We would use that building for that. So I took them to this building […]. So when we got in there I just pulled out the firearm, I had them […]. What I actually wanted was my money, my share of the money, because look these guys had more than R800 000.00 cash, money and diamonds that I had to rob, you understand what I mean? I just wanted the money, that is what I wanted because look I am married and I have got kids. These are young boys they don't have responsibilities like me. […] Right, I just wanted them to feel pain, you know, like pain like with a tube, you know how you take a tube? […] Take a tube you let him lie down and you pull it over his face. When he faints, you throw water down his nose, he wakes up, just carry on until he confesses something, you know. I pinched him with the pliers, all the different places, you know, just torture them, giving them pain […]. So I thought to myself, no man these guys, they're too far gone. You understand what I mean? I am going to have to kill them. […] I was angry with them and I wanted my money. I mean that was a lot of money […]. And to do the crime I had to go and hijack the car and hide the car away and use our hijacked car, I still had to make number plates for that car, you see. And use my car, my guns. I had to rob the guy. I had to hijack the victim again, you understand? […] No they had really done me in, they really double-crossed me […]. You couldn't use a gun there. So I used a knife […] I stabbed them.

(Participant 5)

Ja, I was a member of the Majimbos. Actually I can say that in the society of Westbury I am a well known guy, but people only know me for the bad I did. […] and we wait for long, for victims to come down there. Whether young, whether old, it doesn't matter. […] Sit ons nou en kom die mense, jy sien. Okay, vra maar 'n cigarette van hom. Maar ek weet vir myself wat is it, wat wil ek hulle maak, verstaan jy? Ek weet ek wil hom roof. Want ek en my bras het klaar beplan, […]. [...] en ek gaan daai mannetjie stop, verstaan jy? Sorry my outjie, het jy nie 'n gwaai vir my nie? Maar nou die mens [...] hy wil net uitkom, daar wil hy net uitkom. [...] so sê ek nee gee my 'n gwaai, het jy nie 'n light nie? Jy sien as ek sê ek het nie 'n light nie, so draai hy om. Hy sê, my bra wat soek jy, jy het nou vir 'n gwaai gevra nou vra jy vir 'n light. Jy sien, net daai tyd, ek reach die gun ek vang hom, [...] ek het hom net geskiet daar, jy sien? [...] Jy sien daai man, hy wil met my baklei daai man. Ek sê vir myself, okay die man is langer as wat ek is. Toe sê ek vir myself, sê ek het die gun. Hy gaan nou nie terug slat vir my nie. […] Ek slat net die eerste skoot. Ba.

(Participant 16)

Ja, me I was in, I was released from prison, that will be June 2002 on the 18th. Ja as I, soos ek in die lokasie ingekom ne, ek het mos vriende gehad, verstaan jy? [...] Uh, die bekende Majimbos gang. [...] Dis nou karre roof en die verstaan jy? [...] Ons gaan toe Funvalley toe jy sien. [...] Soos ek by die pool staan, hier duik iemand in die pool in verstaan jy. Die tsotsi, hy spat my nat, hy klim uit jy sien. Ek wys hom, hey my buddy, ek het my foon by my, jy sien. Ek het my foon by my en jy spat my nat. Hy praat met daai man, hy klim uit, hy doen dieselfde ding weer verstaan jy. Nou ek wys hom, soos hy nog in die water is, ek vertel hom hey jy, jy moet kyk wat maak jy, jy sien. Moet nie 'n mens vir 'n poes vat nie. [...] Ja, hy klim uit. Ek wys die ouens haai, laat ons uitstaan jy sien, laat ons loop. Weet jy wat hy maak, hy klim uit die pool uit. Twee right skote, goep, goep! How my buddy, wat maak my buddy? […] Ja, jy sien. Hy embarrass my voor die hele kinders, en hiers die hele kinders, jy sien. Okay daars nie 'n probleem nie, kar toe, ek gaan haal die gun. Ek gaan haal die vuurwapen jy sien, kom terug en nou wat sê jy, ek bridge die gun, bridge die gun, nou wat sê jy. Hy jy, skiet my, skiet my, skiet my! Damn, ek skiet hom. Ba. […] Jy ken by die lokasie, jy ken hoe lyk dit by die lokasie, is spinnery by die lokasie, verstaan jy. Jy is soos, jy spin, jy het mos 'n reputation, verstaan jy my broer. Ja, verstaan jy, jy's nou 'n gang member al die goete. Jy moet lewe according to daai reputation van daai, sien jy?

(Participant 25)

In all of the above illustrations the core elements of the narrative form are clearly reflected, namely, the **normality of violence** alongside **justifications and rationalisations for the use of violence**. References to making *"a living on crime"*, crime as *"business"*, *"selling drugs and having stolen stuff"*, being a *"gang member"* in the *"Majimbos gang"*, *"karre roof"*, *"ek wil hom roof […] ek en my bras het klaar beplan"*, *"I am a well known guy […] for the bad I did"*, and being previously *"released from prison"*, all indicated a prior involvement in criminal activities. In addition, there was also an implicit suggestion that this included aspects of confrontation and violence in several instances, as many of the activities referred to above are in fact coupled with violence or act as gateway activities into violence in many South African communities. The violent homicidal encounter was therefore constructed as a normal and logical extension of the social lives of participants, with participants not attempting to distinguish it as an extraordinary event.

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Certainly one of the effects of this construction was to implicitly challenge the dominant moral discourses that tend to censure severe forms of interpersonal violence such as homicide within the immediate and broader discoursal context. Participants were unequivocally stating that violence remains a legitimate means of social relating within certain social contexts and under specific social conditions. While the language of pre-meditation was not always apparent, motive was implicit in almost all instances. This suggests that even if the homicide had not been planned itself, that violence had been either overtly or covertly considered as a potential outcome of a confrontation between the participants and others. In addition to this normalisation of violence and criminality in which the encounter was not necessarily viewed outside of the norm of participants' social activities, justifications were also present as a means to rationalise the violent act itself. Here, rational qualifiers that included references to exacting justice, even within the context of criminal activities (e.g. *"I wanted my money, […] they really double-crossed me"*), enacting self-defence (e.g. *"Hy wil met my baklei"*), the protection and defence of others (e.g. *"he pointed my friend to shoot at him […] and that is when I took out the firearm and shot him"*), and the protection of masculine honour (e.g. *"Damn, ek skiet hom. […] jy het mos 'n reputation, […]. Jy moet lewe according to daai reputation"*), were all present. In particular, they ensured a degree of deflection of blame for the encounter, and allowed for a certain measure of positive self-presentation to be maintained within the interlocutory context.

While the normalisation of violence was certainly paramount within these narratives, and was predominantly accompanied by justifications and rationalisations, there were also instances in which this was extended to a ***reification of violence***. Registers of excess that were sometimes difficult to believe at face value, accompanied by little or no remorse, and even a brazen form of bravado, were also articulated by the participants. Certainly, it appeared that much of these unsolicited disclosures served functions within the interlocutory context, and were utilised as an effective strategy with shock value to convey the legitimacy of violence as an expression of 'successful'

masculinity to the researcher and the invisible narrational audience. The following extracts illustrate this phenomenon.

[…] I stabbed him, let's see, I think about 37 holes. […] the one who survived, I stabbed him 27 holes, but he survived, I don't know how. […] do you want a detailed description? Well you know we take a pliers and you use them on a guy's penis, you know just the tip there where the urine comes out and sperm comes out. […] Actually pliers can break fingernails, toenails, breaking the fingers, break the nose, probably the ears, stuff like that. Understand me? […] You know, work on the nerves.

(Participant 5)

Ja you see, the time when we got arrested nê, there were other bodies found. […] Ja, but now these other bodies, my co-accused didn't know about it. […] Ja, both of them. It was a male and a female. You see both of them were found there. But now they said the case was temporary withdrawn 'cause I don't know, they had to send away what, for dental what something see. […] Ja, they didn't know who the people were you see. […] Ja, and uh, dynamite nê, I told you nothing about the dynamite and the firearms that were found in this house you see. But according to the newspapers there was a child and a mother found in the ceiling. Actually, according to the newspaper, all and all there were 14 bodies that they got there you see. But uh, there was only three. Two was only skeletons, one was a full body, you see. The other two were skeletons. […] Most of my other murders are unknown murders […].

(Participant 12)

Die enetjie klap hom, daai enetjie skop hom, die enetjie steek hom so 'n klein gaatjie in die kop in jy weet. [...] So sê ons vir ons self, ons steek nie hom om dood te steek, net om hom krag uit te haal. Steek hom, steek hom, steek hom, so hy gaan sit nou in die hoekie in. […]. Hy is defenceless nou, sien. Toe gaan ons uit, soos ons uitgaan, hy's besig om te soebat nog. […] Okay, raait ouens elkeen het die paal, ons tel een, twee, drie, val hy uit. Toe val die hele rotse en alles op hom. [...] ek weet nou nie hoe het daai gebeur nie, een hele stuk van hom been het afgebreek, seker soos hy die stene wil gekeer het. Want kyk, ek praat van groot rotse.

(Participant 13)

In all of the above extracts, violent encounters were described with a degree of excess and spectacle through references such as *"stabbed him 27 holes"*, *"dynamite and the firearms that were found in this house", "all and all there*

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were 14 bodies that they got there", "Two was only skeletons, one was a full body", "daai enetjie skop hom, die enetjie steek hom so 'n klein gaatjie in die kop in jy weet", and *"een hele stuk van hom been het afgebreek".* Despite the almost unbelievable and spectacular nature of the disclosures by participants, the impact of these registers served as a mechanism to unhinge and unbalance the interview as a confessional space, through generating queries about the accurateness and truthfulness of these disclosures, but also through the sheer shock and voyeuristic value thereof. In these instances, participants often positioned themselves as the educator who would school the researcher about the nature of violence in many South African communities. Furthermore, this shift in the balance of power within the interview context was also partly achieved through participants' performances of a form of hypermasculinity that was coupled to violence. This is particularly important in the context of Dissel (1996) and Steinberg's (2004, 2005) work on the utilisation of violence within hostile settings such as prisons, where hypermasculinity is linked to violence and therefore to status as well. Graphic descriptions that were almost hyperbolic revealed participants' more overt contestations and challenges to hegemonic discourses of morality that govern the legitimacy or illegitimacy of homicidal violence with South African society.

More specifically, the ***justificatory and rationalising rhetorical strategies*** referred to above are reflected in the following excerpts.

> I only have two words in my mind, do or die, because if it wasn't him […], I was actually awaiting my friend's death. Because his first reaction when my friend got out, […] he couldn't do this to my friend and that is where the conflict came. I couldn't lose a friend, I had to do it, I had to do it. 'Cause I was just in that situation. 'Cause if I never fired, he could have acted a shot upon him.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

> Ek het gedink, die ou hy is lank agter my, is either hy of dis ek, want die ou, eendag hy gaan my kry, dan is ek off guard, dan skiet hy vir my. Dit gebeur so in ons se lokasie in. As jy 'n squealery het met iemand, dit eindig nie net daar nie, dit raak groot. Op die ou einde, hy kry 'n vuurwapen, ek kry 'n vuurwapen dan daag mekaar af. Daag mekaar af, dis either hy skiet vir my, of ek skiet vir hom.
>
> *(Participant 4)*

Nou sien jy, jy kry twee soorte mense as jy roof, as ek kan dit so stel. Jy kry daai soorte, jy vang hom, hy sê kyk my bra, vat alles. Moenie my seer maak nie, vat ek alles, dis klaar. Dan kry jy daai soorte wat homself sê ek word nie geroof nie. Daai eene wat homself sê hy sal terug baklei vir hom ding, daai was die case daai dag, verstaan jy? Daai ou, ek het gevoel hy gaan terug baklei want ek het met hom gesoek.

(Participant 16)

Participants provided clear rationalisations as to why their actions were justifiable in the context of the defence of self and the defence of others, and incorporated registers in which there was an apparent compulsion to act violently to avoid further harm. In each example, there was a sense of delimited choices available to them, and the commission of the homicide was therefore constructed as a justifiable rationalisation in that context. This is reflected in *"I couldn't lose a friend, I had to do it, I had to do it", "dis either hy skiet vir my, of ek skiet vir hom",* and *"Daai ou, ek het gevoel hy gaan terug baklei want ek het met hom gesoek"*. While the first two extracts reveal a defence of others and self, the third highlights the confrontational aspect of many crimes and inverts the perpetrator-victim dyad in the service of claiming self-defence as well. In all of these instances, there is thus some deflection of blame, given that the choice to commit an act of violence appears to have been 'forced upon' participants. In relying on these binaries, participants were in fact also attempting to persuade the narrational audience of the correctness of their construction through pitting their construction of the outcome of the event against an even potentially more untenable outcome. The primary effect was to generate a sense of positive self-presentation around their involvement within a homicide, and to minimise the pejorative responses likely to be generated by the narrational audience around the commission of homicides.

Given that the normalisations, reifications and justifications referred to above emerged most prominently within these narratives, participants made very few unqualified concessions about their culpability within the encounter. However, there were intertextual shifts within the narratives that included ***minor exculpatory lexical registers and rhetorical strategies*** of dissociation, denial

and loss of control, appeals to accidental killings, distancing strategies, and claims of victimisation due to impropriety by authorities.

The following represent some instances in which the homicidal behaviour was attributed to **substance use, abuse and intoxication**, thereby allowing for participants to excuse their violent actions. Even though less prominent within the narratives, these excuses provided further supporting arguments for participants about their limited responsibility (i.e. that they accepted blame, but not responsibility). The effect was once again to minimise judgemental responses from their respective audiences, and to bolster their positive self-presentation in the face of prevailing moral censure. While the first two extracts were clear representations of such instances (e.g. *"ek was hoog"*; *"you don't think clearly once you got drugs in your body"*), the final extract also included hedging as a rhetorical strategy to display a sense of responsibility and culpability, but then to undermine this by relying on an external attribution to excuse the violent behaviour (e.g. *"I won't blame the drugs knowing that what I am doing is wrong. But at the end of the day the mind just snaps, you, you basically go into a different world"*). Hedging in this instance allows for a toning down of the impact of a statement and to mitigate forceful judgements that are likely to be made if the statement is made in an unmodified manner (Lakoff, 1972).

Nie eintlik dronk nie, ek was hoog. Ek het Ecstacy gebruik. Ja, en CAT gesnuf.

(Participant 4)

You know when you on that substance, this rocks, it's like a cocaine substance mos with some chemicals and you know you don't think clearly once you got drugs in your body. And I was heavy on drugs, when I was outside, I was heavy on it […].

(Participant 1)

Uh, okay first of all, it start with, it really starts with, started with me having drugs in my system. Drugs in the system, okay I won't blame the drugs knowing that what I am doing is wrong. But at the end of the day the mind just snaps, you, you basically go into a different world.

(Participant 16)

However, participants also used the rhetorical strategy of ***appealing to accidents*** as a further mechanism of excusing their actions and absolving themselves of responsibility. Here in particular, appeals to accidents did not merely minimise responsibility, but erased it completely as the participants' agency was entirely evacuated from the encounter through suggestions that they had no control over the homicidal event.

> But I don't know, things went wrong, I don't know where. […] I grew up in a family where firearms was a day-to-day basis thing you know. And for me to use a firearm, its I mean, I'm well trained in it, so that morning it was just quick reaction of you know, my hand just went and that's it. Sort of like an accident, so I don't know, don't know.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

> Okay, ons loop nie met die mes in nie, maar daai dag, ek weet nie man, dit was net so uitgesit om te gebeur, toe het hy so klein appel mes in hom sak in. [...] Okay, ek het omgegee vir hom. […] Kyk dit het net gebeur within an instant.
>
> *(Participant 17)*

> Gun goes off, it just goes off, person is laying on the ground, you are in shock, in that state of shock, obviously you run away.
>
> *(Participant 16)*

In the above illustrations, there were not only direct references to an *"accident"*, but the minimisation of participant agency was also obvious (e.g. *"Gun goes off, it just goes off"*; *"dit het net gebeur"*; *"my hand just went and that's it. Sort of like an accident"*).

Distancing rhetorical strategies were also deployed by participants as a further mechanism to neutralise any judgemental moral injunctions against homicide perpetrators. Here in particular, denials and hedges emerged quite strongly as rhetorical strategies through which to distance the participants' actions from more extreme and sensationalised forms of violence that are frequently heavily censured.

Even after that day it still bothers me, I'm not that type of person. It's about business. I don't know, I won't blame my friends, I got my own life wrong.

(Participant 1)

Ek is nie soos die psychopaths and serial killers, dis mense wat kry 'n rush as hulle daai ding doen.

(Participant 17)

Because I won't hurt you or kill you for nothing. I am not a psycho, you understand what I mean?

(Participant 5)

Denials and disclaimers were most commonly used for distancing participants from what they constructed as more extreme or pathological forms of murder through references to *"I'm not that type of person", "Ek is nie soos die psychopaths en serial killers",* and *"I am not a psycho"*. In the first instance, there was an attempt to differentiate between the violent and the non-violent masculine self that Hearn (1998) refers to, while the latter exemplars again utilise the denial of psychopathology as a means to suggest that the murder was rational and justified, thereby reducing any judgement directed against them. Also, *Participant 1* once again utilised the hedge in mitigation of his actions during the homicide by suggesting on the one hand that it was all about *"business"*, but simultaneously toning down this statement with the qualifier that *"I won't blame my friends, I got my own life wrong"*. These strategies are employed as a means to minimise judgement, but also to evoke a degree of understanding and even sympathy from audiences, thus promoting positive self-presentation once more.

Furthermore, participants even went so far as to claim a position of victimhood within these narratives, utilising rhetorical strategies such as ***condemning the condemner*** to position themselves in this manner. The following extracts reflect how several participants utilised the rhetorical strategy of condemning the condemner (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990) as a means of defence or mitigation.

Well, like I said I knew this cop. Okay, this was a corrupt official that approached us that morning because we used to make deals. […] Usually he catches me with cars, I just give him a certain amount of money. There he goes, there we go. That is how we deal. […] So I made a case at ICD, I had quarrels with the investigating officer because he was promising my co-accused money, and things, you'll get a better sentence and all that. So, there's no evidence on me on this case actually, my co-accused went and gave a confession on everything and that's about it, ja. […] I plead not guilty on this whole case, because first of all, it was my ID, no-one could have pointed at me on my ID, but during my trial the judge assumed […]. Ja, but a lot of evidence of mine were never brought in front of the court, anything, I don't know. They just went on the co-accused's statement, that's all. That's it.

(Participant 1)

I'm gonna make a retrial now. That's the way they sentenced me you see, because of a gun nè, the one at Funvalley, the gun didn't correspond with the bullet that came out of the deceased you understand. […] they arrested my younger cousin you see, the very same day, you see. He was arrested with the gun and for the murder. […] Uitwysing kan nie vervang word nie, en die getuie ok, hulle was uitdruklik gevra […]. Maar ek staan 'n baie goeie kans, maar nou wat ek gaan maak ek wil net uitvind by hom advokaat, jy sien. Die ding wat ek wil hê, my jonger cousin, hy moet 'n affidavit maak. Jy sien, so as hy affidavit maak, hy stem die saak. Daai man was nie daar, ek het geskiet, as hulle mos terugaan na die hele facts van die saak, verstaan jy.

(Participant 25)

Participants somehow suggested that they were the victims of a flawed criminal justice system and that they were in fact unfairly judged. References to a *"corrupt official", "promising my co-accused money", "evidence of mine were never brought in front of the court", "the gun didn't correspond with the bullet that came out of the deceased",* and *"my younger cousin […] was arrested with the gun and for the murder",* were all exemplars of inverting processes of moral judgement to reduce the extent of potentially negative evaluations directed towards them. In both of the above extracts, the participants, despite noting their own involvement within the homicidal encounter, continued to suggest that they had not been given a fair trial in some way or another, and that ineptitude on the part of investigation teams or improper conduct by members of the criminal justice system had resulted in

their incarceration. While this did not erase their involvement in the homicide, the strategy of condemning the condemner served as a mitigating communicative strategy to highlight their unfair victimisation, the infringement of their rights, and therefore underpins attempts to create a more sympathetic response to them amongst audience members within the narrational context (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990).

Finally, participants also utilised ***expiatory registers*** of regret to suggest that they had experienced a lapse in moral judgement during the homicidal encounter, but that they had subsequently come to a realisation of this lapse and corrected it. References to being *"sorry at the end of the day"*, *"realising where you went wrong"*, and *"God […], he'll see to everything else"* reflected the morality lessons that participants were attempting to convey.

> I just wanna say up till today I'm sorry for the whole thing I did, I mean they ask me in court to show remorse. I just couldn't take the stand you know, because I just felt, maybe by that time I still had that in me to say, hey you still doing crime, you still a gang member, so don't go and say sorry man. You sit, but I am sorry at the end of the day you know, I feel bad for this whole thing I did. But I just don't know where my life turned around, you know, where my life took a turn, I don't know. But all I can say is you know, God will create something for us all, and he'll see to everything else.

> *(Participant 1)*

> And finally, doing things on your own and you realise that at the end of everything murder has occurred, everything has been done and then you land up in a place like this and start realising where you really went wrong.

> *(Participant 16)*

However, this level of moral correction was not homogeneous, but was rather contested. The following extracts reveal that there was in fact no sense of remorse or regret displayed and articulated by some participants, once again suggesting the normalisation of violence in the lives of participants.

> Ek het maar net vir myself gesê, haai hy's dood daai vark. [...] Ja ek het goed gevoel in daai sense.

> *(Participant 4)*

> I won't say that I am sorry for what I done, I am just sorry I got caught. […] As I told you, I am not sorry for what I did.

<div align="right">(Participant 5)</div>

In contrast, the above two extracts directly challenge the notion of regret and remorse, with one participant suggesting that *"ek het goed gevoel"*, and another suggesting that *"I am just sorry I got caught. […] As I told you, I am not sorry for what I did"*. In both instances, this again served to contest the pervasive moral discourses that censure male homicidal violence, indicating that participants were resisting such a moral yardstick.

4.4.2. Decline: Murder as a Negative Tipping Point

The second most common narrative form to emerge from participants' talk can be characterised as a narrative of decline, in which the homicidal encounter was constructed as a crisis point within participants' lives, that had been unexpected, and that had materialised in the context of an acute altercation with another person. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) note that this is generally a regressive narrative that includes references to elements of deterioration within the person's life circumstances. The homicidal encounter clearly manifested in three distinct narrative phases, namely a pre-event phase, an event phase, and a post-event phase (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998). For several participants, the homicide thus represented a sudden failure in judgment, a momentary lapse, and a negative or declining spiral that ultimately resulted in their incarceration, a lack of freedom, and a disruption to past and future plans within their lives. The lexical register that was most common in these narratives was the crisis tipping point, and relied on rhetorical strategies that included references to a denial and loss of control (Lau, 2008), dissociations (Wood, 2004), and excuses (Dobash, Dobash & Lewis, 2001). Rhetorical strategies such as an appeal to accidents and disclaimers were also utilised to minimise the culpability of the participants (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990). Unlike the previously discussed narrative form in which justifications served as the primary rationalising strategy to defend participants' actions, these narratives primarily deployed exculpatory registers. Blame was thus accepted by most participants, but these registers allowed for

some deflection of responsibility (Hearn, 1998). However, justifications did present themselves as they did in the previous narrative form, but they were far less prominent than the exculpatory registers. In addition, the intertextual shifts reflected a plot development within these accounts that also incorporated registers of regret, remorse, and references to the foreclosure of their future aspirations because of their involvement within the homicidal encounter (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). As in the previous narrative form discussed, participants' stories again contained concessions about their involvement within the homicidal encounter, but these concessions were qualified by the exculpatory nature of their rationalisations. The distinction between the two narrative forms discussed thus far clearly indicates a level of inversion in the primary and secondary use of exculpatory versus justificatory registers. While the previous narrative form was more justificatory in nature, the second was much more exculpatory.

The following extended extracts reveal the above-mentioned narrative form.

> As ek dit weer so kan stel. Ek was nie rerig oor haar gewees nie. […] En uh, as ek dit so kan stel, sy het net tiepe mind games gespeel. Today she is a   good person, she pretends okay I do still love you. Tomorrow she change. That was still confusing. And on the other hand she used to throw me with that words. No you don't want to look for a job whatsoever. And that stuff, I am just bottling them up, swallow, swallow everyday. So at that time I guess everything was too much, it was too much for myself. Then I just explode. […]En ons het woorde na mekaar gesling daaroor, en ek het haar daai oomblik gedreig en gesê, nee ek gaan jou slaan. Okay alright en sy het my gedreig ook, sy het 'n bierbottel wat langs haar op die tafel gestaan het. Sy sê sy gaan my met daai bierbottel slaan en steek. En sonder om na te dink het ek die vuurwapen uitgetrek en haar geskiet. […] Nee, al wat ek wil sê is eintlik dat ek het my les geleer. Vuurwapen is 'n baie gevaarlike ding en ek sal lank dink dat mense daar buite wat vuurwapens het, hulle moet nie die selle doen as wat ek gedoen het. Dis nie 'n goeie ding nie. En die plek hier waar ek is, is nie 'n goeie plek nie. [...] jy kry kos en kleure maar stil jy het nie jou vryheid. Jy kan nie doen wat jy wil waneer jy wil nie. Jy doen dit opdragtig.

> *(Participant 2)*

Okay ek het nie intention gehad om te sê ek gaan die mense seermaak of sien. Dan rook ons nou. […] Ek rook, rook, ek los maar. Klaar gerook het ek net gesê, ouens okay ek gaan loop. Nou wat ek wil loop, die magazine van die gun is myne jy sien. Ek het gesê ouens julle sal 'n magazine kry, okay hulle het gegaan met daai want hulle het eintlik die gun gesoek. Toe wat ek die gun wil vat om die magazine uit te haal nou, ek ken dit lyk seker die ouens het van dit gepraat nê, ons gaan hom nie die magazine gee nie. Ek het die gun geruk van hom af. Okay die twee hulle het stil gesit, maar die ene. Lyk daai laaitjie voor hy gekom het, hy't gerook maar hyt nie pille gerook, lyk hyt gafief gerook jy sien. Hom oê was paranoid, wit en groot jy sien. Daai kind het gesqueal vir die gun. Ek sê, okay ek het hom geskiet maar dit was nie my fout nie. Kyk toe ek die gun neergesit het, sit ek die safety toe trek ek dit op. Toe ons squeal vir die gun, die safety by sy hand, hyt dit seker afgesit by accident of whatever. Maar die gun was klaar gebridge jy sien. Okay ek het getrek, trek totdat hy die gun los, toe gaan my vinger op die trigger, toe skiet dit. Skiet ek hom deur die gesig jy sien. […] Okay ek in my hart, ek ken ek het die trigger getrek jy sien. Ek regret dit nou nog. […] As jy vêr in die lyn afloop en jy kyk dan was dit nie worth it nie. […] As jy stil sit jy dink, miskien hulle het nie daai op hulle gedagte gehad nie. Miskien hulle wil maar net, hulle was mal vir die gun. Of hulle wil afgeshow het. Maar ek kan net sê wat gebeur het, het gebeur, ek kan nie tyd terug draai nie jy sien. Kan maar net voorentoe kyk vir 'n beter tyd.

(Participant 3)

Maar toe ons nou lekker gekletter raak toe sê hy vir my dat my dogter weer daar was die dag. Toe vra ek hom nou wat het sy hier gemaak, toe sê hy vir my jy ken nie eintlik hierdie dogter van jou nie. Sy is eintlik 'n bietjie los maar hy dit meer in 'n grapperig tiepe van 'n manier gesit. En toe hy nou sien ek hou nie van die manier waarop hy dit stel nie toe dis asof hy my 'n bietjie gekoggel het, en toe verloor ek my humeur, toe verwurg ek hom. [...] En toe jong, toe snap ek, ek het hom aan die nek gegryp en ek het hom uit daai stoel uitgetel en probeer sy nek aftrek. [...] Ek het 'n goeie werk gehad, huis, 'n kar daar was eintlik niks wat ek gekort het nie. Okay dit was 'n stupid ding wat ek gedoen het.

(Participant 14)

Hy het vir my in die face geslaan, maar um, jy weet ek ken, jy het die gedagte in jou kop, hierdie ou is 'n recce. Hy het dit aan jou gedoen en nou slaan hy jou agter die kop. Toe draai ek om, toe vat ek die vuurwapen toe draai ek die vuurwapen en toe skiet ek hom en hy het nie geval nie, toe skiet ek weer en toe tot hy gelê het. Sien dit was op daai stadium, ek het nie, ek weet nie, ek is seker nie die enigste persoon wat nie hou daarvan as 'n persoon agter my kop klap nie. Dit is, jy slaan blank. Op daai stadium dis 'n kwesie van (snaps fingers) dis net 'n, dis 'n split second. Toe ek sien

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wat klaar gebeur het, toe sien ek hiers nou moeilikheid. Toe weet ek nie wat om te doen nie. [...] Jy kan maar op my rekords gaan kyk, my rekords is skoon. Dis nou net hierdie fout wat ek gemaak het. […] En ek is eintlik spyt die ou is dood, want ek meen, as jy vat hoe kosbaar 'n ou se lewe eintlik is, huh. Dis baie kosbaar, daar is nie iets wat dit kan replace nie, nie geld nie, niks nie. [...] Maar nou vyf jaar down the line sit ek in die tronk. […] Nee, ek sou tien teen een a bestuurder nou gewees het.

(Participant 18)

From the above, references to an ***emotionally escalated interpersonal altercation*** are fairly clear in *"ons het woorde na mekaar gesling"*, *"Ek het die gun geruk van hom af. [...] Daai kind het gesqueal vir die gun"*, *"hy my 'n bietjie gekoggel het, en toe verloor ek my humeur"*, and *"Hy het vir my in die face geslaan"*. Here in particular, the encounter was narrated in a manner to suggest that premeditation was absent, and that motive arose spontaneously. Unlike the previous narrative form discussed, the homicidal event was constructed as a tipping point outcome of an extraordinary set of circumstances, rather than a continuous and stable reflection of a pre-existing history of criminality and/or violence. Alongside these references were exculpatory registers in the form of allusions to a ***denial and loss of control as a tipping point*** (e.g. *"Then I just explode"*; *"En toe jong, toe snap ek"*; *"jy slaan blank. [...] dis net 'n, dis 'n split second"*) as well as ***appeals to accidents*** (e.g. *"ek het nie intention gehad om te sê ek gaan die mense seermaak"*; *"Dis nou net hierdie fout wat ek gemaak het"*). In addition, *Participant 14* and *Participant 18* both utilised euphemisms within their accounts in an attempt to minimise the seriousness of the encounter and to soften the register of the narrative by referring to the event as a mistake (*"fout"*) and a loss of a sense of humour (*"en toe verloor ek my humeur"*). In all of the above, there appeared to be an initial acceptance of blame that had been attributed to them, but responsibility was clearly deflected and avoided. By utilising these exculpatory registers and rhetorical strategies to rationalise their violent actions, participants were also attempting to generate a degree of credibility and positive self-presentation in relation to their narrational audience. To further support this construction of self within the homicidal encounter, the narratives also included an ***expiatory register*** in which participants performed a degree of self-reflection into the moral

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appropriateness of their actions. Direct references to *"ek het my les geleer"*, *"Ek regret dit nou nog"*, *"dit was 'n stupid ding wat ek gedoen het"*, and *"ek is eintlik spyt die ou is dood"*, all point to specific registers of regret and remorse. Morality tales were utilised as a rhetorical strategy in some instances with *Participant 2* ending his narrative with a lesson for an interlocutory audience who may apprehend his story. This not only served as a means of 'educating' others, but in the process also allowed for the positioning of the self on the moral high ground through the disclosure of the encounter. Finally, all the narratives also included **registers of life deterioration** with references to loss of freedom and the compromising of past and potential future plans. The rhetorical strategy deployed here was the temporal comparison in which past, current and future life circumstances were either overtly or inadvertently compared. In some instances, participants referred to their present circumstances as a negative or deteriorated comparison to a more idealised past that had been lost because of the homicide and subsequent incarceration (e.g. *"En die plek hier waar ek is, is nie 'n goeie plek nie. [...] jy kry kos en kleure maar stil jy het nie jou vryheid"*; *"Ek het 'n goeie werk gehad, huis, 'n kar daar was eintlik niks wat ek gekort het nie"*), while in others instances, they compared their current circumstances implicitly with a different life trajectory that may have come to fruition or hopefully would come to fruition in the future (e.g. *"Kan maar net voorentoe kyk vir 'n beter tyd"*; *"Nee, ek sou tien teen een a bestuurder nou gewees het"*). The fundamental social function of the narrative form was not challenge the prevailing moral discourses directed towards the condemnation of homicide perpetrators, but rather to renegotiate moral credibility and to re-position participants on an equivalent moral playing field through the exculpatory and expiatory registers. The degree to which the confessional space was being directly challenged was therefore significantly less, but these qualifiers assisted in constructing the participants as reasonable and normal men who simply had an accidental and momentary lapse in judgement.

More specifically, the **exculpatory registers** relied primarily on strategies of denials and loss of control, minimisation, and appeals to accidents in the following examples. Boonzaier and de la Rey (2004) refer to minimisation as

an attempt to deflect the seriousness of the behaviour engaged in, thereby reducing the moral judgements that may directed against one. In the first extract below, the reference to *"blank geslaan"*, *"gesnap"*, *"split seconds"*, and *"alles het net so vinnig vir my gebeur"*, there is not only an allusion to a denial and loss of control, but also to an impulsivity and dissociation from the event. The second illustration also suggests a loss of control (e.g. *"snap"*), but also makes direct reference to it (e.g. *"verloor beheer oor jouself"*). However, in the third instance, the appeal to accidents comes to the fore in the extract (e.g. *"I see my case as, as more like an accident"*), but this was also accompanied by a minimisation strategies in the form of denial (e.g. *"I decided to myself this is not murder, I'm not gonna plead guilty to this"*), and a disclaimer (e.g. *"I caused his death, that I agree upon, yes but I didn't murder this person"*). Here too, while concessions about involvement were made by participants, the responsibility for the act was somehow either evacuated or renegotiated though the use of these exculpatory registers, once again ensuring some degree of moral credibility and positive self-presentation.

> […] en seker dis net daai klap agter die kop en ek het net gesnap. Ek het net blank gegaan. [...] Ek het blank geslaan op daai dag. [...] En ek kan nie onthou wat hy het gesê nie, maar hy het net iets gesê en toe, toe voel ek hy, toe slaan hy my. [...] En toe dis net split seconds gewees. […] Jy weet dis net, ek wou nie die ou roof nie, dis net alles het so vinnig vir my gebeur.

> *(Participant 18)*

> En toe jong, toe snap ek, ek het hom aan die nek gegryp en ek het hom uit daai stoel uitgetel en probeer sy nek aftrek. […] Ja, hyt geval ek meen ek het hom, toe ek by myself bietjie kom, toe sien ek nee wag laat ek hom neergooi maar, toe is dit klaar te laat, ek het hom te lank gehou. […] Ja jy weet, 'n mens kan dit nie beskryf nie. Dis vir my moeilik om the beskryf. Ek dink uh, 'n ou verloor beheer oor jouself […].

> *(Participant 14)*

> I see my case as, as more like an accident. […] I decided to myself this is not murder, I'm not gonna plead guilty to this, I'm gonna plead not guilty. Because I did not murder this guy. Because of what I've done this person died, but I didn't murder this person. I caused his death, that I agree upon, yes but I didn't murder this person.

> *(Participant 24)*

However, **other exculpatory registers** also emerged within the narratives and included references to the use of substances and the states of intoxication that many men found themselves in at the time of the homicide, as well as the implication of being socialised into a life of violence. While some of these were more proximal to the homicidal event, others were more distal. The first two excerpts on the implication of alcohol in decision-making and the consequent compromising of participants' agency, are reflected in *"as ek nugter was sou ek miskien anderste opgetree"*, and *"ek was 'n alkolis. […] toe die sneller getrek is weet ek nie. Daai stukkie is vir my duister"*. The third extract also makes reference to the essentially violent nature of men as compared to women, and supports the naturalisation of gender differences that Butler (1990) critiques (e.g. *"Men are stronger, they are, I think they got harder feelings"; "vroumense is meer saggeaard as mans uh, dis vanselfsprekend"*). Taken-for-granted notions of masculine violence and female passivity as a binary were relied upon here to reinforce the regimes of truth that govern hegemonic gender relations. However, the final excerpt reveals what Cody and McLaughlin (1990) refer to as the sad tale, in which participants reflect upon historical or distal events that have brought them to the point of enacting certain behaviours. Here, references to a troubled past involving violence being perpetrated against the participant was used as a means to further deflect responsibility within the encounter (e.g. *"hy het my gemolest"; "dis hoe jy opgebring is jy sien"; "ek het niemand gehad nie, ek het gefend vir myself jy sien"*).

> Toe het ons bietjie gedrink, gekuier. Dis maar nou almal my mense, meeste ouens drink maar met my. Ek meen ons is swaar drinkers. […] Ja ek sal sê drank het 'n rol gespeel daar, as ek nugter was sou ek miskien anderste opgetree.
>
> *(Participant 14)*

> Ek was 'n hele rukkie sonder werk, as ek werk gehad het, het ek dit basies verloor deur my gedrinkery, ek was 'n alkolis. Ek het gedrink vir die eerste span. […] Um, maar soos ek kan sien, toe die sneller getrek is weet ek nie. Daai stukkie is vir my duister.
>
> *(Participant 24)*

Because maybe they're [men] stronger, they're wearing the pants, they're in charge. And if things doesn't go well they take the law into their own hands, that is what I would think. […] die vroumense is meer saggeaard as mans uh, dis vanselfsprekend […]. Men are stronger, they are, I think they got harder feelings, they don't worry as much as women.

(Participant 24)

Okay, die boytjie hy het my gemolest, dan is ek nog jonk. Voor my pa uit die tronk kom. Hyt my gemolest, hyt my geslaan, hy maak met jou wang so op die grond sit. Dan klap hy dit. En jy sal nie opkom tot hy sê jy moet opkom nie, jy sien. Nou bra al daai, dit het gemaak dat ek goeters doen wat ek nooit moet doen nie. […] Ouens wat in die location bly wat ek ken, het my familie seergemaak jy sien. […] ons het vir [hom] gesteek. Nadat alles begin bra, dis hoe jy opgebring is jy sien. Vir my, ek kan sê, dit het daar begin want ek het niks gehad nie, ek het nie 'n Pa gehad nie net 'n ma gehad. So basically ek het niemand gehad nie, ek het gefend vir myself jy sien.

(Participant 3)

To further strengthen their positioning as normal, reasonable men, the participants also often relied on logical proofs to articulate **registers of concern for others and their law-abiding nature**. Polk (1994) notes that this is not uncommon for many men involved in homicides and is also a distancing technique to ensure that their actions and their identities are not constructed by others as pathological, criminal or depraved. The following reflect this positioning in participants' accounts of the post-homicidal actions that they took. In the first and third extracts, the men recounted instances such as *"moet net wag vir die SAP om op te daag. En dit het nie lank gevat nie"*, and *"het ek die vrou gesê, okay gaan skakel die polisie, sê vir hulle ek is hier en hulle moet vir my kom optel"*. In the second extract, the participant indicated that *"ek het gebel, eerste die polisie, na die polisie bel ek die ambulance"*. The intention certainly appeared to be directed towards indicating an internalised sense of right and wrong, being law-abiding, and ultimately also concerned for the well-being of another human-being. In general, this component of the narratives appeared to utilise proofs of their actions to foster even further the construction and positioning of participants as normal, and thereby avoided the judgements of criminality or pathology.

Ek het geweet nou's ek in die moeilikheid. Nou's ek in die moeilikheid. Uh, wat presies ek gedink het seker weet ek nie, ek het net geweet ek is in die moeilikheid, ek moet net wag vir die SAP om op te daag. En dit het nie lank gevat nie, toes hulle daar.

(Participant 24)

En ek het gehardloop. […] om te sê nou gaan ek die ambulance bel. Alright, ek het gebel, eerste die polisie, na die polisie bel ek die ambulance.

(Participant 6)

Ek kom huis toe. Bly daar weer waar ek gebly het en van daar het ek die vrou gesê, okay gaan skakel die polisie, sê vir hulle ek is hier en hulle moet vir my kom optel. En sy het so gemaak en hulle het my kom optel.

(Participant 2)

Within the intertextual chains of the narrative, there was also an evolution of the plot to incorporate ***justifications as a secondary argument*** to support participants' initial exculpatory contentions about the event. The justificatory register was specifically articulated through references to potential victimisation and therefore drew on rationalisations of self-defence and the defence of others.

Ek kan nie presies onthou wat ek teruggesê het nie, maar ek moes iets vir hom terug gesê het, wat hy, ek kon sien, die man wil my kom aanval, hy wil my aanrand. Dis toe ek nou opspring en die vuurwapen sien, en die hassepad kies uit die kamer uit. [...] Die vuurwapen op daai stadium was in my hand, basies sê op my pens, maar dit was toegemaak met 'n kontinentel kussing. [...] Ek het hom twee skote gegee.

(Participant 24)

Toe gryp ek die hand met die mes, alright hy het my gesteek. […] Okay hy steek my in die hand en finger, toe gryp ek sy hand. Gelukkig, okay hy is groter wat ek is. Maar net gelukkig sy plakkies het geslip. En ek kyk as ek omtrek gly hy en hy kom voorentoe en ek kry 'n kans om die mes die gryp. Toe val hy in die mes in.

(Participant 6)

Jy weet na hy, toe hy my oor die kop geslaan het, en die feit dat hy gedreig het hy gaan my familie en my vrou en my kind leed aandoen. Daai slag toe hy my teen die kop tref. Toe dink ek hier is dit nou, hy wil net moeilikheid maak, jy weet?

(Participant 18)

The above three extracts reveal a register of self-defence that is apparent as a justification and rationalisation for why it is that violence was enacted by participants, as evidenced by *"hy wil my aanrand", "hy het my gesteek",* and *"hy gaan my familie en my vrou en my kind leed aandoen"*. However, *Participant 6* nevertheless couples this self-defence register with an appeal to accidents when he suggests that *"Toe val hy in die mes in"*, thereby even further reducing agency, culpability and responsibility simultaneously.

Further still, the narrative evolved to include more ***expiatory and propitiatory registers*** and included elements such as regret and remorse. Unlike the previous narrative form in which participants were often regretful of being caught, or were quite satisfied with the outcome of the homicide, this form of dehumanisation was not present in this narrative form. Rather, they constructed the homicide as something negative in their lives, that they were regretful of because of the impact on self and immediate others, but also remorseful of the effects of the homicide on others who would have been affected indirectly by the homicide itself.

'n Mens kan nie lekker voel nie. Dis 'n lewe wat verwoes is. Die persoon het na sy Ma omgesien, sy was eers voorheen die opsigter, so hyt oorgevat by haar. Is nie lekker nie, om te weet jy het 'n onskuldige lewe basies, wat iemand anderste wou beskerm het, doodgemaak het. Dis nie lekker nie.

(Participant 24)

They don't know how I feel, 'cause I mean, she was my wife, she was like my wife, my mother, my sister, you understand. I think I'm more hurt, I know I can't be more hurt than her son you see, but I'm hurt as well, till now I think about it. […] What happened and things like that you see. […] Ek is nie 'n violent type mens nie. Hulle weet watse type persoon ek is, so hulle weet ek het dit nie bedoel laat sy haar lewe moet verloor want ek het a confession statement gaan gee […].

(Participant 20)

> Ay, I feel bad about it. Especially as I'm here in prison, but ay I can not turn back the hands [of time] you see. I feel bad about it, I feel sorry you see. Even for him and his family because they have lose their child you see, that's why I feel sorry about it. Maybe I, sometimes I used to think that maybe there was another option maybe I should have (?) but now it's too late. It's too late now.
>
> *(Participant 27)*

In the first and third extracts above, the idea of regret is conveyed by participants in their reflections such as *"'n Mens kan nie lekker voel nie"*, *"I feel sorry you see"*, and *"Ay, I feel bad about it"*, but is also extended to include more remorseful registers pertaining to the impact of the behaviour on the victim and significant others. Here, references to *"Is nie lekker nie, om te weet jy het 'n onskuldige lewe basies [...] doodgemaak"*, and *"for him and his family because they have lose their child you see, that's why I feel sorry about it"*. However, the second extract above reveals a more sophisticated and indirect manner of conveying remorse and regret, but still infusing it with a construction and positioning of the self as a victim. Here the narrative excerpt inverts the perpetrator-victim dyad once more and the participant reflects on how *"I think I'm more hurt"*, *"'cause I mean, she was my wife"*, even though he was responsible for her death. In all of the above, expiatory and propitiatory registers were evident as a mechanism to indicate the participants' insight around their wrongdoing, thus accepting blame and renegotiating a position of moral credibility through these qualified concessions of involvement within the homicidal encounter.

4.4.3. Transformation and Growth: Murder as Erring and Rehabilitation

The final narrative form that emerged within the participants' talk was that of transformation and growth *post* the homicidal event. Within these narratives, participants constructed the homicidal encounter as a predominantly once-off event that was unplanned, and that represented a fundamental point of erring in their lives. This was similar to the narratives of decline referred to earlier in which distinct phases prior to the event, during the event, and after the event could be detected. However, they more importantly also incorporated registers of the event being a turning point for growth (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach &

Zilber, 1998). This was frequently supported by a progression in the intertextual chains within the story that pointed to a desire for, and provision of proof of, rehabilitation. While certainly represented far fewer times within the overall data set, these narratives were nevertheless present as well. Even though justificatory and exculpatory registers were present, the distinguishing feature was the more propitiatory and rehabilitatory registers which included references to regret, remorse and atonement. Rhetorical strategies such as apologies and logical proofs (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990) were utilised to highlight participants regret, remorse and actual process of atonement. Participants made concessions about their involvement within the homicidal encounter, with far fewer qualifications than in the previous two narrative forms discussed.

While not focussing extensively on the exculpatory and justificatory elements within this narrative form (given that they have been addressed in the previous two sections), the following two extended extracts highlight the propitiatory and rehabilitatory registers within narratives of transformation and growth.

> We went to the place where we found a guy and a woman there. There's a bush, okay they were having sexual intercourse there. Okay, we just mugged them there. And then we point a firearm at the lady and the guy. And then we demanded money. They say no we don't have the money. Okay I probably just shooting one shot, I shot the guy in the head […]. When I reached there, I say no freeze. We need money, they tell me they don't have money. Okay fine, the lady, the lady squealed there till I end up firing you know but the intention was not to fire at the guy, was just to make them to be scared. To show that we are serious, because when you are young, when you make a robbery, uh, some people you can point a person with a firearm and he won't get scared, because they saw we are still young, maybe you won't shoot. So I fired a shot to scare them but I was pointing the firearm at the guy. […] Okay […] after I killed that person I feel, then I just talk with my ancestors you know, I've killed a man. I have killed a man. I don't know what to do but for my ancestors to just forgive me, you understand. Okay, to kill I don't think is a good thing […]. I said no I'm fine but I go to confess and say you know, I have killed […]. […] I went to him as a priest […]. But like now when I'm in prison, when I sit down, I say you know what, I was a churchgoer outside. […] my Mother told me that no, you know what, the ancestors, they need you inside the church of God. But now I say I belong to the church […]. Those people I've killed is those people I was supposed to go and serve them as a prophet. […] What I was wishing after I was arrested, I wish to be there in

his funeral but the, it won't happen, even I can ask the government to do so, they won't do for me. Okay, I say what if they can take me there just to go and bury that guy but I don't deny so that they can put me in prison […]. Because I know it is painful to kill because first I don't know what is the cost of the funeral and undertaker. I don't know how much is a casket, I don't know how much is the food that they eat. I don't know how much they cost, all the cost of the funeral, I imagine I'm doing this thing and the people I know at the funeral, people are crying. All the family are crying but I killed this person. […] But now when they call me to come here I was at other section, we were doing cast drama of the HIV/AIDS. […] You understand, right now I just say no, what I was doing, definitely, sure, I was totally wrong, you know. I just say no maybe I'm an emotional person, okay let me just change my attitude okay since I'm in prison I just teach myself to live with the people. […] let me change my attitude, let me talk polite with other people, let me respect other people's feelings. If you don't respect yourself, other person he won't respect you either you understand, so I say okay let me try to respect myself so that I can know other people, let me listen to other people so they can listen to me […].

(Participant 10)

Ja, I got this information from the duty point guy, I heard that guy was her boyfriend, you see. So from there on after I give her the money, she says there is no way I can't get the money back. So this where I shot her twice. […] Yeah, I feel that both of us, we are travellers and we travel for our homelands or where we come from, so how can you crook me? The way I felt was if you crook me, that is part of life, but you also involved with another man who is my junior at work. You use the tricks of taking the money to finance another man, not your own man. […] Ja, when I heard that she's dead, I cried. No I did not know she is dead. […] Ja, ja, I think how honest I am to her, she is not honest with me, punishing her. But so after this I feel so sorry and after my, before my conviction I apologise to the company, the state and the family. I am a human being. I try to console the family, because if this case happen in my family, what am I going to do? We are human beings. Anybody can make the mistake. What has happened has already happened you see. […] I got God through my heart, I am a sinner, I pray to God, I repent all my sins that I commit before myself and my God. Because I, though it happened like that it's not something that I plan in my life that I will assassinate […]. So I am hundred percent sure that once I make up my mind that I will not do violence. […] After I think of it I realise it is where I commit a sin before myself and my God. So I read Bibles, I did the Bible course, my certification comes next month.

(Participant 21)

In both of the above extracts, ***exculpatory registers*** appear to form the primary basis for rationalising the participants' involvement in a homicidal encounter. In the first extract the participant describes an event that essentially included a robbery that had 'gone wrong'. In this account, he utilised an appeal to accidents by making reference to *"but the intention was not to fire at the guy, was just to make them to be scared"*, and suggests that while the motive of robbery was clear, that the murder itself was not premeditated, but rather accidental. Similarly, the second extract highlights the participant's appeal to accidents in the form of a reference to an error of judgement. Here he claims that *"Anybody can make the mistake"*, and *"it's not something that I plan in my life that I will assassinate"*, suggesting again that premeditation was not clear. As with the previous narrative form discussed, both participants had never been involved in prior killings, and constructed the event as a once-off failure, lapse, accident and mistake. The exculpatory nature of the account positioned these men as out of control, with little agency, and therefore with little responsibility. However, ***justifications*** were also employed within the second extract in which the participant committed the violent act as a means to *"punish"* his female partner for acting as a *"crook"* given that she was *"involved with another man who is my junior at work"*. The justification therefore centred around responding to a sense of being emasculated by a woman, but also as a means of defending his honour in relation to alpha-male challenges from a younger work colleague. Here too, the taken-for-granted nature of intimate relational transactions between men and women were utilised as a means to rationalise the event, thus further serving as a minimiser of blame. This account positioned the participant as a victim and therefore justifiably suggested that he was entitled to act in his defence. In addition, there was some deployment of distancing techniques in the use of *"I am a human being"*, thereby minimising the possibility of his actions being construed as inhuman. In both instances, attempts at positive self-presentation and the avoidance of negative judgements again underpinned the use of these registers and strategies.

However, the expiatory and propitiatory registers were far more present in the narrative excerpts from these two participants. Both accounts reflect references

to regret in utterances such as *"to kill I don't think is a good thing"*, *"what I was doing, definitely, sure, I was totally wrong, you know"*, *"I cried"*, and *"I feel so sorry"*. However, regret was supported by references to remorse in the context of the victim and the victim's significant others. Both participants were clearly more compliant in the disciplinary context of the interview and the prison setting, and reflected on processes of self-regulation that highlighted their remorse through references to a need to *"confess"*, asking for *"forgiveness"* as a *"sinner"* and seeking out those who would be able to offer absolution in some manner (e.g. *"ancestors"*; *"priest"*). Here in particular, the religious and spiritual component of the narrative revealed a strong synergy with the confessional technologies that the interview epitomised, and in fact, the interview took on a decidedly confessional tone. Still further, the account from both participants revealed the use of logical proofs to display their pathways to atonement. References to wanting to be at the funeral and to show atonement through *"if they can take me there just to go and bury that guy"* were also accompanied by actual steps taken prior to incarceration, such as *"I apologise to the company, the state and the family"*. Participants also however provided logical proofs of the steps taken to rehabilitate themselves and this register can be seen in such references to *"But now I say I belong to the church"*, *"I read Bibles, I did the Bible course, my certification comes next month"*, *"let me just change my attitude okay since I'm in prison"*, *"If you don't respect yourself, other person he won't respect you either"*, *"So I am hundred percent sure that once I make up my mind that I will not do violence"*, and *"we were doing cast drama of the HIV/AIDS"*. In all the above instances, not only was a sense of self-insight being conveyed by the participants, but the actual steps that they had taken to become more socially responsive and spiritually driven were also reflected upon. In general, what this allowed for was a construction of the self as a wrongdoer, who had erred, and who had subsequently embarked on a path of self knowledge, social and spiritual enlightenment, and had therefore attained some degree of growth, transformation and rehabilitation. Participants did not overtly challenge the prevailing moral discourses that censure homicidal violence, but instead accepted and appropriated them, and then attempted to negotiate their positioning as morally rehabilitated members of society through expiatory and

propitiatory registers. While some exculpatory and justificatory registers were clearly present, participants were able to make concessions about their involvement in the homicide with far fewer qualifications.

4.5.   Social Functions and Ideological Effects of Narrative Forms

From the above descriptions of the primary narrative forms within the data set, it is apparent that the interview process was fundamentally an interpersonal accounting exercise that involved participants' self-disclosures about a homicidal encounter in which they were implicated. Holtgraves (1990) notes that all self-disclosures are essentially instrumental in attaining certain *social goals*, especially pertaining to self-presentation, impression management, the establishment of credibility, and the management of what Tracy (1990) refers to as *face*. Holtgraves (1990) and Tracy (1990) note that face work can generally be conceptualised as attempts by speakers to ensure that they are well regarded and approved of by others, and to avoid others' impositions on their positive self-presentation. However, interpersonal accounting is not simply a set of strategic linguistic manoeuvres that occur within a vacuum, but is also bound by the positioning of speakers and their interlocutors within specific socio-historical contexts and contexts of narrative production. Thus, in examining narrative forms and their social functions, not only is an analysis of the speaker-interlocutor relationship possible and desirable, but an analysis of the immediate and extended contexts within which such narrative production occurs also becomes possible (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998).

Within the *narratives of stability and continuity*, the functions of participants' talk centred around constructing and positioning themselves as men who had acted violently out of necessity. While relying predominantly on justifications (and to a lesser extent on exculpatory and expiatory registers) to acknowledge blame but to offset responsibility, participants nevertheless displayed elements of compliance in relation to the prevailing moral condemnations surrounding homicide within the social formation. Despite being willing to accept some degree of qualified guilt however, the primary register deployed was that of normalisation and reification. Even though Scott's (1990) conceptualisation of the public transcript was therefore evident in the articulation of minor exculpatory and expiatory registers, they appeared to be employed predominantly as part of a transactional process between the researcher and

the participants, allowing for the men to have 'voice' to openly articulate and reveal more private transcripts surrounding their involvement in homicidal violence. Participants generally engaged in a manner to imply that judgements by a standard of morality that often accompany such interviews and confessional processes, were not justifiable. Fundamentally, the function was to construct themselves as necessarily violent within contexts that demanded it, and as reasonable men who were acting reasonably within such contexts, rather than as gratuitously violent. In considering the function of this strategy within the participants' social contexts, it is apparent that most of these men experienced their environments as challenging and perilous, and as social spaces in which criminality, violence and their own unemployment were significant features. In addition, the prison context in which they found themselves was also one that could be described as precarious. Under these conditions, the establishment and performance of a violent masculinity served as greater currency for these participants, as it was intimately related to the attainment of power and status. Connell (2000) notes that under conditions where normative and hegemonic forms of masculinity can not be attained, that men may negotiate their masculinities in such a way that its coupling with violence becomes more pronounced. Similarly, Bhana (2005), Thomson (2002), Willis (2004) and Dolan (2002) also noted that in adverse social contexts where the hegemony of a transnational business masculinity is not attainable, that the coupling of violence and masculinities becomes a distinct negotiated form of identity for men, especially if the historical context already sanctions some degree of violence. The social currency embedded within a violent masculinity was also pivotal for participants, as many disclosed a foreshortened sense of future (e.g. Participant 16 commented, *"as ek nie dood gaan, dan gaan ek tronk toe"*). Here, they could not essentially conceive of their positions within their contexts altering, nor could they envisage the social context itself being reconfigured in their favour. Constructions of violent masculinity therefore served to anchor their identities as fairly fixed in contexts that they believed were fairly fixed as well, and in which there was little opportunity for shifts in resource access or future prospects. This form of hypermasculinisation and its integral linkages to violence was thus an appropriate adaptive strategy for many men who could not foresee any other forms of hegemonic masculine identity attainment possible within their social contexts. Despite the disciplinarised environment and context of the interview and the prison setting, participants were implicitly and actively engaged in subverting and resisting the

power relation within the interview process. Not only was this accomplished through the normalisation of violence, but also through aspects of excess, spectacle and shock that they conveyed in the interviews, as this served to unbalance and invert the generally established disciplinary relation of power within interview contexts. The dominant moral framework was implicitly or overtly flouted within the interview, with participants providing internally cohesive arguments (Fairclough, 1992) to justify an alternative moral benchmark against which to evaluate their actions.

Within the *narratives of decline*, the social functions of participants' iterations were somewhat different. They were highly invested in positive face work and actions that helped to position and construct them as normal men who had been functional within their contexts prior to their momentary lapse in judgement within the homicidal encounter. Active attempts at positive self-presentation therefore became much more significant within these narratives, as participants attempted to deploy exculpatory (and minor justificatory) registers and strategies to reduce negative moral judgements. The strategy of constructing themselves as normal men included references to the normalcy of their behaviours after the event (such as calling the police, the ambulance, and eliciting help from others). There was thus an attempt to reduce the potentially negative effects of moral judgements through constructing and positioning themselves as dissimilar to the crazed, depraved or pathological killer. When considering the function of this communicative strategy in relation to the social contexts of participants, most of these men had experienced their environments as less constraining than articulated in the previous narrative form. Most were employed at some time or another and constructed themselves as 'productive citizens' within their social worlds. There was thus greater purchase power in constructing themselves as normal in order to position themselves as potentially 'productive citizens' who could be reintegrated into their communities in future. Clearly, their location within the social formation prior to the event and their perceptions of their potential location after their incarceration played a role in the way that they constructed themselves. While these participants had been able to reflect on a past set of life plans that had gone awry, as well as a potential future set of life plans that had been compromised due to their involvement in a homicide, these reflections indicated that they did not have an entirely foreshortened sense of future. Positioning themselves as normal men who had experienced a failure in judgement therefore represented a compromise

position of accepting some degree of guilt and moral censure about their homicidal actions, but in the service of potentially re-entering society as 'acceptable citizens' in future. There was also a greater sense of capitulation to the disciplinary process that was epitomised by the interview process, and rather than overtly contesting the implicit power relations, they attempted to renegotiate their moral credibility through exculpatory registers. Resistance and capitulation thus manifested simultaneously within the interviews, or as Scott (1990) notes, there was the deployment of both public and private transcripts. The main strategy therefore appeared to be directed towards minimising social and moral judgements of repugnance against them, in order to potentially reintegrate and reinsert themselves into their lives, families and communities at a later stage.

Within the final ***narratives of transformation and growth***, the primary function of the men's talk was to distance themselves from their violent pasts as far as possible, and to reconstruct themselves as rehabilitated men who were ready for reintegration into the social formation. Here, the context of narrative production was once again critical. Unlike the first two narrative forms in which participants either saw the hostile context as unchanging, or envisaged possibilities for potential reinsertion into their 'normal' lives, these participants relied on a moral currency as a strategy for reintegration into their communities, through a performance of rehabilitatory and propitiatory registers. The apparent driver of these narratives was their internalised sense of the social context as one that is morally condemning with respect to homicide perpetrators, and they thus adopted the strategy of moral compliance (see Rauch, 2005, for an illustration of South African society's emphasis and preoccupation with moral degeneration and regeneration at present). At the level of disciplinarisation, these men were much more acquiescent in relation to the confessional space of the interview and showed only minor resistances to it. Their credibility was thus established through their construction and positioning of themselves as 'exemplary sinners' who could be socially reintegrated. Fairclough (1992) makes reference to these strategies as those of politeness and social desirability, and the presence of such public transcripts certainly outweighed the use of private transcripts (Scott, 1990). However, these all served as mechanisms for negotiating and offsetting the balance of power within the interviews, through an appropriation of dominant moral discourses

and an extensive use of neutralisation strategies in the form of displays of self-regulation, insight, growth and transformation.

From the above, it was apparent that men positioned themselves differently in relation to violence for various purposes and functions within the social context. Importantly, the contextual demands and possibilities often determined how this positioning or ethos of subjectivity (Fairclough, 1992) was constructed. Men who experienced the social context as perilous and unwavering, with few prospects for change and the attainment of a hegemonic masculinity, clearly relied on a greater coupling of violence and masculinity that was normalised and even reified within their narratives. Men who observed some possibilities and fewer constraints within the social formation were more circumspect in their overt linkages between violence and masculinity. Finally, others who constructed the social context as one that was morally condemning relied on strategies that coupled moral rehabilitation and masculinity as a means of appropriating the dominant moral yardstick as a means of subverting its impacts on them. Within all of the narratives, the interviews represented a disciplinarised space that was never unidirectional, and was varyingly responded to with acquiescence, capitulation, and resistance.

At an ideological level, the most immediate effect can be seen in the implicit and overt challenges to dominant orders of moral discourses that govern the legitimacy and illegitimacy of violence. While some of the above narratives clearly reinforced and reproduced these moral discourses, others openly contested them. These resistant or subordinated moral discourses highlighted the discontinuous nature of hegemonic forms of morality and their instability in social contexts. The continuum of the narratives spoke to the manner in which constructions of masculine violence and violence more broadly, are also reflections of the contradictory manner in which violence is addressed, legitimised and delegitimised within contemporary social formations. The normalisation of violence, the ambiguous relationship to violence, and the denunciation of violence all mirror the social formation's inconsistent moral response to it. On the one hand, state-sanctioned forms of violence continue to be found in increased levels of militarization and securitisation that are underpinned by militarist ideologies; the market economy legitimises structural forms of violence that encourage avaricious corporate profiteering and competition that are underpinned by

classist and individualist ideologies; and insidious forms of violence at an interpersonal level are reinforced by ideologies of familism, ageism, and sexism. On the other hand, severe forms of interpersonal violence such as homicide are disavowed and delegitimised. While not suggesting that homicide should be socially accepted, there needs to be some cognisance of the fact that these forms of violence are all underpinned by precisely the same legitimising ideologies and discursive networks. In essence, they point to a failure in the moral economy, and alternative moral yardsticks will of necessity emerge under these circumstances to contest the moral centre of any society (Thompson, 1971). Challenges to dominant moral discourses surrounding violence therefore expose the essentially violent nature of South African society in general, and offer the potential to critique the ideological effects of the discourses that reinforce such violence.

Despite the tensions, contradictions and ruptures that were evident within the narratives, the underpinning *discursive networks* deployed by most participants continued to reinforce the violent nature of masculinity. Here, discourses of essentialism that naturalised masculine violence were often utilised for exculpatory reasons, while environmentally and socially deterministic discourses were frequently deployed as a means to justify violence. Discourses of instrumentality were also present and conveyed the normalisation of violence in processes of acquiring access to certain social, interpersonal and material resources. Referent gendered, familial and ageist discourses were also apparent in accounting for violence. Once again, while these discourses reinforced the centrality of the coupling between masculinity and violence they also provided an opportunity to interrogate the social context as an incubator of masculine violence. In this sense, the sample discourses underpinning the narratives provided a snapshot of their interdiscursive relationship to broader discourses operant within the social formation (Fairclough, 1992). While many of the discourses surrounding male violence were fairly normative and defensive in nature and were therefore more homogenous in their coherence (Fairclough, 1992), there were a minority of discourses that were also more accommodatory (Morrell, 2001), thus revealing points of rupture, discontinuity and heterogeneity in the discursive contours themselves. In the following section the form, functions and ideological effects of the participant's discoursal practices are examined comprehensively.

5.   FORM, FUNCTION AND IDEOLOGY IN DISCOURSAL PRACTICES:

From the previous section, it is evident that the narratives that men generated were all underpinned by a range of discursive networks that either pertained directly or indirectly to the relationship between masculinity and violence. This section examines the primary discursive categories and themes that prevailed within the narratives, and explores their overall form, functions and ideological effects. It highlights their linguistic form by noting the general lexical registers and specific rhetorical strategies deployed, their interdiscursive relations to broader social discourses, their social functions in relation to the reproduction and contestation of broader power relations, and their reproductive or critical effects at an ideological level. Thus, in addition to determining how these discourses served to reproduce existing discursive patterns within the social formation, the analysis also interrogated the degree of coherence within the data and pointed to possible ruptures and instabilities that allowed for alternative readings of the texts (Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992). It therefore adopted a deconstructionist function to examine the manner in which discourse utilisation reinforces power relations by generating certain taken-for-granted regimes of truths, but also searched for oppositions and contradictions that may disrupt continuous understandings of the world and allow for alternative or discontinuous meanings to emerge (Macleod, 2002).

Four main discursive categories were delineated within the participants' narratives, and reflected a continuum of discourses surrounding male violence. While these discourses were not deployed in a sequential manner within the narratives, some broad reflection on their relationship is perhaps instructive. Firstly, participants often relied on distancing discourses that minimised their agency within the homicidal encounters, and these generally included understandings of the origins and reasons for male violence. This was followed by a second category that reflected on a range of referent discourses as a means of justifying and supporting male violence. The third category of discourses extended even further and provided discursive content that highlighted the centrality of violence in the construction of masculinity among many participants. Finally, the last category provided support for the utility and importance of male violence in economic gain and resource acquisition. This continuum of discoursal practices revealed an amplification of the relationship between masculinity and violence from constructions of inevitability, to justificatory, to pivotal in identity construction, to instrumental in resource acquisition. In each of these broad categories, the relationship to the context of discoursal production was fairly illuminating,

pointing to the manner in which systems of signification that are operant within South African society primarily contribute to a pervasive acceptance and legitimisation of male violence. Nevertheless, ruptures and instabilities also manifested, with participants revealing duelling sets of discourses within their narratives at various points (Wood, 2004), and these are reflected upon at the end of this section.

5.1. Minimising Agency in Murder: Distancing Discourses in Male Homicide

Within the first broad discursive category, participants employed a range of discourses that served exculpatory social functions, and relied on essentialist, moral and deterministic understandings of the origins and reasons for male violence. While allowing for some distancing from the act at the level of their personal responsibility, these discourses tended to reinforce the essentialisation and naturalisation of male violence (Butler, 1990). In addition, they also reproduced dominant moral discourses that located the origins of male violence in a compromised set of ethical standards by which the participants were conducting themselves. Furthermore, they reflected broader discourses of environmental determinism that facilitated a construction of participants as high-risk individuals from high-risk communities. Forms of disciplinary power that regulate hegemonic constructions of gender and the uneven nature of gendered social relations were articulated and reproduced within these themes, as well as internalised moral barometers and self-constructions of being at-risk and marginalised. At an ideological level, the primary effect was to reinforce patriarchal, masculinist and sexist ideologies that underpin specific forms of gender domination, which consequently legitimise a range of malignant behavioural repertoires that men often enact in gendered encounters. In addition, while the participants appropriated discourses of morality and environmental determinism for exculpatory purposes, these reinforced binaried conceptualisations of high and low-risk communities, as well as morally deficient and stable social categories, that are both frequently appropriated in support of a range of classist ideologies.

5.1.1. *"We are what we are"*: Essentialist Discourses

One of the most common articulations within men's accounts of their homicidal actions was to rely on taken-for-granted or ***naturalised gender differences*** between men and women. In particular, these differences were

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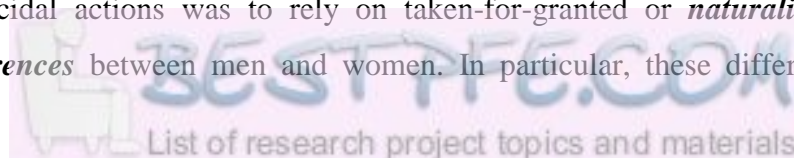
constructed around inherent personality differences and behavioural repertoires that were linked to violence or non-violence, across gender.

> I'd say women are more clever than men. […] because a man in a situation, where your adrenalin is pumping, you get cross. You don't be objective […]. You look at it one way […]. I'm gonna beat the shit out of him. Women look at it another way, what's the options I can take. Men don't. Most men don't.

> *(Participant 9)*

> Because men, maybe they're stronger, they're wearing the pants, they're in charge. And if things doesn't go well, they take the law into their own hands, that is what I would think. […] vroumense is meer saggeaard as mans uh, dis vanselfsprekend dink ek laat 'n vrou nie tot so 'n daad sal oorgaan.

> *(Participant 24)*

> Nee, jy sien, vrouens word altyd gedreig tot op 'n punt, jy weet. Nou 'n man nou nê, hy gaan nou alles doen net vir die fun van dit, jy sien. Maar jy sien, 'n vrou altyd sy het daai patience, sy gaan staan vir dit. Sy gaan jou luister, sy gaan sien tot wanneer sy nou nie meer kan nie. Nou 'n man, nou hy sê homself wat, die ene word my gewoond, ek gaan hom nou breek, jy sien. Nou 'n vrou nie, sy het daai patience sy gaan daai pyne staan jy sien.

> *(Participant 13)*

> 'n Man [gebruik geweld]. Dis maar altyd so. Die way ek ken. Ag kyk, die vrou is 'n sagte mens.

> *(Participant 25)*

This discourse of naturalisation was reflected in behavioural differences such as women having more *"patience"*, being good listeners (*"luister"*) and examining their *"options"*, and men taking *"the law in their own hands"*, being less *"objective"*, and acting violently (e.g. *"adrenalin is pumping, you get cross"*; *"I'm gonna beat the shit out of him"*; *"ek gaan hom nou breek"*). In addition, inherent differences in constitution were also reflected upon in *"die vrou is 'n sagte mens"* and *"vroumense is meer saggeaard as mans"*, implying a binaried opposite for men. While the lexical register of innate personality and behavioural difference can be seen above, the rhetorical strategy that was utilised most frequently here was the assertion of fact. Not

only were most articulations statements that were non-tentative in orientation, but men also relied on terms such as *"vanselfsprekend"* and *"dis maar altyd so"* to reveal the unquestionable nature of their statements and the historical continuity of their assertions.

Extending on this initial discursive articulation were expressions of the ***male aggressive drive*** discourse. Participants' talk centred on the essentialist nature of male violence with reference to *"human nature"*, the role of evolution and being born with such characteristics *(e.g. "That is something that came out along with us"; "leiers word gebore")*. In addition to the assertion of fact as a rhetorical strategy once again, *Participant 3* also crisply utilised the simile of *"brandy and coke"* to explain the natural synergy between men and violence. Registers of the natural order could also bee seen in references to *"human nature"*, *"if you look at nature"*, *"territory"* and *"soos in die natuur ook"*, reinforcing the inevitability of this construction.

> Okay, men and violence, that is human nature I'd say. That is something that came out along with us.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

> Ouens en bakleiery gaan saam [...] soos brandy en coke. Dit mix net saam.
>
> *(Participant 3)*

> Um, if you look at nature, […]. There is a leader in every territory. Almal wil 'n leier wees. Maar nie almal kan leiers wees nie. Um, leiers word gebore, hulle word nie gemaak nie. […] jy wil die girls wys kyk, jy is sterk, jy weet. Sy kan veilig voel by jou of sulke goeters, jy weet. Of jy kry nou die ou wat altyd, hy is die local ou daarso, hy wil net wys hy is nog die local ou, and who want to come through that territory, moet hulle self kan bewys jy weet. Soos in die natuur ook.
>
> *(Participant 18)*

An even further development of this discourse can bee seen in the construction of ***men as impulsive*** and not being able to control their emotions or passions (Houel, Sobota & Mercader, 2003)

[...] sien daai frustration bou so op hy maak jou die moer in. Here, jy's kwaad, tot jou broer sal jou keer, jy sal hom doodmaak. Jy kan hom doodmaak net van keer jy sien. Daai frustration wat opbou in jou in.

(Participant 3)

I was angry with them and I wanted my money […]. You don't actually think, you are just in a rage. How can I say, I wouldn't say it's a rage, it's just like you know. I can't explain it. You are just so pissed off with this guy that you just want to hurt him.

(Participant 5)

So at that time I guess everything was too much, it was too much for myself. Then I just explode.

(Participant 2)

It's like a strain that snaps inside of you, that's maybe how I can explain it. It was just like a strain that snapped inside of me.

(Participant 9)

In the first two extracts above, the centrality of emotions such as being *"angry"*, experiencing *"rage"* and *"frustration"* prior to the murder all indicate a sense of men being at the mercy of specific volatile emotions, namely those pertaining to aggression. In the second two extracts above, this register of volatility is accompanied by one of a loss of control, with references to *"explode"*, *"snaps"* and *"snapped inside"* to illustrate the uncontrollable nature of men's volatile emotional states (Lau, 2008). When coupled with the previous registers, these accounts reinforce the notion of the aggressive male who is always on the brink of a momentary lapse that will allow for a slippage from civility back into a bestial state (Hearn, 1998).

Finally, such momentary lapses and slippages into the bestial self were accounted for by discourses of **male disinhibition** through the use of alcohol and drugs. The primary register was one that clearly indicated how control could be lost under certain conditions of intoxication, to reveal this inhuman split in the self (Hearn, 1998). References to *"gedrink"*, *"swaar drinkers"*, *"we were drunk with drugs"* and *"drugs in my system"*, followed by *"het nie*

beheer oor myself", *"voel ek dat ek kan baklei"*, *"you basically go into a different world"*, and *"toe snap ek"*, are all variants of the discourse of the uncontrollability and dissociative nature of men's aggression, and relied predominantly on the use of excuses as a rhetorical strategy for exculpatory purposes.

> [...] ek was bietjie gedrink gewees [...]. En ek het nie beheer oor myself. [...] Op daai tyd, ek was baie kwaad gewees [...] .
>
> *(Participant 2)*

> As ek nou gedrink het dan voel ek dat ek kan baklei met enige iemand. As iemand miskien net my lelik kyk, dan vra ek hom, hoekom kyk jy my so kak? Jy moenie so kak kyk nie, ek moer jou nou.
>
> *(Participant 6)*

> […] started with me having drugs in my system […]. […] But at the end of the day the mind just snaps [...]. […] you basically go into a different world. […] your mind is not really there where, how can I say, how can I call it. It's not really there where the murder is or is going to take place […]. And we were drunk with drugs […].
>
> *(Participant 16)*

> Toe het ons bietjie gedrink, gekuier. Dis maar nou almal my mense, meeste ouens drink maar met my. Ek meen ons is swaar drinkers. […]. Ja ek sal sê drank het 'n rol gespeel daar, as ek nugter was sou ek miskien anderste opgetree. […] Ek meen hy't gesien ek was woedend oor wat nou weer gebeur het. [...] En toe jong, toe snap ek, ek het hom aan die nek gegryp en ek het hom uit daai stoel uitgetel en probeer sy nek aftrek. [...] Ek dink uh, 'n ou verloor beheer oor jouself op 'n oomblik. […] Ek was baie kwaad. […] Ek dink dit is waar, 'n ou afswitch of iets.
>
> *(Participant 14)*

By locating the locus of control for violence within the natural constitution of men, these discourses not only provided the basis for deflecting personal responsibility, but also minimise the extent to which systemic critiques of male violence may be proffered in everyday interactions. However, a critical reading of the texts reveal that all of the above sample discourses found interdiscursive resonances in social discourses that dichotomise gender relations into male emotional volatility and female emotional stability; the

naturalisation of the male aggressive drive and female passivity; and male uncontrollability and female thoughtfulness. These binaries not only drew upon, but also reinforced hegemonic gender relations that unevenly position men and women within social formations and support ideological processes of male domination and female subordination. Not only do they legitimise male violence against women, but also centralise male violence in relation to other men. While the coherence of these discourses was contested to some extent through discursive heterogeneity, this were not frequent, but did point to possible ruptures in these meaning systems (see later in this section).

The deployment of these discourses by men should also of course be viewed in the context of discoursal production. Ever changing sexual and gender relations based on the gains of feminist movements globally and in South Africa, altered patterns of labour and productive relations that have resulted in mass unemployment and poverty, as well as increasing wealth disparities, have all made the possibilities of attaining a 'successful' masculine identity more challenging in many South African contexts. Fanon (Bulhan, 1985) notes that under conditions in which structural violence is experienced, populations often turn to forms of interpersonal violence within their own communities as a means of regaining and asserting some measure of control over their lives. Given that the naturalisation of gender differences has been one of the most enduring, recalcitrant and historically pervasive meaning systems through which to understand male violence, its extensive presence within the textual data is unsurprising. Furthermore, it continues to find resonances in scientific knowledge generation and discovery (see **Chapter Two**). Finally, in contexts where hegemonic forms of masculinity can not always be achieved, the use and deployment of violence as part of a defensive re-masculinisation process (Morrell, 2001) is strengthened by allusions to its innate and inherent foundations, and helps to structure regimes of truth that are uncontestable.

5.1.2. *"The devil made me do it"*: Moral Deficiency Discourses

In the second discursive theme within this category, men also made use of **moral discourses** to account for their homicidal actions. While they were not as well represented in the textual data as the previous discourse, they

nevertheless deserve some consideration, given their functions and ideological effects.

In the extracts below, spiritual and religious references and registers were employed as a means of accounting for the violent actions within the encounter through iterations such as *"I had a devil spirit in me"*, *"it was temptation that made me do it"*, *"I am a sinner"*, and *"I saw that this [violence] is a witchcraft thing from my grandmother she did to me"*. Except for the last extract in which the participant positions himself as someone with a degree of agency, the predominant rhetorical strategy utilised was for participants to position themselves as the objects within these iterations, thereby reducing their levels of agency within the account. These registers were also supported by additional registers that suggested that a malevolent external force was directing their actions and is reflected in *"Why I allow the situation to control me you see"*, and *"She is a witch, my grandmother. […] That she may control everything you see"*.

> I was thinking for just now, I wasn't thinking for tomorrow. The devil was using me. I had a devil spirit in me you see. […] Ja, I had a devil spirit in me. Because what I was doing, when I think, when I am here, when I am alone I see I wasn't supposed to do such things like that. Why did I do such a thing like that? Why I allow the situation to control me you see. […] Okay, I was a sinner.
>
> *(Participant 7)*

> She is a witch, my grandmother. She was sort of into witchcraft. Ja, there is a thing of this witchcraft and my grandfather is being possessed by witchcraft, which is from this grandmother. That she may control everything you see. […] my grandfather, my father was made a zombie by this grandmother. [...] The way she had used witchcraft to make my grandfather be possessed that he may not even love us you see. […] And I am having this particular fit which I don't know, which is being assumed it is epilepsy where as it is not a epilepsy. […] they say it is not the epilepsy. I saw that this [violence] is a witchcraft thing from my grandmother she did to me.
>
> *(Participant 23)*

I can say it was temptation that made me do it [violence].

(Participant 10)

[…] before myself I got God through my heart I am a sinner […]I realised it [the murder] is where I commit a sin before myself and my God.

(Participant 21)

At a broader social level, these sample discourses also reflected interdiscursive connections to dominant moral discourses that delegitimse severe interpersonal forms of violence such as homicide. Participants were clearly reproducing, appropriating and internalising this dominant moral discourse for an exculpatory purpose and as a means of paradoxically subverting the degree of moral censure directed against them. While the immediate social function allowed participants to deflect personal responsibility for their actions, these discourses also locate the source and origin of violence within a breakdown of the individual's moral constitution, and thus minimise the degree of organic critique of the social system itself as homicide- inducing.

However, a more critical approach to the texts again highlights that these men positioned themselves as being morally deficient in some manner or another, with references to spiritual and religious registers that implicitly produced binaries of good and evil. Such binaries are often represented socially as those of the righteous, non-violent male versus the immoral, violent male. In extending on this binary and considering that higher rates of homicide are often implicated in marginalised and depressed communities (see ***Chapter One*** and ***Chapter Two***), there is frequently an extrapolation of this moral discourse to entire social categories. Such discourses reproduce and reinforce a range of classist ideologies that attribute blame for violence to the underclasses, legitimise the use of technologies of moral orthopaedics within these 'morally deficient' communities, and mobilise institutional processes to control the degree of 'immorality' within such communities. Classist ideologies of this nature are directed towards processes of subjugation and systemised forms of domination of certain social categories, and conceal the

fundamentally unjust nature of the social system (Thompson, 1971) through the projection of blame and the concealment of failures of the moral economy. The presence of discourses such as these therefore often point to fault lines of inequality within social formations that are themselves drivers of structural violence.

When considering the above in the context of discoursal production, it is apparent that many South Africans currently experience the state as being unable to meet their basic needs, that there is a lack of confidence in the institutions of government to protect its citizens, and that the economic and productive relations are less than equitable in post-apartheid South Africa. Terre Blanche (2006) notes that processes of wealth accumulation in post-apartheid South Africa have been characterised by super-elites and the entrenchment of oligarchies on the one hand, but increasing poverty for many South Africans on the other hand. Citizens have in many instances either attempted to exact a form of social justice themselves or have engaged in activities such as the informal underground economy. Unsurprisingly, within this same context there has also been a focus of attention directed primarily at the marginalised and underclasses as nodal points of moral degeneration and subsequently, also as a focal point for moral regeneration (Rauch, 2005). Thus, the presence of moral discourses of this nature are perhaps sound markers that point to the persistence of fissures of social inequality within the underbelly of South African society, that are themselves drivers of violence in may instances.

5.1.3. *"It's about upbringing"*: Deterministic Discourses

The most significant feature within this discursive theme was the reliance on forms of ***environmental determinism*** to account for male violence. Participants deployed registers of inadequate parental involvement, described a process of social learning from violent contexts, or indicated that their violence was due to a set of peer pressures that implicated gangsterism. In the first two extracts, there are clear references to *"reg grootmaak"* and to the loss of a parent in the participant's account (*"my father passed away when I was three-months old"*). Furthermore, they described peers as a source of their

violent behaviours and criminality in articulations such as *"deurmekaar met gangsters"* and *"the people you hang around with"*. Still other references to the observation and learning of violence from the social context were also evident in attributing responsibility to a *"violent background"*, *"as jy sien jou pa slaan jou ma"*, *"'n geweldadige agtergrond"*, and *"we see violence as something that has to happen in life"*. In each of the extracts below, some form of environmental determinism was used as the primary discourse through which to account for male violence. The main register was essentially one of failure in socialisation, and the primary rhetorical strategy was that of the sad tale as a rationalisation (Cody & McLaughlin, 1990).

[…] jy sien as die mense jou groot gemaak het reg, deeglik, jy sal nie worry met violence. Jy sal nou en dan baklei in die straat en squeal, maar jy sal nie worry om te sê die ene, as ek hom vang ek sal hom kry, jy sien. As jy reg groot gemaak is, maar nou as jy met 'n violent background kom, as jy sien jou pa slaan jou ma, tomorrow jy't 'n girlfriend. Jou girlfriend doen iets verkeerd, jy gaan haar ook slaan.

(Participant 3)

[…] my father passed when I was three-months old. Nine children, my mum was alone, she wasn't working at that time, we grew up pretty harsh. I started stealing at the age of seven when I was breaking in. I started carrying a gun at the age of 11. Started robbing at about the age of about 13.

(Participant 5)

Ek kon seker gaan werk soek het en sulke tiepe van goed, maar die tiepe mense wat ek meer deurmekaar was op daai oomblik. Ek het skool gelos toe ek in nog in St. 7 was, in die begin van St. 7 jaar en alles. Van toe af is ek deurmekaar met gangsters en al daai tiepe van goeters. So ek glo nie ek sou 'n normale werk gekry het al het ek gaan soek nie. So crime was my enigste uitweg. [...] Ek het nog altyd 'n geweldadige agtergrond gehad.

(Participant 8)

[…] it's all bad influences. […] Second of all, people change you. The things you do, the things you say, the people you hang around with, that environment alone changes you.

(Participant 16)

> Well, for me. I'll put it this way. You see the way we grow up, the environment we grow up at, we see violence as something that has to happen in life. For there is always people who are fighting here, people who are fighting there. We get used to these kinds of stuff, you see so we don't see any problem with that. So that's why most of us tend to be violent at times. Because we've seen most elders solve their problems violently, so we think that's the kind of the way. That's how we need to solve our problems as well.

(Participant 26)

At a broader social level, these sample discourses also have interdiscursive synergies with discourses of environmental determinism that have characterised our understandings of violence in South Africa for several decades. The existence of these broader social discourses are partly due to the historical analyses that were conducted during periods of heightened repression under apartheid, in which less nuanced and more vulgar forms of determinism sometimes came to the fore to explain the causal relationships between uneven and unequal contexts and psychosocial problems such as violence. While appreciating the ideological import of these studies at the time as well as their potential liberatory functions, they nevertheless contributed to a broader discourse of environmental and social determinism. In addition, current scientific knowledge production and discovery continues to feed into these discourses at present (see *Chapter Two*), thereby reinforcing their popularity within everyday understandings of the origins of crime and violence. Within the talk of the participants, these discourses of determinism were again deployed for exculpatory purposes, allowing for a deflection of personal responsibility within the homicidal encounter. In addition, while noting the role of environmental determinants in a more localised and focussed manner, the discourses implicitly veered away from broader systemic critiques of the origins of male violence.

Here too though, a more critical reading of the texts within context reveals that they had the effect of reinforcing the dichotomy of environmental failures resulting in male homicide perpetrators, versus environmental integrity resulting in well adjusted males. Similar to the previous discursive theme, when transposed onto epidemiological and criminological research into male

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homicide in South Africa, the effect is to extend this binary to generate high-risk and low-risk communities who respectively house high-risk and low-risk individual men, that often also correspond directly with marginalised and more affluent communities. At an ideological level, the power relations embedded within, and reproduced by these discourses serve to reinforce ideologies that allow for the control, subjugation and domination of the underclasses, and are particularly supportive of classist ideologies in the period of modern industrial capitalism. Foucault (1994) notes that within capitalism, the primacy of the labour force directed the social gaze towards the underclasses to ensure their stability and docility in the service of the expansion of capitalism. Thus, the *"dangerous individual"* was therefore examined within the context of the underclasses as a potential threat to material processes of accumulation, and associated mechanisms of surveillance, moral orthopaedics, and institutional control emerged to contain the possible resistances offered by the underclasses to such processes of systemised and structural domination.

Within the South African context of discoursal production, Foucault's (1994) thesis finds exemplary reverberations. One of the prevailing concerns in South Africa society is the effects of crime and violence on the economy and the stability of the social formation on general. Recent research attests to this focus and preoccupation, with an increasing number of state and intellectual initiatives being directed towards assessing the broader social and economic burden of homicide in South Africa (Bowman & Stevens, 2004; Butchart, 2000; Peden & van der Spuy, 1998; Phillips, 1999). Furthermore, surveillance technologies have also increased within South Africa since the demise of apartheid and the deregulation of the market economy (see for example the increase in basic epidemiological research during the last 10 years). Discourses of determinism in this context point to inherent power relations between high- and low-risk communities, and support classist ideologies of subjugation, control and domination of these high-risk communities. While the presence of these discourses within the textual data certainly reflects a specific function for participants within the narrational context, it also serves as a marker of inter-community and class cleavages of inequality, subjugation,

structural violence and systemised forms of domination, which in themselves may act as an incubator for forms of interpersonal violence.

In general, this discursive category pointed to the manner in which men deployed a range of discourses for exculpatory purposes within their narrational and interlocutory contexts. However, a closer critical reading of the texts reveals that embedded within these discourses are several manifestations of disciplinary power that have resulted in the reproduction of certain regime of truths, binaries, and taken-for-granted ways of understanding the origins and reasons for male violence. In essence, the reproduction of these discourses highlights the manner in which they act to produce and constitute docile subjects in contexts that are fundamentally uneven. Through a critical examination of their ideological effects, it is apparent that these discourses point to meaning systems and social practices that represent and reinforce fractures of inequality along cleavages of gender relations, inter-community relations and class relations. Furthermore, these fractures of inequality are all integrally linked to exploitative processes of subjugation and systemised forms of domination that reinforce and legitimise violence at an interpersonal level as well as at a structural level within the South African social formation. The fundamental point emerging from this discursive category is that distancing discourses that were employed reflect a social context that is highly differentiated, uneven, and legitimising of violence at various levels.

5.2.   Motivating for Murder: Justificatory Discourses in Male Homicide

The second major discursive category included several themes that served the broad social function of justification within the participants' narratives. Here in particular, the discourses were predominantly of a referent nature (Parker, 1992), allowing for the intersection of a range of varied systems of signification to bolster and support the utilisation of violence by men. Included in this category were discourses of survival in hostile contexts, female commodification, familism and adultism, and privatisation and ownership. In general, these discourses not only reinforced the normality of masculine violence, but were also themselves reciprocally sustained and maintained as particular regimes of truth that govern uneven social relationships. Forms of disciplinary power that result in uneven parent-child relations, familial relations, gender relations, competitive individual relations, and ownership relations were

therefore all reproduced within the themes. Furthermore, these have the primary effect of supporting systemised forms of domination through ideologies of individualism, ownership and privatisation, patriarchy and sexism, as well as familism and adultism.

5.2.1. *"It's the law of the jungle"*: Discourses of Survival

In the first discursive theme within this category, the overall lexical register that was evident was that of ***Darwinian fitness and survival***. Participants reflected on their actions as a means of protecting themselves and ensuring their survival in a range of circumstances and instances. These included self-defence within the context of confrontation, murder as a pre-emptive form of self-defence to avoid future prosecution or harm of some sort coming to themselves, and murder as a form of self-defence and survival within hostile and competitive social contexts. The primary binary that were established through this discursive theme tended to reflect that of the powerful man versus the weak man, and while it drew on discourses of gender implicitly in the construction of masculine 'success', this was secondary to the necessity of enacting violence as a means of survival.

In the following extracts, participants recounted their involvement within the homicide as a critical instance ***physical protection*** in the face of another who was more powerful in some way. Masculine power was thus referred to in an embodied manner, and included registers of physical intimidation, size and the power of their antagonists. Words and phrases that capture this are *"groter as my, […] hy het meer krag"*, *"ek kan seerkry of even worse ek kan my lewe verloor"*, and *"die een het 'n lekker body, hy kan my overpower"*. For participants, these instances represented a sense of physical danger that allowed for the justification of their subsequent actions (e.g. *"Ek sal myself gaan defend"*; *"Jy worry van jouself daai tyd […] Daai is 'n matter of saving yourself before you get hurt"*; *"so steek ek hom"*). The sample discourse essentially reflected a broader social discourse that is encapsulated in the notion of 'survival of the fittest'.

Hoekom ek sê vir myself. Ek sal myself gaan defend. […] verstaan jy, want hy is groter as my hierdie mannetjie, first of all, hy het meer krag as wat ek het […].

(Participant 16)

[…] ek kan seerkry of even worse ek kan my lewe verloor. Jy worry van jouself daai tyd, […] jy skenk nie aandag nie, al maak jy hom seer, jy skenk nie aandag nie, […] solank jy net wegkom daar. Daai is 'n matter of saving yourself before you get hurt.

(Participant 3)

Okay alright, so kyk ek, die een het 'n lekker body, hy kan my overpower, hy kan my seermaak. Laat ek net die mes gaan haal net as hy kom met hom goeters sien jy. Okay soos ek besig is sien ek naai hy gaan my overpower. So haal ek die mes uit, so steek ek hom.

(Participant 15)

In other instances, the primary nature of the account was of murder as a pre-emptive action. Participants reflected on how their actions were attempts at **preventing future harm** coming to them, primarily through the criminal justice system. In addition, there was a register of compulsion to act that was based on fear, and a sense of limited choices available to the participants once they had embarked upon a course of violent action. Unlike the previous excerpts which justified their actions as attempts at protecting their physicality in the context of a confrontation, these extracts reveal a set of actions to prevent a constraint to their freedom. Here too, justifications and rationalisations were most prominently deployed as rhetorical strategies.

I am going to have to kill them. You understand what I mean? That's now after I saw now hey this is better, I have to kill these guys to. […] And scared of being caught. […] You do it not to get caught. You understand? Because a dead man tells no tales.

(Participant 5)

I think fear. Fear of being caught out. […] He was scared, 'cause the lady knew us. He was scared that she was able to point us out […]. And when he did it, I got fear I think from my side, it was more of a fear of being caught for attempted murder so I said no, let's rather finish it up and then no-one can ever say who did and whatever.

(Participant 9)

[…] Toe check ek nee man, ek wil nie tronk toe gaan nie sien jy. So vra hy my nou wat gaan ons maak, toe sê ek hom nee man, dis beter die enetjie, ok, ek maak hom sat.

(Participant 15)

References to *"fear of being caught out"*, *"scared of being caught"*, and *"ek will nie tronk toe gaan nie"* were all articulated in the above as justifications for their actions. In addition, once the decision to commit the act had been reflected upon, participants often used linguistic devices to dehumanise the victims, making it more palatable to themselves and to their narrational audience (e.g. *"die enetjie, ok, ek maak hom sat"*; *"let's rather finish it up"*, and *"a dead man tells no tales"*). In these instances, victims were either not referred to at all, or were spoken about in belittling terms, or as referred to symbolically through idiomatic expression.

The final set of extracts revealed a sense of self-defence and ***protection in the context of hostile and brutal environments***. The hostility of contexts was conveyed though registers of war and predation in terms and phrases such as *"one thing that never went through my mind was to surrender"*, *"territory"* and *"spilled your blood"*. This conveyed a sense of how participants viewed their actions in such contexts, once again drawing on the 'survival of the fittest' and 'kill or be killed' lexical registers. References to *"do or die"*, *"is either jy of hy, jy maak hom seer of jy wis hom totaal uit"*, *"you spilled my blood. And I have to spill yours"*, and *"dis alles van wies die eerste ene wat die trigger trek"*. In each of these utterances, the lexical binary of life or death helped to convey a sense of compulsion, and an urgency to act in self-defence.

But one thing that never went through my mind was to surrender. […] I only have two words in my mind do or die, because if it wasn't him, I was actually awaiting my friend's death. […] I couldn't lose a friend, I had to do it, I had to do it.

(Participant 1)

It's about, 'n man se ego, hom territory, as jy in 'n plek lank is. Jy soek nie 'n ander ou van ander plek moet kom, jy al die jare jy het respek. Jy kry respek van almal af in daai plek in. […] so 'n ander ou wat net kom en hy wil jou verneder [...]. Jy moet iets doen omtrent die saak. Is either jy of hy, jy maak hom seer of jy wis hom totaal uit.

<div align="right">*(Participant 4)*</div>

At that time I told myself when you in Rome, do what the Romans do. Die wat hulle kan doen, kan ons ook doen. En beter as wat hulle dit doen. […] I told you that time we were only eight gang members so we had to prove ourselves you see. And they reduced us back to seven you see. […] That means you spilled my blood. And I have to spill yours. So what that actually means is if I can get you, your mother, your father, your sister, your brother, whoever your family member, is like. 'Cause if I spill anyone of their blood, I spilled your blood.

<div align="right">*(Participant 13)*</div>

So gebeur dit onse lokasie. Dis deel van onse lokasie lewe. Gangsterism, dis deel, so dis alles van wies die eerste ene wat die trigger trek. So werk dit in onse lokasie.

<div align="right">*(Participant 4)*</div>

While the survivalist discourses above were commonly utilised by participants to justify their homicidal actions, they also have interdiscursive counterparts within the social formation in the form of broader social discourses of masculine competition, fitness and survivability; as well as economic competition, fitness and survivability in the context of patriarchal and market-driven economies. One of the most significant binaries generated by these discourses is that of individual masculine strength versus weakness, with a much higher premium being placed on positive fitness values and survivability. At an ideological level these discourses are not only reflective of, but also reproduce gendered ideologies that couple hegemonic notions of masculinity with strength, but these also intersect directly with individualist ideologies that allow for the unfettered pursuit of individualist ideals and aspirations. The latter is most commonly associated with contexts in which markets flourish, and is the ideological bedrock of capitalism.

In the context of contemporary South Africa as the location of discoursal production, the post-apartheid period saw an unprecedented deregulation of the South African economy and the embracing of market ideals and models that included trade liberalisation, privatisation and consequent levels of unemployment, poverty and wealth disparities (Terre Blanche, 2006). Slovo (Cronin, 2007) in some his earlier work characterised the nature of capitalist accumulation as a form of barbarism, in which layers of the social formation cannibalise others for their own interests through the rough-shod pursuit of their own personal wealth acquisition and ambitions. While some would suggest that this is perhaps an over dramatisation of the nature of the market-economy, the current human development indicators suggest that it is in fact apparent in many marginalised communities. Given these social and economic processes, and the underlying ideology of individualism, it is unsurprising that discourses of survival are this prominent within the narratives of participants. Also, the referent interplay between discourses of masculinity and discourses of economic fitness mutually reinforce each other, but in conditions where economic fitness is constrained because of structural inhibitors, many of the men adapted these meaning systems and deployed them within the context of their own lives. The result for many participants appears to have been an enactment of the fitness and survival registers of the economy through the lenses of masculine aggression – rampant attempts at getting ahead at the expense of others, and deposing antagonists through the use of violence, which presented itself as the primary condition of possibility for masculine identity expression.

5.2.2. *"She is my woman"*: Discourses of Female Commodification

A second discursive them to emerge within this category pertained to referent discourses of female commodification, emasculation and loss, and the manner in which men articulated their violent actions as a response to this. While serving a justificatory function once again, participants' articulations included registers of ownership of women, as well as the consequent effects on the masculine sense of self or identity when this ownership was compromised in some way. In the first and final extracts, there were clear references to the

transactional nature of gender relations, especially though *"give her money"*, *"no way I can get my money back"*, *"making expenses in respect of you"*, and *"she was just using me all these years, while I was working you see"*. Participants were suggesting a degree of ***financial transactioning*** that positioned men as providers, productive earners or breadwinners, thereby generating the belief that there was some degree of ownership and control of women that could be purchased or that was due to them because of this investment. While registers of entitlement were not always clear in the textual data, participants did convey a sense of having their hegemonic position as provider undermined, being cheated through a breach of the implicit contract with their female partners (e.g. *"you crook me"; "you use tricks"*), and ultimately resulting in the killing of their female partners.

I heard that guy was her boyfriend, you see. So from there, I give her the money, she says there is no way I can get my money back. So this is where I shot her, twice. […] The way I felt was if you crook me, that is part of life, but you involved with another man who is my junior at work. You use the tricks of taking the money to finance another man, not your own man. […] I am making expenses in respect of you, while you know that you are having another boyfriend.

(Participant 21)

Net daai attitude, daai sterk attitude wat hy hom self sê, nee ek is in hom huis in, ek is met hom meisie so hy kan my nie nog vertel nie. […] Ek drink saam met jou meisie, so jy, ek kan jou nie kop toe vat nie man. Jy is nie man genoeg om haar man te wees nie. Want hoekom ek drink saam met jou vrou, jy sit en kyk my net so. So sê ek myself, okay alright, […] hom body rondswaai soos hy wil, sien jy. Daai is wat rerig gemaak het ek moet hom steek. […] So in a way in, ja, was ek jaloers.

(Participant 15)

En ek vra vir haar hoekom, waarom doen jy die goed? Sy sê luister, get out of my life, I don't want you anymore. En ek is like, dit kan nie wees nie. Ek kon jou mos lankal gelos het, as ek geweet het dinge sal so uitwerk, ons sou nie eers getrou het nie. […] Dit is 'n pyn op die hart daai, dis 'n pyn op die hart, dit is soos 'n skok wat deur jou gaan om te sê dat die persoon vir wie jy lief is wat nou sê jy moet fokof uit haar lewe uit. Na dat julle alles al deurgegaan het, saam gestaan het, dit is seer. Dit raak 'n persoon. […] Dis moeilik, ja dit raak, geestelik raak dit jou aan […].

(Participant 19)

Ek en sy was verloof gewees en op die betrokke dag het ons 'n squealery gehad. […] En haar terug aantwoord was gewees, hoekom loop ek agter haar aan. Alright ek is 'n bietjie gedrink en kyk ek voel 'n bietjie seergemaak.[...] Today she is a good person, she pretends, okay I do still love you. Tomorrow she change. That was still confusing. And on the other hand she used to throw me with that words. No you don't want to look for a job whatsoever. And that stuff, I am just bottling them up, swallow, swallow, everyday. […] Vir my het dit gelyk as dit nooit sal wees nie dat ons bymekaar kom, dit sal nooit weer so wees nie. […] Ek dink dis gevolg van gevoelens wat ek vir haar gehad het, en sy weet dit. Maar op daardie oomblik het sy dit net reject. So vir my ek kon dit nie aanvaar nie. Ek kon dit nie aanvaar nie. Dit breek 'n man 'n bietjie.

(Participant 2)

That's when he [my stepson] pushed me okay, but he just pushed me then I fell you see. Then he came and he kicked me here you see. […] That's when he kicked me you see, now I think they [my stepson and wife] lost respect and things like that for me. […] Like I said that last couple of months since I lost my job things just started getting worse for me, you see. Things just started, I don't know, it just deteriorated, you see. I don't know, things just got worse everyday. […] because to me it looked like she was just using me all these years, while I was working you see, now I lost my job, now I'm nothing in their eyes anymore, you see.

(Participant 20)

However, variants of this discourse can also be seen above in the encounters that *Participants 15 and 21* recounted, in which the act of murder was premised on **sexual jealousy** in relation to another male whom had been constructed as a sexual rival or adversary. Not only did *Participant 15* make reference to the stabbing as a result of his jealousy (*"So in a way in, ja, was ek jaloers"*), but *Participant 21* also articulated an implied sexual rivalry as the justification for his actions (e.g. *"You use the tricks of taking the money to finance another man, not your own man"*; *"I am making expenses in respect of you, while you know that you are having another boyfriend"; "but you involved with another man who is my junior at work"*). In addition, *Participant 15* also adopted a first person position in re-telling the event from the perspective of the victim to convey his experience of being taunted and challenged. The overall impression from these two accounts was that the homicide occurred in response to alpha-male sexual challenges to the

participants (e.g. *"Jy is nie man genoeg om haar man te wees nie"*; *"hom body rondswaai soos hy wil, sien jy"*), but more importantly reveals the manner in which men are positioned in relation to each other as adversaries, and women are positioned in relation to them as commodified objects.

In addition, the above extracts also represent a discourse of ***emasculation and loss*** and the murderous consequences thereof. Participants described the sense of loss of this relationship in real terms, but predominantly as a loss of their self respect and the respect from others, and therefore account for the homicide as a defensive strategy to wrestle back some degree of control and power. References to *"now I lost my job, now I'm nothing in their eyes anymore"*, *"het sy dit [my gevoelens vir haar] net reject. So vir my ek kon dit nie aanvaar nie. [...] Dit breek 'n man 'n bietjie"*, and *"dat die persoon vir wie jy lief is wat nou sê jy moet fokof uit haar lewe uit. [...] dit is seer. Dit raak 'n persoon"*, all provided some indicators of men's positioning of themselves through the lexical register of emotional victimisation, that then entitled them to act as perpetrators of violence.

These sample discourses echoed interdiscursively with broader discourses operant within the social context of narrative production, and in particular, with social discourses of female commodification in the context of capitalist societies. As a referent discourse, it also intersected directly with hegemonic gender relations, thereby supporting and legitimising the use of male violence against women. From the extracts, there are suggestions that women resisted commodification in several ways. Firstly, they resisted directly by breaching the transactional contract through involvement with a sexual rival. Secondly, they rejected their partners, thereby offering an implied resistance to commodification. Thirdly, they devalued their male partners as unable to act as an agent of commodification, constructed them as failed men, and therefore attempted to annul the transactional contract. In all of these instances, men either described a sense of anger, rejection and emotional pain, or emasculation. Furthermore, each instance also then came to represent a failure of control over women as objectified and commodified sexual partners. Here again, the enactment of violence in response to their breach or annulment of

the transactional contract can perhaps be seen a defensive strategy (Morrell, 2001) that men engage in under circumstances where their dominant forms of masculine presentation are undermined either by changing gender relations, sexual relations, or levels of unemployment. In fact, these accounts reflect a microcosm of changing gender relations within intimate interpersonal relationships, and support the thesis that defensive re-masculinisation processes often accompany such changes in gender, productive and sexual relations. The participants' positions as breadwinners, providers, productive earners and chosen sexual partners were clearly undermined in these encounters, thus establishing the basis for re-masculinisation strategies. Within the context of discoursal production, shifts in gender relations, family relations, labour relations and sexual relations all provided the basis for undermining the attainment of normative hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Adapted forms of masculinity that then often rely on violence become more pronounced as a means to assert control, especially in contexts of masculine disempowerment.

5.2.3. *"I mean, I'm a father"*: Familist and Adultist Discourses

A further discursive theme that emerged was the reliance on referent familist and adultist discourses to justify and support the legitimisation of male violence. Participants accounted for their violence by constructing and positioning themselves as the protective father, the providing father and the adult who needed to meet out a measure of discipline to an unruly child. Relations of power between parents and children, fathers and mothers, as well as broader adult-child relations, were thus reproduced within this theme.

In the following two extracts, participants positioned themselves as ***protective fathers*** who acted violently in defence of their families. In both instances there was a construction of an external threat to the members of the family - the first being through an act of molestation and the second through a direct threat to the safety of the family members by an acquaintance. The overall lexical register was therefore one that could be described as reparative within the first extract. While making reference to a failure in caring for his daughter (*"ek het opgeslip […], ek het gefail"*), *Participant 14* accounted for his actions as a

manifestation of his own guilt (*"Ek dink dis dalk 'n skuldgevoel"*). In the second extract, the overall register was more defensive in nature with *Participant 18* accounting for his actions as a form of defending his family (*e.g. "hy gedreig het hy gaan my familie en my vrou en my kind leed aandoen"*; *"om myself te verdeurdig en my familie te verdeurdig"*).

However, in both instances, these sample discourses were drawing upon broader discourses of the taken-for-granted role of fathers as protectors within the construction of the nuclear family (Poster, 1988). While this referent discourse draws on ideologies of patriarchy and familism, it also intersected with and referred to discourses of normative masculinity in the context of hegemonic gender relations. These interwoven discourses therefore also obliquely reinforced ideologies of masculinism, providing a complex legitimisation of the violent positioning of men within social formations. In particular, because of the emotional currency associated with familism, violence enacted in the service of protecting the family is often legitimised even further.

> Ek meen dis my klein dogtertjie. […] Ja well, ek het opgeslip, ek kon dit nie gekeer het nie. [...] Ek was nie daar om seker te maak dat dit nie weer gebeur nie, ek het gefail. [...] Jy weet as 'n pa wil ek so goed as moontlik vir my kinders en vrou sorg, dis hoekoem ek altyd baie lang ure gewerk het. [...] Ek dink dit was altyd vir my teleurstellend, dat ek te min tyd aan my familie gespandeer het. Dat ek nie daar was op daai oomblik toe hierdie molestering gebeur het nie. Ek dink dis dalk 'n skuldgevoel.
>
> *(Participant 14)*

> Ek het nie die ding beplan nie, verstaan jy, dit was net so, ek het dit [die vuurwapen] vir hom gekry om myself te verdeurdig en my familie te verdeurdig. […] en die feit dat hy gedreig het hy gaan my familie en my vrou en my kind leed aandoen. […] To protect my family. That was it. Myself and my family.
>
> *(Participant 18)*

A variant of this discourse could also be found in that of the ***providing father***, through which participants constructed themselves as acting violently (frequently in the course of robbery and theft) in order to provide material

resources to their families. The overall register of these excerpts suggested that they were under social pressure to act as breadwinners, to provide, and to fulfil their responsibilities to their families. References to *"you have to buy clothes for the child"*, *"I was just thinking about my kids, my family […]. Here is December, I need that money for my kids"*, *"ek sal nie gaan slaap as die kinders nie kos het nie"*, and *"the pressure lies on the father […] to provide"*, all constructed these participants as being compelled to act to fulfil these roles. In so doing, it allowed for the justification of their criminal and homicidal actions. Here too, making reference to familist discourses positioned participants on the moral high ground, and reduced the potential for judgements to be directed at them. However, more importantly, it again points to the construction of men as breadwinners in families, as occupying a position of dominance in relation to productive and labour relations within the family, and reinforces their position of power within both gendered and familial contexts (e.g. *"he's the one who has to provide to the wife and the wife has to provide to the kids you see"*).

> […] you have to buy clothes for the child, your girlfriend wants to go out, you have to socialise, you have to have money to socialise with friends, things like that. So the part-time jobs I had by that time, I couldn't meet my ends with the money I was getting paid, you understand, I had to put extra in. There's when I went over to crime and like I said, the do or die part.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

> I was actually very chuffed with what I was doing, to be honest with you. As I say, I wasn't sorry because my kids, I was just thinking about my kids, my family. I am doing crime, […]. What about my kids? Here is December, I need that money for my kids. The laaitjie wants a Daisy Gun, the other one wants this. I have got two kids.
>
> *(Participant 5)*

> […] ek sal nie gaan slaap as die kinders nie kos het nie. […] ek het daardie dag geroof, […] I work for it, I steal it. Anyway, any which way dat ek daai geld gekry, daai is die eerste ding […]. Jy sien, pressure kan jou druk.
>
> *(Participant 16)*

Men are involved in this things 'cause they are the one who has to provide in most cases you see. Men, the pressure is always on the shoulder of the men. You see this thing, I'm the one who has to provide, even at home. When a wife has nothing and the father has nothing also, the pressure lies on the father you see. 'Cause he's the one who has to provide to the wife and the wife has to provide to the kids you see. 'Cause the kids are crying for their mother. Their mother is crying to their father, you see.

(Participant 11)

While not fitting neatly into the familist discourses referred to above, a similar ***adultist discourse*** emerged through which participants articulated and reproduced the uneven relations of power between adults and children. In the instances below, men accounted for their homicidal actions as a means of disciplining a younger person who had shown disrespect and who had attempted to challenge the taken-for-granted age hierarchy and pecking order. The initial lexical register was mainly centred on the importance of the age differential as a means of establishing respect. Both participants below made reference to this though utterances such as *"Hy is klein"*, *"hy was nog baie jonk"*, *"die mannetjie"*, and *"hierdie laaitjie"*, positioning the victims as children in some way, and therefore justifying their violent actions.

Alongside this, was a register in which victims were positioned as disrespectful in relation to their elders. Phrases such as *"hy moet respek he vir mense wat groter as hom is"*, *"hy het geen maniere nie"*, *"Hy gaan nie vir my 'n laaitjie maak nie"* all highlighted the implicit power relation between adults and children that was being deployed and reproduced to account for the participants actions within the homicidal encounter.

Finally, the accounts ended with registers that constructed the homicidal violence as a mechanism and process of disciplining and restoring the adult-child relation of power. Phrases such as *"ek wil hom maar net gedisiplineer"*, *"ek discipline hom"*, and *"Ek wil hom nou net maniere geleer het"* reflected the manner in which adult-child relations are regulated in a unidirectional manner with regard to discipline, punishment and violence. Here too, the sample discourses essentially reflect and reproduce the uneven nature of adult-child relations (i.e. the adultist notion of 'spare the rod, spoil the child'), but

were utilised to convey a sense of duty to teach and correct the behaviour of 'younger upstarts', and therefore justified the commission of the homicide.

> […] Ek wil hom nou net maniere geleer het om te sê, moenie die ding doen wat jy doen nie, dis verkeerd. […] Hy is klein, hy moet respek he vir mense wat groter as hom is, verstaan jy? […] Daai dag, toe vat ek hom lewe, sien jy dit? […] hy was nog baie jonk, hy het niks gesien nie. […] ek wil hom maar net gedisiplineer […]. […] Ek het aan myself gesê nou gaan hy maniere het, nou sal hy respek het. Hy sal nooit weer die ding doen nie. […] ek dink my mind het net gesnap toe sê ek maar hier is 'n kind man, hy is nog baie jonk, dis 'n laaitjie. Hy kan nie so praat nie, jy verstaan.

> *(Participant 17)*

> En ek het hom gesê, kyk hier ek is nie jou laaitjie nie. Hier is jou laaitjies, en ek het ook my laaitjies. Jy moet vir hulle rondvok, nie vir my nie. Vir my sal jy nie rondvok nie. [...] En daai mannetjie wat doodgegaan [...] hy het gesoek om seer te kry want die hele oggend het hy so aangegaan. [...] Want hy het geen maniere nie. […] En ek sien, nee man hierdie laaitjie hy het nie respek, hy praat nie mooi met jou nie. [...] Daai is nie reg nie, ek discipline hom. [...] Hy gaan nie vir my 'n laaitjie maak nie. Ek sal vir hom 'n laaitjie maak, nie hy vir my nie.

> *(Participant 6)*

The disciplining adult, the violently protective father, the aggressively providing father, and the belligerent man are also closely related referent discourses of masculinity that draw on and reproduce similar ideological outcomes that position and legitimise men as dominant, more powerful, and naturally violent within a range of institutional and relational arrangements and encounters. The intersection of these referent discourses give expression to each other, allowing for a reinforcement, justification and support of male violence in general. In addition, they reciprocally reinforce and reproduce gendered ideologies as well as familist and ageist ideologies that allow for the domination of women, family members and children.

5.2.4. *"This is my home"*: Discourses of Space Privatisation

While the final discursive theme was not heavily represented within the overall data set, it is nevertheless important to consider as it draws on similar discourses of ***privatisation, ownership and survival***, but in the context of

participants' homes. In each of the extracts below, men constructed themselves as defenders of their homes, as exemplars of privatised spaces. The overall register within these discourses centred on an experience of threat within their own homes, after which they positioned themselves as rightfully defending themselves.

> Huh uh. Ek het dit koel gevat, want kyk sy het my nie eintlik hard geslaan nie, verstaan jy, is maar net ek was kwaad, want hulle wil nou oor vat hier by my. By my plek. Dis wat my kwaad gemaak het. […] It just made me feel like, ja, this is my place and no-one will tell me what to do and things like that. I'm not going to let another person come take over here by me and things like that you see. […] Ek sal uh, kyk as jy 'n man is van die huis is nê, kyk jy verwag mos altyd om bo te wees, verstaan jy, so jy, jy gaan nie wil hê iemand anders moet jou plek kom oor vat nie en dinge soos daai nie, so jy wil, jy wil hulle wys dat jy, al moet jy nou slaan en so aan verstaan jy. Jy wil hulle wys dat nee, jy's die baas, jy's die baas van die huis of jy's die baas van die vrou. […] Ek dink, nou baie van ons manne as ons, as ons daai hold veloor, dan raak ons vulnerable.
>
> *(Participant 20)*

> Normaal weg sou ek nooit so iets gedoen het nie, ek is, ek raak geweldadig, maar om iemand se lewe te neem, nee. Dit is nie in my nie, uh dis baie moeilik om vir jou te sê. Miskien die rede omdat hy in my woonstel, terwyl ek gelê en slaap het, my kom krap, krap het. Dis al rede wat ek vir jou, wat ek kan dink, hoekom ek dit gedoen het. […] Daar was 'n bietjie van 'n gesquealery met die rede wat, hy vir my gesê het, I think you must take your things and fuck off, kan ek miskien sê, dit het my laat trigger. […] Ek het gedink, wies jy om in my kamer in te kom en my te kom vertel wat om te doen in my kamer. […] Ek meen, dis dood logies, niemand kom in jou kamer en sê vir jou om jou goedjies te vat en te fokof nie. […] So ek dink as hy dit op 'n beter manier met my kontak gemaak het, sou dit nie, defnitief nie gebeur het.
>
> *(Participant 24)*

In the above extracts, both men refer to actual experiences of threat as well as perceived experiences of threat. In the first instance, the participant explains that he was attacked by his partner, even though this was a minor altercation (*"sy het my nie eintlik hard geslaan nie, verstaan jy, is maar net ek was kwaad"*), but that he experienced it as a threat to his dominant role in his privatised space. He notes that *"hulle wil nou oor vat hier by my. By my plek"*,

"kyk jy verwag mos altyd om bo te wees", and *"Jy wil hulle wys dat nee, jy's die baas, jy's die baas van die huis of jy's die baas van die vrou"*. In a similar manner to which women are commodified and objectified, so too was the space of his private dwelling. The second participant in these extracts also notes a similar experience when he states that *"terwyl ek gelê en slaap het, my kom krap, krap"*, and *"hy vir my gesê het, I think you must take your things and fuck off"*. In both instances participants responded with violence that ended in a homicide, the first being through setting the dwelling ablaze and the second through a gunshot. Their motivations are captured in *"I'm not going to let another person come take over here by me and things like that you see"*, and *"Ek meen, dis dood logies, niemand kom in jou kamer en sê vir jou om jou goedjies te vat en te fokof nie"*.

While the overall register initially appears to be that of defence in the face of threat, a closer reading of the text reveals that is in fact a register of staking claim to a privatised space, asserting the right to own it, as well as acting authoritatively within it. In all of the above, the discourses of privatisation and the protection and assertion of self in the context of private property, finds strong resonance in liberal democratic societies such as South Africa. Under these circumstances, the privatisation of property and space is a central tenet of the social order, valued beyond many other rights as it speaks directly to the nature of modern industrial capitalism and its associated emphasis and protection of individual ownership. While the discourses certainly acted as a justification, they also further supported the ideologies of privatisation, individualism and patriarchy, all of which collectively locate and position men at the centre and head of households. The intersection between constructions of aggressive masculinity and the absolute right to defend private property mutually reinforce each other in this context, and buttress the enactment of violence in privatised spaces.

Within this discursive category, the above discursive themes were primarily deployed by participants for justificatory purposes. However, while they did not pertain directly to violence, as a referent set of themes they relied on and reproduced forms of disciplinary power that govern intimate heterosexual relations, family relations, adult-

child relations, interpersonal relations and relationships to property and privatised spaces. Throughout this process of reproducing these discourses, certain regimes of truth that naturalised the uneven character of these relationships in men's favour became apparent. Not only did these regimes of truth position men as dominant, but also reinforced their entitled enactment of violence. Importantly, these discourses point to ways in which central elements of social relating within social formations deeply entrench the normalisation of male violence in the context of sexual relations within an intimate partner, within families, and between adults and children. Furthermore, interpersonal relations within public and privatised more broadly were also characterised by strong overtones of individualism, privatisation and competition that encouraged violence. What this again points to is the centrality and pervasiveness of violence within systemised forms of signification that reflect and dialectically construct our social worlds, our social practices and our behavioural repertoires within them. Essentially, this discursive category again revealed that the context of discoursal production is a pernicious incubatory environment within which male violence is fostered as normative.

5.3. Murder as Spectacle: Public Performance Discourses in Male Homicide

Within the third discursive category, there was a clearly distinguishable shift away from essentialising and justifying masculine violence, to the point of locating such violence as a central feature of masculine identity development amongst many participants. Violence was constructed as an integral mechanism or tool to perform a masculinity (Butler, 1990) that was considered 'successful' within the confines of the participants' contexts (Connell, 2000). Here too, the overall function for participants was to normalise violence as a necessity in perilous or hostile social environments, but at an ideological level, it also served to reinforce dominant or hegemonic constructions of masculinities as invariably involving elements of aggression. The coupling of violence to male power and status; to the preservation of masculine honour; and to the overt display of masculine 'success' through the brandishing of weaponry; were all evident in the discursive themes that follow. This set of discursive themes highlighted the performative aspect of violent masculinities most starkly, as an adapted appropriation of hegemonic elements of 'successful' manhood, which were then transposed onto more constraining contexts in which such dominant forms of

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masculinity were often unachievable. At the level of disciplinary power, they reflected the manner in which men's accounts represented an internalised performance of their sex in an attempt to gender appropriately within their contexts (Butler, 1990). At an ideological level the themes not only reinforced ideologies of masculinism, but also reflected and reproduced ideologies of militarism that tend to underpin sovereign forms of power within the South African context.

5.3.1. *"Violence makes reputations"*: Discourses of Masculine Status

In the first theme within this discursive category, men articulated the centrality of utilising violence in a public manner to help construct a valued form of masculine identity that was premised upon power, dangerousness and respect. The overall register was one of the 'meek shall not inherit the earth', and the public enactment of violence was associated with a 'successful' form of masculine identity in hostile contexts in which hegemonic forms of masculinity were not attainable. In general, men's accounts revealed a focus on the social and personal identity gains that could be made from this kind of public performance of violence.

References to accessing respect from others were clearly and unambiguously articulated as a function of violent displays. The overwhelming lexical register was of the ***essential nature of violence in 'successful' masculine identity attainment***. Participants referred to *"gain that respect through violence"*, *"if you are rough and stuff like that, that is when you will get respect"*, *"To gain respect you have to hurt somebody"*, *"Gong is 'n hond, hy vat nie kak nie, klomp goeters, sien jy? […] Jy maak vir jouself naam"*, and *"Hulle sien ek het plak. Ek is nie bang nie"*. From the above, the relationship between violence and respect, as well as violence an dangerousness were all articulated as a regime of truth within the participants' lives. There was the implicit assumption that public reputation would be forged in the enactment of violence, where the participants would be feared and simultaneously revered. These sample discourses reflect a regime of truth that is operant within broader social discourses as well, where men are expected to present themselves as highly competitive, powerful and successful in order to gain respect within the context of hegemonic constructions of masculinity.

However, in contexts where this form of hegemonic masculinity is not always attainable, violence is valued as a more visible and easily accessible attribute through which to show strength, power, and to attain concomitant forms of wealth, status and recognition. This is perhaps particularly true in contexts where rates of violence are high, as a higher premium is placed on violent displays as a means of forging an adapted 'successful' masculine identity.

[…] they just have to respect you, and you gain that respect through violence and all that, you understand.

(Participant 1)

[…] en as jy hom wys, dis even beter want nou is dit voor mense. So hulle kan sien dat jy ernstig is. Jy is nie bang nie. […] Hulle sien ek het plak. Ek is nie bang nie. […] So toe voel ek daai aand, daai aand, ek is die ene wat no bo is, hy's nou die ene wat onder is. So ek is die ene wat die krag het.

(Participant 4)

[…] if you are rough and stuff like that, that is when you will get respect. […] this guy gets slapped around, just anyhow in the street. He won't be respected, understand what I mean? But the one who slapped him around he will be respected.

(Participant 5)

To gain respect you have to hurt somebody, to be known, so it is part of violence.

(Participant 16)

[…] daar haal ek 'n gun uit en ek is bo-op hulle. […] Ai, jy sien hulle, ek weet ook nie, hulle sê nee ek is 'n boss en klomp goeters soos daai sien jy, sal sê ja ek is 'n Gong, hy's 'n hond, wat wat, dis my bynaam. Gong. […] Sien jy. Okay dan sal hulle sê, Gong is 'n hond, hy vat nie kak nie, klomp goeters, sien jy? […] Jy maak vir jouself naam.

(Participant 22)

However, there were also more personalised registers in the accounts of some men, indicating that they experienced an internalised sense of success through their violent actions. The following extracts are exemplars of this phenomenon.

Can you imagine how it feels bungee-jumping? That's how it felt, 'cause I felt like a doctor or a powerful God or something. What went through my mind is, I'm taking someone's life away.

(Participant 9)

Its about a ego thing because if you like say when you go to school, if you scared to fight a boy, they gonna call you a sissy and whatever but if you fight that guy, you proving to the other guys that you can take out violence and you're proving to yourself that you're a man. […] You feel now by yourself that I've proved to this guy that I'm the boss, I'm stronger than him, he'll never come and look for shit to me again. So the only way to get there is through violence.

(Participant 9)

In the above, the registers of personal gain can be seen in references to words and phrases such as *"ego"*, *"I felt like a doctor or a powerful God or something"*, and *"you're proving to yourself that you're a man",* and all indicated that masculine identity was not simply a performance for others, but also a performance for the self. This reflects the degree to which the amplified relationship between men and violence is in fact a form of disciplinary power that acts on men in a manner that facilitates self-regulation and the active pursuit of this specific regime of truth. It is represented here in the duality of identity performances for both the external world as well as for the self. It furthermore suggests that masculine identity as traditionally conceptualised within psychology is not a separate internal and external process, but is socially constructed to yield both internal and external gains and motivations. Ideologically, it of course drew on and reinforced a range of gendered ideologies that help to maintain the dominant position of men within social formations. Finally, this discourse also directly challenged the idea of a singular hegemonic masculinity, as many of the participants articulated the integral relationship between men and violence as a successful masculinity. Rather than understanding this as a subordinated masculinity, or a reflection of a crisis in masculinity, participants reframed this relationship as an adapted performance of hegemonic masculinity that was determined by prevailing conditions of possibility.

5.3.2. *"Don't disrespect me"*: Discourses of Masculine Honour Preservation

While asserting one's reputation, developing a 'name' for oneself, and claiming a degree of respect were all associated directly with the public enactment of violence, there was also a discursive theme that highlighted the maintenance of this power in relation to others. The focus was thus on the retention and preservation of male status and respect. The primary register was the management of face credibility through what Polk (1994) has referred to as honour disputes. Here, participants accounted for their violent actions as a response to a public test of masculinity in which there was a taunt or question about their status from an external source. These honour disputes normally involved some degree of emasculation, public humiliation and embarrassment which then needed to be defended. Forms of defensive masculinity such as these often become more entrenched within contexts of re-masculinisation, which in various ways speaks to the nature of masculinities in many marginalised contemporary South Africa communities (Morrell, 2001).

In the extracts below, the register of an ***honour challenge*** which was public in nature was extensively represented within the discourses. Participants reflected on events such as, *"Toe begin hy nou my ma se poes vloek en my vloek"*, *"Weet jy wat hy maak, hy klim uit die pool uit. Twee right skote"*, *"I had a clash with some other guys there and they are beating me very bad"*, and *"he grabbed me, he told me I'm a young boy all those things, all those vulgar languages and there's nothing maybe I can do to him"*.

This process seemed to have triggered a set of effects, the primary being a loss of face in the public domain. Participants reflected on this as *"'n negatiewe effek het op my ego"*, *"Dit het vir my laat klein voel teenoor hom en hy is jonger as my"*, *"Hy get geen respek [vir my of my ma] nie"*, *"Hy embarrass my voor die hele kinders"*, *"Hy het my geslaan voor mense sien jy"*, *"dit maak hom klein, sê eintlik dies 'n poes die jong"*, and *"the way he was grabbing me and his friends they were laughing you see"*. In response to these challenges, all of the men represented in the extracts below were then involved in an escalated altercation, in which their challenger was killed.

Dit het vir my laat klein voel teenoor hom en hy is jonger as my, so in die lokasie dit sal 'n negatiewe effek het op my ego want in die lokasie is alles oor my ego. […] So as hy so agter my is, hy maak dit laat ek moet klein lyk voor mense.

(Participant 4)

Toe begin hy nou my ma se poes vloek en my vloek. […] As iemand my ma se poes vloek, hy slaap nie met my ma nie. Nee hy slaap nie met my ma nie. En hy ken nie my ma nie. Hy ken mos nie my ma se poes nie. [...] Dis net my pa vat haar poes kan vloek want hy slaap met haar. Hy ken haar poes, nie 'n ander man. Sy is nie 'n hoer nie. Sy slaap nie rond met ander manne nie. [...] Hy get geen respek nie.

(Participant 6)

Die tsotsi, hy spat my nat, hy klim uit jy sien. [...] Ek het my foon by my en jy spat my nat. […] ek vertel hom, hey jy, jy moet kyk wat maak jy, jy sien. Moet nie 'n mens vir 'n poes vat nie. [...] Weet jy wat hy maak, hy klim uit die pool uit. Twee right skote, goep, goep! How my buddy, wat maak my buddy? […] Ja, jy sien. Hy embarrass my voor die hele kinders, en hiers die hele kinders, jy sien. [...] Kyk ek is 'n mens ek like nie gembarrass word nie. Veral voor vroumense sien jy. Ja, dit was maar hom flop, daai outjie. […] Hy het my geslaan voor mense sien jy, en daai is een ding wat ek nie van hou nie, hy sien. […] Ek is mos 'n man van vroumense sien jy. Like jol en al daai soort van dinge. Die main ding is moet my nie embarrass nie man. Jy ken dit maak die ander duiwel wakker. […] Here, dit maak hom klein, sê eintlik dies 'n poes die jong. […] Dit laat jou klein voel.

(Participant 25)

I had a clash with some other guys there and they are beating me very bad. […] Well, there's this pride in there, you see for you to be a man, you have to have pride. Isn't it so? When I beat you up in front of other people, what happens to the pride? You see that's what makes other people very much violent. Because right now, I'm this kind of person doing this […]. I have no trouble with anyone, no-one, then you come from nowhere and you beat me up in front of people. Then these people won't be respecting me the same way they were respecting me before, you see. They think this one is weak stuff, he's been beaten […].

(Participant 26)

Uh, you see this guy uh, at first before he grabbed me, he told me I'm a young boy all those things, all those vulgar languages and there's nothing maybe I can do to him. Actually he disrespected me that day you see, than. [...] Yes, ja, the way he was talking to me and the way he was grabbing me with my jacket here. That shows he was disrespecting me. You see that's why we went outside, I was already angry by the time I went outside. […] Because he, the way he was talking to me. And the way he was grabbing me and his friends they were laughing you see. And this girlfriend did see us still you see because it's difficult if you can slap in front of your girlfriend. It was better if this girlfriend was not even here next to me. […] This girlfriend will not be going to respect me anymore. […] I don't know for women, but for us men to be disrespected, it's too difficult because if you are disrespected, uh, it shows maybe that you are not a man. I'm not saying that a fight is the way of showing that you are man. Fight is not good, but sometimes you have to fight in order to bring things back to right.

(Participant 27)

In general, the above extracts point to the fact that masculine power is not simply sought after, but also needs to be maintained if successful masculine identity is to be stable within these contexts. It again speaks to the degree to which the sample discourses reflect masculine competition within broader social discourses, but in instances where non-violent and more socially accepted forms of masculinity can not be attained, violence is elevated to a special attribute that is to be sought after and preserved. It also reinforces and reproduces gendered ideologies and constructions of masculinity as violent, especially in contexts where these honour disputes occur in front of women. However, a more critical reading of the discourses also reveals how they implicitly critique myths of moral absolutism that govern the legitimisation and delegitimisation of male violence. While serious forms of interpersonal violence such as homicide are frequently delegitimised, the participants' accounts offered an embedded critique of moral absolutism, by suggesting that in their contexts such displays are valid and essential to successful masculine identity negotiation.

5.3.3. *"Guns make a man"*: Discourses of Weaponry as a Masculine Display

This particular discursive theme highlighted the specific relationship between men, weaponry and masculinity. It revealed how the brandishing of weaponry

represents a functional form of protection and safety for many men in contexts that are violent, and where there is a perception of threat directed towards them. Beyond this survivalist overtone or register to men's accounts, there was also a more overt utilisation of weaponry as an extension of the performance of violent masculinities to ensure a degree of fear and respect from others. While reproducing to some extent the notion of the violent male, a critical analysis of these discourses in context also highlights its relationship to ideologies of militarism in the historical militarization of South African society, and the place of gun culture within this context (Cock, 2001).

In the extracts below, several participants mentioned the ***functional utility of firearms in insecure environments*** where they lived. It was constructed as an equaliser, as a means of safety, and as a means to protect oneself in dangerous circumstances. References to *"Ek is kort, het geen krag. […] 'n vuurwapen […] dis sekuriteit basies"*, *"ek voel baie unsafe […] dan is ek alleen by die huis. […] As jy nie met jou gun is, jy voel unsafe, jy sien"*, and *"Kyk 'n mes is very close. Jy moet baie nader ingaan om hom seer te wil maak en 'n vuurwapen kan jy seermaak van 'n ver distance, from a distance"*, were linked to a register of self-protection, thereby reinforcing the social construction of firearms as a tool of defence.

> Maar enige man is maar so, hulle hou van vuurwapens, soos hoe kan ek sê, sê nou jy's groot sterk en alles. Ek is kort, het geen krag of dit nie. Maar ek wil nie hê almal moet rondloop en vertel, ja daai ou is 'n bangbroek maar hy doen niks daaraan nie so. As jy 'n vuurwapen by jou het, dis sekuriteit basies. Daar is nie juis iemand wat by jou moeilikheid gaan soek of wat ook al nie.
>
> *(Participant 8)*

> Soos ek, as ek my gun los by die huis. Ek loop ne, ek voel baie unsafe, jy sien. Daar was 'n tyd dan reeds my broer, jy gaan pee met jou gun, jy gaan kak met jou gun, as jy kombuis toe gaan. [...] En dis mos net ek, my ma en my pa en sustertjie, en die sustertjie, sys nou agt jy sien. Dan is hulle mos weg, dan is ek alleen by die huis. Jou gun lê hierso, jy gaan toilet toe, jy vat jou gun, jy's in die huis in jy sien. Jy vat jou gun, jy gaan pee, jou kom terug, jou gun bly by jou. Twenty-four hours […]. As jy nie met jou gun is, jy voel unsafe, jy sien.
>
> *(Participant 25)*

Okay, die een ding is meeste van ons mans, jy hou daarvan om 'n vuurwapen te dra. […] Ek het meer krag oor jou, ek kan net sê nee as ons miskien squeal […] Maak nie saak of jy het of nie. Ek het dan iets, backup. Meer as my hande wat kan werk. Tog enige van ons weet, 'n vuurwapen is 'n baie gevaarlike ding. […] Kyk 'n mes is very close. Jy moet baie narder ingaan om hom seer te wil maak […] 'n vuurwapen kan jy seermaak van 'n ver distance, from a distance.

(Participant 2)

However, while this functional and protective register was certainly present in the accounts, by far the most significant register was the use of firearms as an ***extension of power that could be visibly displayed*** to others. In this context, brandishing firearms was a means of instilling fear, and consequently, of instilling a sense of respect in a very public manner. Participants made direct linkages between the attainment of power and firearms in their sentiments, as conveyed in the following extracts.

[...] look at hunting you know, competition, things like that, that is something you enjoy with a dangerous weapon and it's something you can really involve other spectators and people. So I'll say men got that urge to have power to rule […]. Net daai krag, net daai wilskrag, om te sê, nee hy het krag in sy hande. Want sodra jy 'n vuurwapen in jou hand het, almal gaan bang wees vir jou veral as hulle sien jy gebruik dit. […] No, I felt I got a firearm, I got power in my hand, why must I surrender.

(Participant 1)

Vir 'n ou, gun is die vinnigste way wat jy iets kan settle. As ek vir jou soek, ek haal 'n gun uit, ek point jou, jy sal my nooit weer pla nie. […] Die anders is bang vir 'n gun, jy sien. [...] Ja, en 'n gun gee jou meer krag.

(Participant 3)

[...] om 'n vuurwapen te het en mense weet jy't 'n vuurwapen, dan is hulle 'n bietjie bangerig vir jou. [...] Jy't krag, jy't krag. […] Ek is in control.

(Participant 4)

And uh, weapons, I would say they give you a power, they give you strength. So if I am standing with a gun you would think twice about telling me nonsense.

(Participant 5)

[…] hulle loop met 'n wapen, hulle gebruik hom. Hulle wil mos nou die cowboy wees in die movie in. […] Almal moet nou bang wees vir hom. Sê, daai man het 'n mes of daai man het 'n gun. Jy moet nie speel met daai man nie.

(Participant 6)

'n Vuurwapen, hulle is meer bang vir 'n vuurwapen […]. Ek voel naai, ek is 'n koning, a king. Hulle sal my niks vertel nie, even tot 'n policeman, hy sal kom, ek sal hom ook skiet. […] hulle ken, ou Gong, haai hy vat nie kak nie. Ja.

(Participant 22)

References to the instillation of fear in others were expressed through phrases such as *"almal gaan bang wees vir jou veral as hulle sien jy gebruik dit"*, *"anders is bang vir 'n gun, jy sien"*, *"is hulle 'n bietjie bangerig vir jou"*, *"with a gun you would think twice about telling me nonsense"*, *"Almal moet nou bang wees vir hom"*, and *"hulle is meer bang vir 'n vuurwapen"*. The instillation of fear was supported by a masculine identity spin-off within such overt displays of aggression. Participants again reflected on how it gave them a greater sense of power in utterances such as *"meer krag"*, *"they give you a power, they give you strength"*, *"Ek voel naai, ek is 'n koning, a king. […] vat nie kak nie"*.

In the above, the carrying and brandishing of weaponry certainly served a functional purpose for many, but was also viewed as a valuable component in displaying a violent and 'successful' masculinity. While this may have been the primary social function of these discourses for many participants, there were also ideological underpinnings that were being reflected and reproduced through these discoursal practices. In the historical context South Africa, levels of militarization alongside ideologies of militarism and survivalism have always been central to its construction as nation state (Vale, 2003). While the demise of apartheid ostensibly saw a waning of these institutional and ideological practices, they continue to be insidiously present within the social formation. The social fallout from failures to reintegrate ex-combatants within communities, the proliferation of small arms within many communities, the ongoing securitisation of South African society, the public discourse of harsher criminal justice and policing interventions, South Africa's role in

Africa as a peace-keeping force, and its role in the United Nations Security Council, all reflect a society that continues to be militarised. Cock (2001) refers to this as a taken-for-granted and "banal militarism" that involves the normalisation and legitimisation of war, violence and military might. Given the historical and contemporary levels of militarization, it is not surprising that the gun culture in South Africa is as rampant as it is. Xaba (2001) also points out that prior to 1994, militarised violence was legitimised as something noble that provided one with social credibility, especially if it was constructed as anti-state. However, in post-apartheid South Africa this is no longer the case, and many men find themselves utilising their military skills in criminal activities and butting heads with the law. Thus, the presence of militarised and survivalist registers and overtones within participants' narratives and discourses reveals in part their reproduction of militarism, but also their adaptive location of themselves in a changing social world where overt militarist displays are no longer legitimised. Other than the militarised underpinnings of many of these discourses, there were also clearly referent linkages to discourses of masculinism and hegemonic constructions of gender, within which the gun culture represents an adaptation of a 'successful' masculinity in endemically violent social contexts.

Within this discursive category, participants not only shifted away from distancing and justificatory discourses, but directly articulated the importance of violence in the construction of 'successful' masculinity within their social contexts. Here, the emphasis on violence in the attainment of a reputation and status, the preservation of this status in disputes of honour, and the importance of weaponry as a physical extension of masculine performances, were all reflected within the discourses and narratives. While the ideological effects can be seen in continued gendering of men as powerful and violent, as well as the insidious reproduction of militarist ideologies through the reification of the firearm in particular, these discourses also point to the importance of recognising hegemonic masculinity as unstable and compound. While the overt articulations of the relationship between masculinity and violence would be delegitimised in many social contexts, these participants were highlighting the importance of understanding hegemonic masculinity in multiple ways, as adaptive, and as a negotiated form of identity within the conditions of possibility that social

contexts provide. Central to this argument is the recognition that the social fabric in which discoursal production occurred is one which is facilitative of violence, reinforces its normativity, and in fact encourages it through a range of discursive and social practices.

5.4.   Murder as an Instrumental Means: Economic Discourses in Male Homicide

The final discursive category can generally be described as one in which violence and its linkages to masculinity were elevated to a degree of normality within processes of obtaining economic and other material resources. Here, the discourses served to convey a sense that the use of violence was an economic necessity and norm, and found interdiscursive resonance with dominant discourses of wealth and material resource acquisition, competition for resources and status, and the inevitably hostile nature of such economic processes within market-driven contexts. Participants highlighted the instrumental and utilitarian value of violence in several instances, suggesting that it was an acceptable modus operandi in securing material and economic resources. In social contexts where there is the unlikely attainment of what Connell (2000) refers to as the transnational business masculinity, participants' discursive contours represented a form of masculine negotiation around their functioning within a market-driven and consumerist economy. The social construction of 'successful' men as competitive providers within broader economic discourses intersected with hegemonic constructions of 'successful' masculinity more generally, and ensured that they mutually reinforced each other and legitimised processes of resource accumulation as fundamentally competitive and violent within the context of capitalism. With regard to the implicit power relations that were reproduced, the distinction between the 'economic haves' versus the 'economic have-nots' became an important feature around which the men constructed their masculinity. While the primary functions of these discourses were certainly justificatory in nature, these discourses also supported classist and market ideologies that ascribe and attribute greater levels of status and power to those with material access and wealth, and consequently justifies material gain and benefit at the expense of others.

5.4.1. *"Get rich or die trying"*: Discourses of Material Gain

While this was the only theme identified within this discursive category, it was nevertheless important to consider, given that several participants articulated narratives that coupled violence with economic gain. In the first instance, men reflected a ***normalisation of violence and crime as a means of making a living*** and constructed their violent actions as an instrumental mechanism in processes of material gain and resource acquisition. While some participants articulated this instrumentality as a necessity in contexts of limited financial resources, others were more overt in their critique of the labour market and explicitly argued for violence and crime as a more expedient manner through which resources could be attained. In the two extracts below, the men's accounts were conveyed though a primary lexical register of necessity, and crime and violence were thus constructed as their only option to offset difficult financial circumstances that they had experienced.

> […] okay I'm like a guy that depends living on crime like, it's my lifestyle, not actually my lifestyle because I used to work as well. I worked […] about four years […]. At that stage they made me a floor manager. I was a floor manager about for eight months and this thing of, what do they call it, black empowerment, okay, I won't go into apartheid but where a black man is choosed above you. […] And I just thought, well for me to drag on in this job, I'm gonna be unhappy in this work situation and I don't wanna be unhappy in my work. So there is where I just quit, and I thought well the package they gave me and everything and I just decided. I tried to have a straight job and everything. I got that, a couple of R1000's monthly, I can't do my thing, it doesn't meet my ends you understand so, I had to like get extra […]. That is where I went into crime.

> *(Participant 1)*

> What I was trying to do was open a business, be a family man. I came from prison, this is not my first time in prison. My first time was for murder as well. Show people I am changing, you understand? Get some proper respect, you understand? But now, how can I say, things were just too bad. I had to resort to crime here and there. […] The only time I use violence in crime right, is for financial gain. So I would say because of poverty. […] You have to get money. You survive to buy clothes, have food on the table, understand, help my mum with accounts and stuff like that.

> *(Participant 5)*

Here, references to *"okay I'm like a guy that depends living on crime like, it's my lifestyle"*, and *"The only time I use violence in crime right, is for financial gain"* illustrated the normalisation of violence and crime in resource and financial gain. Alongside these iterations were references to failed attempts at engaging the economy and therefore a failure in economic thriving. Participants reflected on these circumstances in *"What I was trying to do was open a business, be a family man. […] But now, how can I say, things were just too bad. I had to resort to crime here and there"*, and *"I tried to have a straight job and everything. I got that, a couple of R1000's monthly, I can't do my thing, it doesn't meet my ends you understand so, I had to like get extra […]. That is where I went into crime"*. These strategies of justifying their criminal activities were supported by comments such as *"You get money. You survive to buy clothes, have food on the table, understand"*. In general, the content of these accounts was underpinned by the implicit tension between poverty and instrumental crime, thereby affording participants an opportunity to establish a compelling argument to motivate for this instrumentality.

Despite the justificatory social function of the accounts, at an ideological level these utterances reinforce notions of the criminal underclasses, and support classist ideologies that suggest that marginalised communities require greater degrees of control and surveillance. While similar to the environmental determinism reflected in the first discursive category discussed earlier in this chapter, these discourses represent a form of social determinism that establishes a causal relationship between poor economic circumstances and criminality and violence. However, a more critical reading of the text also reveals the implicit binary of the criminal underclasses versus the upperclasses who embody greater levels of civil obedience. Such binaries within systemised forms of signification are frequently appropriated into classist ideologies that argue for institutional and structural control, as well as for the subjugation of marginalised communities. In societies such as South Africa where wealth disparities and class divides do in fact exist as a social and material reality, these discourses fuel ideologies and practices that could conceivably be understood as structural forms of violence. The mere presence

of these discourses thus point to cleavages within the social formation that act as a fulcrum on which structural violence rests.

However, while these discourses offer us the opportunity for implicit critique, several participants were more vociferous in their direct critiques of the labour market within the market economy, and its explicit failure to justly provide opportunities to make a living. In the following extracts, participants parodied and caricatured attempts at engaging the social and economic system through mainstream channels. References to *"Ek het gedink daai [studeer en werk] is nie vir my nie, daai is net vir moegoes, ek is mos nie 'n moegeo nie"* revealed the denunciation of these mainstream mechanisms and those who engaged the economy in that manner. Similarly, a more affluent young men who had greater access to mainstream engagement with the economy was referred to as a *"mama's baby"*. *Participant 22* clearly distanced himself from these parodies of masculinity by referring to himself as a *"thug"* and his social experiences as *"thuglife"*.

> Like ek sê, daai het ek gevat, daai is my werk, as ek like sê ek gaan uit vandag ek sê ek gaan drie karre gaan haal. Daai, ek ken, een kar is vir my ma en vir die huis, die ander enetjie is vir my kind om goedjies te koop, en die ander een is vir my. Sien jy. […] Ek het gedink daai [studeer en werk] is nie vir my nie, daai is net vir moegoes, ek is mos nie 'n moegeo nie.

> *(Participant 22)*

> Ja, dis like as ek sê, ek sit daarso ek sê, naai hy sal net weer enetjie kry, dis mama's baby, hom baas sal hom enetjie kry, dis myne die. […] Ja, soos ek hom gesien het, toe sien ek ne, dies 'n mama's baby. […] Eish, sê like jy sal hom sien miskien aan hom drag, hoe gedrag hy homself, […]. [...] Ja, hy's mooi aangetrek [...]. [...] Daai sal nie in die thuglife in kom nie. [..] Ja, hom lewe is baie makliker as ons sinne.

> *(Participant 22)*

Participants also made direct comparisons between mainstream economic engagement and instrumental crime in the following extracts.

[…] a lot of people got the mentality that if I have to work for a boss, I have to listen to his shit for the whole month, I have to listen what he is saying to me, if he says do this I have to do this, if he pushes me in that direction I have to go in that direction, if he says my shoes isn't clean enough, I have to clean them, if he says this and this and this. So at the end of it I think people if they can go and steal, firstly you don't have someone telling me what to do, secondly you are your own boss, thirdly I'd say it's knowing that you are getting all that money in such a small space of time, whereas you would have got it in a long space of time with a lot of bullshit. Just to be honest, so I think, ja, it's about you actually setting your mind and you work it out what is the best for you. Steal or do work, steal or do work? And at the end of the day when you look, when you have the positives about stealing, it's much more than the negatives. Much more.

(Participant 9)

Ons sien hierdie groot mans, om te sê, hy het die ding, hy het dit gekry en so aan. So ek gaan dit ook kry soos hy dit gekry het, en niemand gaan my stop om daar uit te kom nie. […] Nou jy werk vir drie duisend 'n maand, ek maak drie duisend in 'n dag in. Ek gaan nie gaan werk nie. Ja, ek het gedink die honest living is net 'n bluff, verstaan jy. The way to make money, the easiest way is by robbing, hijacking, stealing, doing all sorts of crime, verstaan jy.

(Participant 17)

Here, participants noted that *"if I have to work for a boss, I have to listen to his shit for the whole month […]. Steal or do work, steal or do work? And at the end of the day when you look, when you have the positives about stealing, it's much more than the negatives"*, and *"die honest living is net 'n bluff […] The way to make money, the easiest way is by robbing, hijacking, stealing, doing all sorts of crime, verstaan jy"*.

In addition there was also a register of acting decisively in the criminal attainment of resources and wealth. Men within the study revealed that *"you better get it or else no-one else will get it for you. If you wanna be rich you be rich, if you wanna be poor, you'll stay poor if you don't make a plan about it"*, and *"jy soek daai ding, jy gaan mos plan maak om daai ding te kry"*.

Finally, there were also registers of expedience that reflected opportunistic criminal instrumentality, as well as the ease with which resource acquisition

could be attained. This was represented in participants' references to *"baie successful mense sien jy as criminals in onse lokasie. […] So automatically the environment I grew up in, I adapted that lifestyle of that environment"*, *"jy gaan mos plan maak om daai ding te kry. Verstaan jy, hoe gouer, hoe beter"*, and *"'n Thug se lewe is nie so nie man. Is nou, is nou. Jy sien. Is nou, is nou"*.

> Ja, die geweld kom nou wel in die lokasie wat ek groot word, verstaan jy? Um, baie successful mense sien jy as criminals in onse lokasie. Dit is mense wat hulle is betrokke in dwelms en karre te roof, verstaan jy? So automatically the environment I grew up in, I adapted that lifestyle of that environment, verstaan jy. So daai het gekom natural met al die goeters wat ek sien hier voor my, verstaan jy. Ek het nou maar net geadapt aan dit [...]. Nee ek dink dis die easiest way to get whatever you want. Verstaan jy.
>
> *(Participant 17)*

> Jy verstaan, kyk as jy 'n thug is, jy kyk net wat gaan jy benefit uit studeer. Jy dink nie vir die jare wat kom, jy dink vir nou. Ek pay dan R20000 'n kar miskien verstaan jy […]. Ons het R20 000 'n day gemaak, kyk hoeveel is dit vir die week. […] Kyk as jy ding nou gaan sien miskien, verstaan jy, jy soek daai ding, jy gaan mos plan maak om daai ding te kry. Verstaan jy, hoe gouer, hoe beter. Verstaan jy, ek sal nie gaan, ek het 'n R2000 in my sak, hiers 'n ding van R5000, ek gaan nie deposit sit of lay-bye of whatever. [...] 'n Thug se lewe is nie so nie man. Is nou, is nou. Jy sien. Is nou, is nou.
>
> *(Participant 25)*

> […] for me life was like, you better get it or else no-one else will get it for you. If you wanna be rich you be rich, if you wanna be poor, you'll stay poor if you don't make a plan about it. That is how I live on a day- to-day basis.
>
> *(Participant 1)*

Certainly, many of the sample discourses reflected above have interdiscursive synergies with broader social discourses pertaining to successful functioning within the economy. Registers of decisiveness and expedience are common within market-driven economies, and in fact come to represent admirable attributes of men who epitomise the transnational business masculinity. However, in contexts that are more constrained and do not allow for the accomplishment of this form of

masculinity, many of the participants appeared to appropriate these central markers of success and adapted them to more constraining socio-economic environments. As a more accessible attribute, violence was deployed as a means of expressing economic expedience and decisiveness in the pursuit of material resources. Fundamentally, the discursive underpinnings in both contexts are similar, but result in the construction of the glorified corporate raider on the one hand, and the vilified violent criminal on the other hand. At an ideological level, these discourses of course reflected and reproduced the normativity of consumerism, rapid wealth acquisition, economic expedience, and business decisiveness, but also provided an implicit critique of the pervasive violence and contradictory nature of the market economy.

5.5.   Discursive Instability and Discontinuity

As noted earlier in ***Chapter Five***, discourse analysis is fundamentally concerned with destabilising the apparently continuous nature of meanings within a corpus of texts. Within this study, this was done through identifying oppositions within the narratives, as well as their relative positions of power and consequent ideological effects. In addition, these oppositions were subverted through revealing how they are socio-historically located and not given, thereby sabotaging the continuous and taken-for-granted nature of the regimes of truth that are conveyed by such discourses. By engaging in such deconstructionist processes, this allowed for alternative meanings to emerge from parallel readings of the texts. Furthermore, through exposing the myth of the unitary and fixed subject, discourse analysis reveals how in the minutiae of everyday interactions the potential for resistances and alternative ways of being in the world become evident (Macleod, 2002; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). However, important to note is that while these potential spaces for resistance to disciplinary power may exist, that conscious social processes and projects to harness such discontinuities in the service of transformation must be undertaken, as the prospect of resistance does not in and of itself imply the inevitability of social change. While many of these critical tasks referred to above have been infused into the preceding analysis within this chapter, the following represent additional illustrations of oppositions and instabilities within the discursive categories and themes.

Several participants revealed more contested understandings of the origins and reasons for male violence. The following extracts represent narrational moments in which social constructions of the impulsive and innately aggressive male were challenged. In the first two extracts, despite the presence of hedging as a rhetorical strategy, participants were clearly articulating a sense of personal responsibility that countered the pervasive exculpatory registers that were present within distancing discourses. In the third extract, the naturalisation of gender differences was first generalised (*"Men don't"*), but was later mediated through the rhetorical strategy of particularisation (*"Most men don't"*), that suggested that this was not necessarily applicable to all men.

> Ek kan nie sê ek was nugter nie. Maar ek kan ook nie sê ek het nie geweet wat ek doen nie. Want ek het duidelik geweet wat ek doen.

> *(Participant 8)*

> As a human I don't think, I mean if it was built into human beings, everybody would have gone around killing everybody here and doing whatever. I don't think it's built into humans, I think certain people push themselves to that level for certain reasons.

> *(Participant 9)*

> I'd say women are more clever than men. […] because a man in a situation, where your adrenalin is pumping, you get cross. You don't be objective […]. You look at it one way […]. I'm gonna beat the shit out of him. Women look at it another way, what's the options I can take. Men don't. Most men don't.

> *(Participant 9)*

Similarly, there were also clear discontinuities that contested the discourse of moral deficiency, as evidenced below. These participants' utterances directly challenged the prevailing moral barometers that are employed in legitimising and delegitimising certain forms of violence. In so doing, orders of moral discourses were clearly competing, and reflected the unstable and discontinuous nature of morality surrounding violence within South African society.

> As I told you I am not sorry for what I did.

> *(Participant 5)*

> Ek het maar net vir myself gesê, haai hy's dood daai vark. [...] Ja ek het goed gevoel
> in daai sense.

<p align="right">*(Participant 4)*</p>

In addition, while the first extract below reflects an attribution of blame to peer influences as an environmental determinant of violence, *Participant 6* simultaneously challenged the taken-for-granted idea that family functioning and socialisation was a determinant of his criminality. The second extract below also relied on hedging as a rhetorical strategy, but more importantly, again disputed the idea that peer influences determine criminality and violence. Clearly, these represented minutiae of ambiguity and potential resistances to prevailing environmentally deterministic explanations of male violence and crime.

> […] ek kan nie sê dit was van ek groot gemaak is, want ek was groot gemaak in 'n
> regte huis. Groot gemaak in 'n regte huis. Maar net die vriende wat ek, ek het eintlik
> met verkeerde gemeng, met verkeerde vriende.

<p align="right">*(Participant 6)*</p>

> I don't know, I won't blame my friends, I got my own wrong. But I don't know,
> things went wrong, I don't know where.

<p align="right">*(Participant 1)*</p>

Finally, the participant in the following extract argued that the brandishing of weaponry was in itself a risk factor for attracting violent assault. Contrary to the more prominent articulations of participants, firearms were constructed as a focal point or lightning rod for violence, rather than being a defensive tool or instrument for publicly displaying masculine prowess.

> As hy net uitkom ons vang hom. Ons vat daai gun af. Maak hulle hom nou dood ook
> nog. Daaroor eintlik, wapens, is nie eintlik nodig vir 'n man om met 'n wapen te loop
> nie. Dis nie nodig nie.

<p align="right">*(Participant 6)*</p>

While the above illustrations were by no means intended to offer an exhaustive account of the discursive instabilities within the participants' narratives, they nevertheless provided a snapshot of the internal contradictions within narrational

communications and discursive productions. A closer reading of the previous analytic sections within this chapter reveal many more such instances, as well as the presence of duelling discourses within the narratives (e.g. the protective father and the aggressive man; the providing father and the expedient criminal) (Wood, 2004). When considering all the instabilities, ambiguities and contradictions reflected within the narrative and discursive analyses in this chapter, the potential for disrupting and subverting continuous and taken-for-granted regimes of truth surrounding male homicidal violence becomes more apparent, and the possibilities for transforming and uncoupling masculinities and violence appear more conceivable.

In concluding this chapter, it is perhaps instructive to return to Tolson (2004) and Carrigan, Connell and Lee (2004), who note the limitations of such analytical studies. In essence, these authors all argue that broader social movements and critical social coalitions will necessarily have to engage in social, political, material and consciousness-raising struggles if the transformatory potential revealed within the analysis of this and other textual data is to be materially realised beyond the linguistic context of meaning-making. The following chapter concludes the study by providing a synopsis of the research findings, highlights the limitations, significance and implications of the study, and explores the possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Each murder is one too many.

(Jürgen Habermas, 2003, *A Dialogue with Jürgen Habermas*)

1.   INTRODUCTION:

By way of conclusion, it is perhaps useful to reflect on the problematic of male homicidal violence once more and to distil some of the key elements that have emerged from this study. Even at a cursory glance the extent and magnitude of this psychosocial phenomenon suggests that it is a significant global and national concern that continues to pervade many social formations. Furthermore, it has displayed a remarkable historical recalcitrance, obstinacy and mutability even in the face of significant research, resources and intervention strategies being directed towards its prevention and reduction across the world. While for many the persistence of these global and national patterns has resulted in a level of apathy, despair and fatalism that has reinforced male homicidal violence as a regime of truth that is simply insurmountable and unstoppable, Tolson's (2004, p. 78) view of this phenomenon is perhaps more circumspect, realistic and tempered. Rather than searching for the holy grail of interventions, it is more useful to conceptualise the relationship between masculinities and violence as deeply embedded within social and relational processes, and as a phenomenon that it is *"interwoven with ideology"* and the material conditions of our time. Understanding it as a much broader social problem is more useful in framing our research and interventions in the long-term, as it foregrounds the need for sustained social analysis and interventions at the levels of social relationships, systemised forms of signification, institutional processes, cultural practices, and structural arrangements. With this in mind, this chapter focuses on a summary of the findings of this study as a potential contribution to this sustained form of social analysis, highlights its significance and implications, engages reflexively with some of its limitations, and explores the prospects for future research.

2.   SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:

In tracking the analytic process that was utilised within the study, the findings can broadly be delineated into two areas, and while they are clearly integrally related to each other, are addressed separately for the sake of convenience.

The first broad area generally pertains to the findings that emerged from the analysis of *narrative forms* within participants' talk. Narrative generation was essentially conceptualised as an interpersonal accounting exercise that involved processes of self-presentation, impression management, the establishment of credibility, and the management of *face*. Three primary narrative forms emerged during the analysis, namely, narratives of stability and continuity, narratives of decline, and narratives of transformation and growth

Within the *narratives of stability and continuity*, the functions of participants' talk centred around constructing and positioning themselves as men who had acted violently out of necessity. While relying predominantly on justifications to acknowledge blame but to offset responsibility, participants nevertheless displayed elements of compliance in relation to the prevailing moral condemnations surrounding homicide within the social formation. Fundamentally, the function was to construct themselves as necessarily violent within contexts that demanded it, and as reasonable men who were acting reasonably within such contexts. In considering the function of this strategy within the participants' social contexts, it is apparent that most of these men experienced their environments as challenging and perilous, and as social spaces in which criminality, violence and their own unemployment were significant features. Under these conditions, the establishment and performance of a violent masculinity served as greater currency for these participants, as it was intimately related to the attainment of power and status. More importantly, in adverse social contexts where the hegemony of a transnational business masculinity is not attainable, the coupling of violence and masculinities becomes a distinct negotiated form of identity for men, especially if the historical context already sanctions some degree of violence. Constructions of violent masculinity therefore served to anchor the participants' identities as fairly fixed in contexts that they believed were fairly fixed as well, and in which there was little opportunity for shifts in resource access or future prospects. This form of hypermasculinisation and its integral linkages to violence was thus an adaptive strategy for many men who could not foresee any other forms of hegemonic masculine identity attainment possible within their social contexts.

Within the *narratives of decline*, the social functions of participants' iterations were somewhat different. They were highly invested in positive face work and actions that helped to position and construct them as normal men who had been functional within their contexts prior to their momentary lapse in judgement within the homicidal encounter. Active attempts

at positive self-presentation therefore became much more significant within these narratives, as participants attempted to deploy exculpatory registers and strategies to reduce negative moral judgements. When considering the function of this communicative strategy in relation to the social contexts of participants, most of these men had experienced their environments as less constraining than articulated in the previous narrative form. There was thus greater purchase power in constructing themselves as normal in order to position themselves as potentially 'productive citizens' who could be reintegrated into their communities in future. Positioning themselves as normal men who had experienced a failure in judgement therefore represented a compromise position of accepting some degree of guilt and moral censure about their homicidal actions, but in the service of potentially re-entering society as 'acceptable citizens' in future.

Within the final *narratives of transformation and growth*, the primary function of the men's talk was to distance themselves from their violent pasts as far as possible, and to reconstruct themselves as rehabilitated men who were ready for reintegration into the social formation. Unlike the first two narrative forms in which participants either saw the hostile context as unchanging, or envisaged possibilities for potential reinsertion into their 'normal' lives, these participants relied on a moral currency as a strategy for reintegration into their communities, through a performance of rehabilitatory and propitiatory registers. The apparent driver of these narratives was their internalised sense of the social context as one that is morally condemning with respect to homicide perpetrators, and they thus adopted the strategy of moral compliance.

Ideologically, the most immediate effect was seen in the implicit and overt challenges to dominant orders of moral discourses that govern the legitimacy and illegitimacy of violence. While some of the above narratives clearly reinforced and reproduced these moral discourses, others openly contested them. These resistant or subordinated moral discourses highlighted the discontinuous nature of hegemonic forms of morality and their instability in social contexts such as South Africa. The normalisation of violence, the ambiguous relationship to violence, and the denunciation of violence all mirror the social formation's inconsistent moral response to it. The continuum of the narratives thus spoke to the manner in which constructions of masculine violence and violence more broadly, are also reflections of the contradictory manner in which violence is addressed, legitimised and delegitimised within contemporary social formations such as South Africa.

The second broad area of analysis examined the specific *forms, functions and ideological effects of the discoursal practices* that underpinned the narratives. Four main discursive categories were delineated within the study, namely, distancing discourses, justificatory discourses, public performance discourses, and economic discourses.

In the first discursive category, *essentialist, moral, and environmentally deterministic discourses* were most prominently represented within the textual data. A critical reading of the texts revealed that embedded within these discourses were several manifestations of disciplinary power that have resulted in the reproduction of certain regime of truths, binaries, and taken-for-granted ways of understanding the origins and reasons for male violence. Through a critical examination of their ideological effects, it was apparent that these discourses pointed to meaning systems and social practices that represent and reinforce fractures of inequality along cleavages of gender relations, inter-community relations and class relations. Furthermore, these fractures of inequality are all integrally linked to exploitative processes of subjugation and systemised forms of domination that reinforce and legitimise violence at an interpersonal level as well as at a structural level within the South African social formation. The fundamental point emerging from this discursive category is that distancing discourses that were employed reflect a social context that is highly differentiated, uneven, and legitimising of violence at various levels.

The second discursive category encompassed referential *discourses of survival, female commodification, familism and adultism, and privatisation and ownership*. As a referent set of discourses, they relied on and reproduced forms of disciplinary power that govern intimate heterosexual relations, family relations, adult-child relations, interpersonal relations and relationships to property and privatised spaces. Throughout this process of reproducing these discourses, certain regimes of truth that naturalised the uneven character of these relationships in men's favour became apparent. Not only did these regimes of truth position men as dominant, but also reinforced their entitled enactment of violence. Importantly, these discourses point to ways in which central elements of social relating within social formations deeply entrench and support the normalisation of male violence in general, but also specifically in the context of sexual relations within an intimate partner, within families, and between adults and children. Furthermore, interpersonal relations within public and privatised spaces more broadly were also characterised by strong overtones of individualism, privatisation and competition that encouraged violence. Essentially, this discursive category

again revealed that the context of discoursal production is a pernicious incubatory environment within which male violence is fostered as normative.

The third discursive category was characterised by ***discourses of masculine status, honour preservation, and the use of weaponry as a masculine display***. Participants articulated the centrality of violent public performances in the construction of 'successful' masculinity within their social contexts. While the ideological effects clearly contributed to a continued gendering of men as powerful and violent, there was also a more insidious reproduction of militarist ideologies through the reification of firearms in particular. However, these discourses also pointed to the importance of recognising hegemonic masculinity as unstable and compound. While participants' overt articulations of the relationship between masculinity and violence would be delegitimised in many social contexts, they highlighted the importance of understanding hegemonic masculinity in multiple ways, as adaptive, and as a negotiated form of identity within the conditions of possibility that social contexts provide. Central to this argument was the recognition that the social fabric in which discoursal production occurred, remains one which is facilitative of violence, reinforces its normativity, and in fact encourages it through a range of broader discursive and social practices.

The final discursive category focussed primarily on ***economic discourses*** in male homicide. Men's talk reflected a ***normalisation of violence and crime as a means of making a living*** and constructed their violent actions as an instrumental mechanism in processes of material gain and resource acquisition. Certainly, many of the sample discourses represented within this category had a degree of synergy with broader social discourses that constructed 'successful' men as economically decisive, expedient and well-resourced. However, in contexts that are more constrained and do not allow for the accomplishment of this form of hegemonic masculinity, many of the participants appeared to appropriate these central markers of success and adapted them to more constraining socio-economic environments. As a more accessible attribute, violence was deployed as a means of expressing economic expedience and decisiveness in the pursuit of material resources. At an ideological level, these discourses of course reflected and reproduced the normativity of consumerism, rapid wealth acquisition at the expense of others, economic expedience, and business decisiveness, but also provided an implicit critique of the embedded and overt violence that characterises the market economy.

From the above, the findings suggest that men's accounts of their homicidal actions reflected socially constructed realities through their narratives and discoursal productions, that were peppered with references to the normalisation, reification and legitimisation of masculine violence and dominance in a wide ranging set of interpersonal, institutional, cultural, social and structural practices and arrangements. While being socially delegitimised, murder did however represent a logical and seamless extension of this normalisation, reification and legitimisation of violence, but within the specific constraints of the participants' social contexts. Nevertheless, the instabilities, ambiguities and contradictions reflected within their accounts also raised the potential for disrupting and subverting the taken-for-granted coupling of masculinities and violence. However, such potential processes of de-linking masculinities and violence are not inevitable, and are likely to require broader social movements and critical social coalitions to engage in social, political, material and consciousness-raising struggles if this transformatory potential is to be realised.

3.   IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS:

Given the above, the implications for translating these findings into utile data in the service of transformation and prevention are fairly extensive. Most importantly, the study re-centres violence as a deeply embedded social phenomenon that has a complex set of underpinnings at the material, structural, institutional, socio-cultural, ideological, political, interactive and significatory levels. While recognising that there are no doubt certain individual factors that contribute to this phenomenon as well, the more explicit implication is the foregrounding of the social basis for male violence, and homicide in particular. The findings reveal how male homicide appears to be in part an extension of more quotidian instances of violence that occur in everyday social practices, but also how these reflect a deep social crisis that allows for referent support of male violence in all spheres of social life. Rather than only focussing on specific risks for male violence, it is perhaps more instructive to view male homicide as a vestige of a social formation that is in itself a risk factor for homicidal violence. This is key if we are to address male homicide more holistically and to avoid the fatalistic trap of social blaming that fosters popular notions of masculine crime, carnage, mayhem and murder as the norm. In practice, this implies alternative ways of strategising around transforming dominant constructions of masculinity, and de-linking such constructions from violence. However, given the complex social foundations of masculine violence, Morrell's (2001, p. 33) comment that *"for the most part gender change is slow"*, is quite sobering and realistic.

Nevertheless, preventing and reducing male violence and homicide will of necessity have to include a transformatory focus on material and structural practices that continue to generate inequitable social and economic conditions that pivot on and foster forms of violence; on the institutional practices that generate and reinforce gendered inequalities; and on social and cultural practices that referently reify male dominance and violence at an interpersonal level. Pragmatically, this points to the possibility of learning lessons from the feminist movements that have so ably produced a ferment that has resulted in various counter-cultures, newer forms of feminism, gay liberation and shifts in gendered relations that were inconceivable almost 200 years ago when women's suffrage movements first came into being. Here, foregrounding consciousness-raising exercises, critical deconstructionist forms of education, mainstreaming critical masculinity studies and practices, and facilitating the development and strengthening of social movements directed towards critically transforming gendered relations, are some of the strategies that could be embarked upon to address the persistent social dilemma of male violence. This may allow us to move beyond the legislative and regulatory equity strategies of 'improving numbers' along gendered cleavages and fractures at institutional levels, to more generalised profeminist social practices that will include men more centrally. At the level of social research, the study also highlights the importance of engaging in more reflexive research that deconstructs meaning systems and meaning-making processes. Furthermore, it suggests that that we should more cautiously accept positivist and descriptive quantitative research that can frequently elide the complex and nuanced relationships between male violence and other levels of discursive and non-discursive social practices within social formations. Finally, the study also suggests that the triumph of existing regimes of truth and taken-for-granted ways of being in the world, which are often premised on forms of systemised domination, exploitation and oppression, is not an inevitable outcome. Ruptures and discontinuities coexist with more continuous and reproductive discourses and social practices, and reveal the possibilities for alternative ways of constructing gendered relations, masculinities, and uncoupling violence from masculine subjectivities (see Morrell, 2001; Murphy, 2004).

4.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The most significant limitation in the study pertained to the methodological approach utilised, and in particular, the data collection and analysis. Given that such a large corpus of texts was generated through the narratives of participants, the study was simply not exhaustive. While

this is a limitation of most qualitative studies of this nature, it would nevertheless have been useful to have mined the data further, as there are invariably a range of analytical possibilities that are jettisoned or overlooked within such large qualitative data sets. The findings therefore represent one plausible, partial and perspectival analysis of the data set, not only because of its size, but also because the process of interpretation is in itself a socially constructed endeavour. That being said though, it is also critical to highlight that while the overall exhaustiveness and generalisability of the study's findings may be partial, that transferability of these findings to understanding the relationship between men and violence is significant, given the degree of internal consistency within the findings as well as the degree of consistency with other findings in the extant literature. In addition, while the narratives yielded very rich textual data to analyse, some additional follow-up interviews with participants may have been useful in unpacking the instabilities and discontinuities within their accounts more extensively. This would have allowed for greater interrogation of the alternative ways in which men came to understand and represent their experiences of homicide as well as their social contexts, within their narratives. However, in the spatial context in which the research study was conducted, the pragmatics of pursuing this avenue would have extended the study period considerably, and such follow-ups could not always be ensured within the institutional environment of the Department of Correctional Services. Finally, at the level of reflexivity, some additional consideration of the manner in which the competing demands of colluding with participants and critical distanciation from them within the research process, could also have been undertaken. This would have perhaps allowed for a more detailed explanation of the actual processes involved in conducting challenging reflexive research from within a social constructionist perspective.

5.   FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

While noting the importance of a sustained social analysis of male homicide, several specific areas of possible future research also emerged from the research study. In particular, a separate follow-up study to further interrogate these narratives with as many of the original participants as possible, would attend to one of the limitations referred to above. This would allow for a further exploration of men's varied constructions of their homicidal actions in a more focussed manner, and may yield important information on where potential social interventions based on these disruptions may be directed towards. In addition, given the intersection of gendered constructions and violence within this study, a comparative

examination of women who have been involved in a homicidal encounter such as murder, would provide interesting data against which to compare these findings. Finally, research into alternative masculinities would also be a crucial area of future research, would allow for more detailed explorations of the possibilities for masculine subject constructions, and may further contribute to debates surrounding the dynamic fluidity of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities.

6.   CONCLUDING COMMENTS:

In conclusion, the historical and contemporary enmeshment of male violence with various features of the South African social formation compels us to consider the prevention of violence from a social perspective and as a social imperative. Avoiding this crucial link between the social and the interpersonal realms would be tantamount to a form of denialism that would by default condone the inevitable slide along the path towards barbarism. While avoiding such an outcome undoubtedly requires greater levels of public commitment, coalition-building, and social organisation, the alternative is perhaps unthinkable. Here, it is fitting to once more reflect on Tawney's (1926, p. 184) comments on the tension between morality and capitalism, as this appears to be a central and implicit feature that runs throughout the narrative accounts of the men in this study.

To argue, in the manner of Machiavelli, that there is one rule for business and another for private life, is to open a door to an orgy of unscrupulousness before which the mind recoils, […] and to expose the idea of morality itself […] to an almost intolerable strain.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Department of Correctional Services' Permission to Conduct Research

DEPARTMENT: CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, Pretoria, 0001, Tel. 012 – 307 2359 Facsimile 012 - 328 5313
124 Church Street West, Poynton Building West Block, Pretoria

Mr G.R. Stevens
P O Box1087
Lenasia
1820

Reference: 8/7/1

Enquiries: Ms B.J. Matshego
Date: August 2005

Dear Mr Stevens

Re: Permission to Conduct Research on "Men and Meanings of Murder: Discourses of Power in Narratives of Homicide in South Africa"

It is with pleasure that I wish to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Kindly ensure that the terminology used is in line with that in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005).

Dr L.B. Bergh (Director: Psychological Services) has been appointed as your internal guide. You are requested to contact her before you commence with your research project at telephone number 012 305 8125.

The relevant Area and Regional Commissioners will be informed of your pending research project. It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your visiting times. It is recommended that your identity document and this approval letter be in your possession when visiting the center.
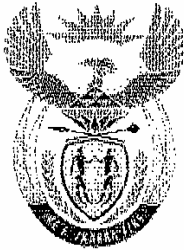
Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the Directorate Research for assistance at telephone number 012-307 2359/305 8043.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

05-08-15

CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER: CENTRAL SERVICES
J A SCHREINER (Ms)

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
GAUTENG

Private Bag X393	Tel.	012-4200147
Pretoria	Fax.	012-3424233/11
0001		

Mr. GR Stevens	Your ref:
P.O. Box 392	My ref: 8/1/2
Unisa	Date: 2005.09.08.
0003	Enquiries: Mr. JM Janse van Rensburg
	Tel: 012-4200147
	E-Mail: Sias.van Rensburg@dcs.gov.za

Dear Mr. Stevens

**Re: Permission to conduct research on "Men and Meanings of Murder":
Discourses of power in Narratives of Homicide in South Africa**

The Chief Deputy Commissioner, Ms. JA Scheiner's letter dated 15 August 2005 refers.

Attached please find a copy of this office's fax transmission dated 6 September 2005 for your attention in this regard as well as contact details of all Area Commissioners in this region for your convenience.

I trust that you would find the above-mentioned in order.

Yours Faithfully

**For: Regional Commissioner: Gauteng
Acting Regional Head Corrections
S J Wilkins**
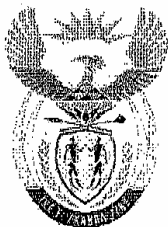
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
GAUTENG

Private Bag X393
Pretoria
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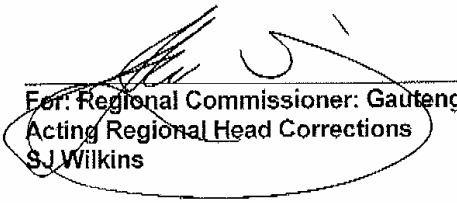
Tel.   012-4200147
Fax.   012-3424233/11

Fax

To: All Area Commissioner: Gauteng	From: Regional Commissioner: Gauteng
For attention : Area Commissioner	My ref : 8/1/2
Your ref:	Date: 2005.09.06
Date:	Enquiries: Mr. JM Janse van Rensburg E-Mail: Sias.van Rensburg@dcs.gov.za

RE: PERMISSION TO VISIT CORRECTIONAL CENTYRE IN GAUTENG: MR. GR STEVENS: UNISA

1. The above-mentioned matter refers.

2. Attached please find a letter as approved by the Chief Deputy Commissioner, Ms JA Scheiner regarding the above-mentioned matter. It would be appreciated if all Heads of Correctional Centre could be informed should Mr. Stevens decide to visit your correctional centres in this regard.

3. For your further attention, please.

For: Regional Commissioner: Gauteng
Acting Regional Head Corrections
SJ Wilkins

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheets (English and Afrikaans)

World Health Organization Collaborating Centre
for Injury and Violence Prevention Research and Training

UNISA | university of south africa

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED BY MR. GARTH STEVENS FROM THE UNISA INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Information for Prospective Participants in the Study

What kind of research is being done?

As part of Mr. Stevens' university studies and degree, this research project is being undertaken through the University of South Africa (UNISA), and is trying to understand men who are involved in the act of killing another person or persons. In other words, it is trying to understand men who have been convicted of murder in Gauteng. More importantly, the study's main aim is to understand the act of killing from the point of view of those who have been convicted for the act. The main objective of the study is to understand the interaction or encounter leading to the death of another person or persons, and to obtain as much detail about the circumstances explaining why and how this act occurred, directly from the persons convicted themselves.

How will the research be done and what are the procedures?

Participants will be interviewed, within view but out of earshot, at the Johannesburg Medium B Department of Corrections Facility. This procedure will last approximately 1 hour and the interview will be recorded using an audio-recorder. Once this has been done, the recorded interview will be transcribed (i.e. transferred from audio information to written text) and analysed. It will then form part of the research report and possibly be published, if permission is granted by the Department of Correctional Services. Participants will be asked questions about the murder as a form of the homicidal encounter or interaction, and will be expected to provide a frank, open and honest account of this interaction, in as much detail as possible. Once this has been done, and all analysis has been completed, the original information or data in both the audio-recorded and transcribed forms will remain confidentially stored and archived at the University of South Africa.

What does the research mean for you?

All interviews are confidential and remain the private communication between the participant and the researcher. All references in the recordings to the participant's names or any other information that may be able to identify the participant will be removed from the transcriptions, research report and/or publications. Participants will therefore be granted complete confidentiality and anonymity and the information provided during the interviews will not be utilised to incriminate the participant in any way, and will not be handed over to the South African Criminal Justice System (i.e. the South African Police Services, Department of Correctional Services, Department of Justice, etc.) for these purposes. However, participation in this project is completely voluntary and no rewards, incentives, assurances or forms of immunity will be granted to participants who agree to participate. Participation in this study will however allow for an opportunity to discuss the reason for incarceration, and also allow others to learn from this as we attempt to prevent murder as a form of homicide in South Africa.

Where to from here?

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them now. If you decide that this is not the kind of research study that you would like to be involved in, then I thank you for your time and the opportunity to talk to you about this project. However, if you are interested in participating in the project, then please go onto the next page, read it carefully, ask any questions if you are not sure about it, initial this page, and sign the form on the following page, granting me permission to interview you and to use the information coming from this interview in the research study and any publications that may arise from it.

Thank you.
GARTH STEVENS
(Researcher)

Institute for Social and Health Sciences and Centre for Peace Action
Route K43, House No 1, South East Metropolitan Complex, Lenasia 1827
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UNISA university
of south africa

OPSOMMING VAN NAVORSINGSTUDIE GEDOEN DEUR MNR GARTH STEVENS VAN DIE UNISA INSTITUUT VIR SOSIALE EN GESONDHEIDSWETENSKAPPE?

Inligting vir Voornemende Deelnemers aan die Studie

Watter soort navorsing word gedoen?

Hierdie navorsingsprojek word deur die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika (UNISA) onderneem as deel van mnr Stevens se universiteitstudie vir graaddoeleindes en is daarop gerig om mans te probeer verstaan wat by die moord op 'n ander mens of mense betrokke was. Dit probeer dus om mans wat in Gauteng aan moord skuldig bevind is, te verstaan. Meer spesifiek is die studie se hoofdoelwit om die moordhandeling te begryp uit die oogpunt van die persoon wat daaraan skuldig bevind is. Die hoofdoel van die studie is om die interaksie of ontmoeting wat tot die dood van die ander persoon of persone gelei het, te verstaan en om soveel inligting moontlik direk van die mense wat daaraan skuldig bevind is te verkry oor die omstandighede wat kan verklaar waarom en hoe hierdie handeling plaasgevind het.

Hoe gaan die navorsing gedoen word en wat is die prosedures?

Onderhoude sal met deelnemers gevoer word binne sig, maar buite hoorafstand, van amptenare by die Johannesburg Medium B Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste Fasiliteit. Hierdie prosedure sal ongeveer een uur lank duur en die onderhoud sal met behulp van 'n bandopnemer opgeneem word. Daarna sal die onderhoud getranskribeer (dws, van oudio-inligting na geskrewe teks oorgeplaas word) en ontleed word. Dit sal dan deel van die navorsingsverslag vorm en moontlik gepubliseer word, mits die Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste toestemming verleen. Vrae sal aan die deelnemers gevra word oor die moord as 'n vorm van doodslagontmoeting of –interaksie, en daar sal van hulle verwag word om 'n reguit, openlike en eerlike weergawe van hierdie interaksie in soveel details moontlik te gee. Na die gesprek en die ontleding voltooi is, sal die oorspronklike inligting of data in sowel die oudio-opname as getranskribeerde vorms vertroulik as argiewe by die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika geberg word.

Wat beteken die navorsing vir u?

Alle onderhoude is vertroulik en bly die privaat kommunikasie tussen die deelnemer en die navorser. Alle verwysings na deelnemers se name, of enige ander inligting waardeur die deelnemers geïdentifiseer kan word, sal uit die transkripsies, navorsingsverslag en/of publikasies verwyder word. Deelnemers sal dus volkome vertroulikheid en anonimiteit geniet. Die inligting wat tydens die onderhoude verkry word, sal nie gebruik word om die deelnemer op enige manier te inkrimineer nie en die inligting sal ook nie aan die Suid-Afrikaanse Strafregstelsel (bv Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiediens, Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste, Departement van Justisie) beskikbaar gestel word nie. Deelname aan hierdie projek is egter geheel en al vrywillig en deelnemers sal hoegenaamd geen beloning, aansporingsmaatreëls, waarborge of immuniteit ontvang nie. Deelname aan die studie sal egter aan die veroordeeldes die geleentheid bied om die redes vir hulle gevangenskap te bespreek en aan ander die geleentheid bied om daaruit te leer as deel van die proses om moord as 'n vorm van doodslag in Suid-Afrika te voorkom.

Wat is die volgende stap?

As u enige vrae het, kan u dit gerus nou vra. As u besluit het dat dit nie die tipe navorsingstudie is waarby u betrokke wil wees nie, bedank ek u vir u tyd en die geleentheid om met u oor hierdie projek te kon praat. Indien u egter wel belangstel om aan die projek deel te neem, kan u die volgende bladsy sorgvuldig deurlees, enige vrae vra oor sake waaroor u onseker is, hierdie bladsy parafeer en dan die vorm op die volgende bladsy onderteken. Daardeur verleen u aan my toestemming om met u 'n onderhoud te voer en die inligting uit so 'n onderhoud in die navorsingstudie en enige publikasies wat daaruit voortspruit, te gebruik.

Baie dankie.
GARTH STEVENS
(Navorser)

World Health Organization Collaborating Centre
for Injury and Violence Prevention Research and Training

UNISA
university
of south africa

RESEARCH AGREEMENT

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT WITH MR. GARTH STEVENS FROM THE UNISA INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

I, ... (full name),

the undersigned, do hereby voluntarily agree, without duress, coercion, threats, assurances of reward or immunity, to participate in an individual, in-depth interview to be used in an official UNISA research project (Doctoral Study) on murder/homicide, that has been approved by the Department of Correctional Services.

The nature and procedure of this interview and the research project was explained to me to my complete satisfaction, and I do hereby offer my informed consent to the use of an audio-recording of the interview and a transcription thereof, for the specific research purposes referred to above.

I am fully aware that the recordings, transcriptions, findings and/or conclusions will not be held against myself in any way and that this interview is conducted with my informed consent and that none of my personal details/information will ever be attached or linked to any findings, conversations or publications.

On the understanding that my personal interviews will remain confidential and my identity will at all times remain anonymous, I agree that information supplied to Mr. Garth Stevens may be used to further the aims of the study in question. Therefore, any recommendations and/or observations consequent to such research may be made available for publication after permission has been granted by the Department of Correctional Services to publish.

This letter of consent is binding on both parties and signed and witnessed underneath.

Name of Participant: ....

Date: ....

Signature: ....

UNISA Researcher: ....

Date: ....

Signature: ....

Witness: ....

Date: ....

Signature: ....

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NAVORSINGSOOREENKOMS

INGELIGTE TOESTEMMING OM DEEL TO NEEM AAN NAVORSINGSPROJEK MET MNR. GARTH STEVENS VAN DIE UNISA INSTITUUT VIR SOSIALE EN GESONDHEIDSWETENSKAPPE

Ek, ... (volle naam),

die ondergetekende, stem hiermee vrywillig en sonder dwang, samespanning, dreigemente, waarborge van beloning of immuniteit, toe om deel te neem aan 'n individuele, diepte-onderhoud wat gebruik gaan word as deel van 'n amptelike UNISA-navorsingsprojek (Doktorale Studie) oor moord/doodslag, wat deur die Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste goedgekeur is.

Die aard en prosedure van hierdie onderhoud en die navorsingsprojek is tot my volle tevredenheid aan my verduidelik en ek bied hiermee my ingeligte toestemming dat 'n oudio-opname en 'n transkripsie daarvan gebruik mag word vir die spesifieke navorsingsdoeleindes waarna hierbo verwys word.

Ek is ten volle daarvan bewus dat die opnames, transkripsies, bevindings en/of gevolgtrekkings nie op enige wyse teen my gebruik sal word nie; dat hierdie onderhoud met my ingeligte toestemming gevoer word en dat daar nooit op enige van my persoonlike besonderhede/inligting beslag gelê sal word nie of met enige bevindings, gesprekke of publikasies verbind sal word nie.

Met die verstandhouding dat my persoonlike onderhoude vertroulik sal bly en my identiteit te alle tye anoniem sal wees, stem ek hiermee toe dat inligting wat aan Mnr. Garth Stevens verskaf word, gebruik mag word om die doelwitte van die betrokke studie te bevorder. Enige aanbevelings en/of waarnemings wat uit sodanige navorsing spruit, mag dus vir publikasie beskikbaar gestel word nadat die Departement van Korrektiewe Dienste tot publikasie toegestem het.

Hierdie toestemmingsbrief is bindend op albei partye en word hieronder deur albei partye en getuies onderteken.

Naam van deelnemer: ....

Datum: ....

Handtekening: ....

UNISA-Navorser: ....

Datum: ....

Handtekening: ....

Getuie: ....

Datum: ....

Handtekening: ....

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interviewing Guide/Protocol[42]

1. Can you tell me about the incident that you were involved in that resulted in the death of another person(s)?

2. If you think about the incident as a story, could you tell me about it in a way so that the story has a beginning, middle and end OR, about what happened immediately prior to the incident, during the incident, and immediately after the incident?

    a. How do you understand what precipitated or triggered the incident?

    b. How do you understand your response in the incident, and what in particular about yourself do you think contributed to the person's death?

    c. What happened immediately after the incident?

3. What do you think the main conflict was about in this situation that resulted in a person(s) dying?

4. Why do you think that incident ended in violence and was not resolved non-violently?

5. Can you tell me about the community in which the incident happened and why you think it happened here?

6. Can you tell me about the specific place where the incident it and why you think it occurred here?

7. Can you tell me about when it occurred and why you think it occurred at that time?

8. If weapons were used during the incident, why do you think this weapon was used?

    a. What are your thoughts about the relationship between men, weapons and violence?

9. Can you tell me about the person who died in the incident and what in particular about this person you think contributed to his/her death?

10. How do you understand your role as a man in being involved in another person's death?

    a. What are your thoughts about the relationship between men and violence?

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[42] Each individual interview commenced with fairly innocuous and benign introductory questions that are not reflected in the semi-structured interviewing guide/protocol, and pertained to the participant's name, age, reason for sentencing, and sentence received. This helped to settle the participants and to 'break the ice', established initial rapport, and allowed for an organic transition into the more central questions of the interview that are reflected in this semi-structured interviewing guide/protocol.