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The role of the physical and social environment in youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park

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Research Report for Masters in Community-Based Counselling Psychology

2011

A Research Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Community-Based Counseling Psychology in the Humanities Faculty, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Masters in Community Based Counselling Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before any degree or examination at any other university.

SUMAIYA MOHAMED

.....

Name

.....09.....day of.....03.....,2011

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I would like to dedicate this research to my colleagues at the Eldorado Park Women's Forum, individuals that have inspired me with their hard work, dedication and commitment to youth development in Eldorado Park. Although the journey has been tough, you have continued to see it as an adventure.

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Abstract

This research explored residents' perceptions of the role of physical and social environmental factors in the development of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. The study investigated physical environmental factors, such as high density housing, poor infrastructure and the lack of recreational facilities; and social environmental factors such as social organisation, high rates of violence, gang influence and substance abuse. Furthermore, the research investigated the interaction of these factors on an ecological level in the development of youth violence, from the perspective of residents. A qualitative methodology was utilised in the research project in achieving the above mentioned aims. 14 in-depth individual interviews were conducted with residents from the council flats and data collected from these interviews were analysed through thematic content analysis.

Results gathered from the data revealed that residents perceived the lack of social order on the council flats as a major contributing factor to the development of youth violence, combined with a sense of disempowerment felt by residents to combat the violence taking place on the council flats and a sense of disempowerment felt by youth due to the circumstances of poverty they find themselves. This contributed to youth engaging in violent behaviour to combat these circumstances. Youth were viewed as exercising violence as a means of empowering themselves and ensuring survival, and thus, the cycle of youth being bred into a lifestyle which promotes violence continues. Furthermore, survival of youth and residents on the council flats was noted as being a major contributor to youth violence, as violence was used as a mechanism to dominate living space, gain basic needs and fend for oneself when under threat.

Thus, a relationship was noted between a sense of social disorganisation and youth violence, which not only contributed to the increase of violence and substance abuse but also maintained it, because with social disorder came the lack of social control which contributed greatly to the development of youth violence on the council flats.

Keywords: Youth violence, physical environment, social environment, qualitative methodology, social disorder, disempowerment, survival

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction into the problem of youth violence within the South African and global context, highlighting the need for research and interventions to tackle this social issue. The chapter also provides an understanding of youth violence in relation to the current research study, thus providing a rationale for the research study. Furthermore, the aims of the research study are introduced and lastly a synopsis of the chapters that are to follow.

Introduction

Recent trends on youth violence in South Africa and internationally have highlighted that youth are both the primary perpetrators of violence and its primary victims (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002). In South Africa, there are a total of 12 000 juvenile prisoners, with the criminal justice system finding it difficult to cope with the increasing number of youth criminals (Dissel, 1997). In addition, youth victimisation rates in South Africa have also proven to be a matter of alarm, according to Amnesty International (2007), reports conducted in 2005-2006 have shown a total of 302, 000 young girls raped under the age of eighteen; 1, 075 reports of youth murdered; 20, 876 reports of assault against youth; and 4, 725 reports of indecent assault against youth.

These trends have made it crucial to promote research endeavours into establishing effective means to prevent youth from falling into the cycle of crime and violence (Dissel, 2007). Furthermore, much research conducted has initially focused on individual and family factors in relation to the development of youth violence, with little focus being placed on the everyday context within which youth are embedded, that is, their immediate community, or neighbourhood, where a large portion of their social interaction, learning and development occurs (Stokols, 1996). This research focuses on the development of youth violence in youth who are embedded in disadvantaged, violence prone areas, specifically, youth from the council flats of Eldorado Park.

Therefore, it is noted that South African youth residing in previously disadvantaged communities, such as those residing on the council flats of Eldorado Park, still face the challenges laid down by the scars of apartheid, as their environment continues to be plagued

by the availability of limited resources, overcrowded unhealthy accommodation, lack of recreational resources, high levels of violence and substance abuse (Normand, 2007). These challenges impact on the physical, social and emotional development of youth. Therefore, youth residing on the council flats of Eldorado Park can be described as 'vulnerable' and 'at risk'. Vulnerability and risk that stems from their presence in a particular environment (Lewis, Lewis, Daniels & D'Andre, 2003). Thus, the research study shifts the focus from blaming violent youth to addressing the social and physical environmental hazards that function to influence the development of youth violence among youth on the council flats of Eldorado Park. This is further elaborated throughout this chapter.

Rationale

On a global scale, 4000 people around the world die from homicide, suicide and war related violence every day, with violence being the second major leading cause of death for people aged 15-44 years (Krug et al., 2002). Furthermore, Moore and Tonry (1998) highlight that there was a point in time when violence and crime rates seemed to slow down, however, in the late 1980s and 1990s there was a rise in violence and crime rates again, and alarmingly this time the majority of perpetrators were youth. The rise in youth violence has arguably made society question, "what is happening to its young people" (Moore & Tonry, 1998, p. 1).

Globally, youth violence is reported in schools and communities on a daily basis, with more and more youth finding themselves in the role of either the victim or the perpetrator (Krug et al., 2002). For instance, it is estimated that 199 000 youth homicides (9.2 per 100 000 population) occurred globally in the year 2000 (Krug et al., 2002). Nationally youth violence is also a noted social dilemma. For instance, research conducted by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation [CSVR] (2007) reported that violence was among the main causes of non-natural deaths in South Africa between 2000 and 2004, of a total of 115 177, 50 051 were due to acts of violence committed by youth (CSVR, 2007). Moreover, national crime statistics highlighted that in 2001, over 25 000 youth aged 16-25 years were currently serving prison sentences as a result of criminal acts committed (Altbeker, 2001). Furthermore, the Department of Correctional Services (2008) reported that in April 2007, South African prisons 'housed' 15% of un-sentenced youth and 22% of sentenced youth aged 18 years. These figures clearly highlight the magnitude of youth violence in South Africa and

the importance of investigating this epidemic in a South Africa context, in relation to the development of appropriate interventions to tackle youth violence.

The CSVR (2007) emphasises that youth violence is spurred on by the environment in which an individual may find themselves, an environment often conducive to the development of violence. These conducive environmental conditions include both physical and social characteristics. Physical characteristics include factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage, high unemployment rates, low income rates, poor infrastructure, intense overcrowding and a lack of resources. Social characteristics include factors such as low levels of social organisation, exposure to violence, gang influence, substance abuse and socioeconomic disadvantage, to name a few (Standing, 2003).

For those living in such violence prone areas, there is a shift toward the 'abnormal normalisation' of violence being a part of a youth's life (Standing, 2003). Therefore, exposure to violence and other conducive influences leave a mark, which has the possibility of manifesting itself and evolving as an individual develops and evolves. For instance, taking a look at the background of gang members or criminals, one notices that the lives of these individuals follow a similar path. That is, coming from a disadvantaged violence prone community and remaining attached to this community; being surrounded by acts of violence and criminal activity; engaging in criminal activity and acts of violence; experiencing arrest or prosecution; becoming a member of a gang; and thereafter engaging in further criminal activity (Standing, 2003). Thus, it has been theorised that individuals from violent communities are likely to be socialised into becoming violent themselves (Zagar, Arbit & Sylvies, 1991). Socialisation is the process whereby young people learn to become members of society in which societal norms and appropriate forms of behaviour are obtained from the social level and embedded within the psychological level (Marshall, 1998).

Environments characterised as being conducive to the development of violence are identified in various parts of the world as high risk areas. These areas are often referred to as 'slums' or 'urban ghettos' and are viewed as playing an important influential role in youth violence (Standing, 2003). For instance, Krug et al (2002) state that in the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, a large percentage of victims and perpetrators of homicide are mainly youth aged 25 years or younger. In addition, Segal, Pelo and Rampa (2001) state that research on inner city ghettos in the United States has shown that 70% of African American youth are likely to be murdered and one out of 45 are likely to become victims of homicide. Furthermore, a study conducted by Williams, Stiffman and O'Neal (1998) on African

American youth from inner city ghettos in the United States found a strong relationship between environmental factors and youth violence.

South Africa is not immune to the presence of these disadvantaged, violence prone areas which resulted as a consequence of the Apartheid regime in South Africa and have become identified as placing youth at a higher risk of developing violent behaviour (Normand, 2007). Terre Blanche (1993) identifies communities in South Africa that had been established in the Apartheid era by the Group Areas Act of 1953, which segregated people to live in certain areas based on their 'racial' category. For instance, in the South of Johannesburg, Soweto was designated a 'black' area; Eldorado Park was home to the 'coloured' population; Lenasia was identified as an 'Indian' neighbourhood; and the Southern Suburbs were designated for the 'white' population. Racialised areas such as these were produced all over South Africa during Apartheid. This process of confining legislated racial groups to certain locations established on the outskirts of major cities resulted in the development of an urban identity which was established along racial and economic lines. Thus, Apartheid is noted as having established laws against non-whites which served to hold back their economic development, a circumstance still noted today (Dissel, 1997). Thus, non-white areas were faced with less privileges and a lack of resources in comparison to white areas. This is still a problem in Post-Apartheid South Africa, despite fifteen years of democracy. These communities have been viewed as 'disadvantaged' and high risk in that they are characterised by poverty; high unemployment; high rates of violence and substance abuse (Mash & Wolfe, 2005); a lack of resources; uncertainty and despondency (Johnson & Lazarus, 2003).

At present the community of Eldorado Park is still a majority 'coloured' community, situated 20km south west of Johannesburg (Terre Blanche, 1993), and has been described as being economically, socially, politically, emotionally and physically violent; frequently associated with injury, violence and gangs (Johnson & Lazarus, 2003). For instance, news reports from the South African Police Association [SAPA] (2006) show that youth violence in particular is common in Eldorado Park, indicative in newspaper articles that report on youth being arrested for various offences such as gun possession, robbery, murder, drug possession, hijacking and assault (Molosankwe, 2008). Furthermore, studies on youth in Eldorado Park by Swart and Seedat (1999) found that within a year alone, 72% of the participants had witnessed a person being attacked with a gun or knife, between 8% and 14% of the participants were themselves attacked with a knife or injured by a gunshot and 14%

had committed violent acts such as attacking someone with a knife or shooting someone. In addition, a study conducted in Eldorado Park in 1993 indicated this neighbourhood as having the highest rates of interpersonal homicide in the greater Johannesburg area (Terre Blanche, 1993). Drawing from the above mentioned studies conducted on patterns of violence evident in Eldorado Park, it is noted that violence has been a consistent feature throughout the history of this community.

Limited research has been conducted on the council flats in Eldorado Park. However, just drawing on newspaper reports and literature on areas with high density housing, Eldorado Park can be identified as one of these disadvantaged violence prone areas, affecting the development and progress of its youth (Zagar et al., 1991). For instance, a study of educators' perceptions of factors contributing to school violence in this community found that educators described Eldorado Park as a community riddled with social problems (Mohamed, 2007). In particular this study found, that the council flats in particular were characterised by violent victimisation of children, overcrowding, high density housing, low socio-economic strata, unemployment, poverty, hunger, history of gang violence, substance abuse and family breakdown (Mohamed, 2007). Educators also stated that youth from the council flats were more likely to be problematic than youth living in the broader Eldorado Park neighbourhood (Mohamed, 2007). Moreover, a long standing history of residents and 'life on the flats' was evident in this study. It appeared that nothing seemed to change at the council flats, as youth were continually being socialised into a set of norms, which would allow youth to survive in this particular environment. The council flats were viewed as being a different type of physical and social environment in comparison to the greater community of Eldorado Park and is still labelled a 'no-go-zone' by outsiders (Mohamed, 2007).

The above mentioned interaction between environmental factors evident on the council flats and individual's residing at the council flats, in relation to the consequences for youth wellbeing and development of youth violence, can be understood in terms of the latest developments in social ecological theory. Social ecological theory highlights the inter-relation of environmental conditions (multiple physical and social factors) and individual wellbeing (Stokols, 1996), emphasising youth embodiment of their physical and social surroundings on the council flats in Eldorado Park, which was and still is characterised by high rates of violence, gangs and poor physical infrastructure of the 'built' environment (Krieger, 2001). Features which Krieger (2001) note, have been consistent over time. Furthermore, social ecological theory opts for a more comprehensive understanding of

contributions to youth violence, by offering a theoretical framework that takes into account the dynamic interplay evident among residents, youth and their sociophysical milieu. Thus, this framework gives attention to the social, institutional and cultural contexts related to the development of individuals but also the development of the environments in which they find themselves, and the interplay between the two sets of influences.

Because violence is not simply associated with individual characteristics, but with societal and communal structures and practices which need to be understood in its context in order to be addressed (Krug et al., 2002). The study sought to understand from residents' perspective what is it about this particular environment, its physical structures and social aspects that lead youth who reside in it to become violent. In order to achieve this, a qualitative research approach was exercised, as this particular research approach is noted as being a powerful tool that can be utilised to learn more about the lives of others and the socio-historical context in which they live (Merriam, 2002). Furthermore, this approach which is seated in an interpretive phenomenological paradigm allowed the researcher to grasp the internal reality of resident's subjective experience of life on the council flats of Eldorado Park (Merriam, 2002). The in-depth knowledge gathered through the use of this approach allowed the researcher to explore resident's perceptions, gather meaning and understanding about the uniqueness of the social environment of the council flats in Eldorado Park, as well as, the physical environmental factors which are under investigation with regard to how they play out in relation to youth violence (Krieger, 2001).

Aims

The present study aimed to investigate residents' perceptions of the role of the surrounding physical and social environment on the council flats of Eldorado Park in influencing youth violence. More specifically, the study sought to explore residents' perceptions of life on the council flats, taking into account communal structures, relations and practices on the council flats of Eldorado Park that are related to each other and youth violence. Thus, the study aimed to capture residents' perceptions of how they understand the development of youth violence as being influenced by their living context; physical and social structure; social dynamics; and the overall environment in which youth and residents' find themselves. In addition, the study explored residents' perceptions of environmental factors evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park and their interaction with contributing factors at the micro, meso, exo and macro systemic levels of ecological development in influencing youth violence on the council

flats of Eldorado Park, exploring the social dynamics of youth in this environment in relation to their interactions with other residents and the impact it has on their development. In light of this, engagement in the research study is motivated by the hope of gaining a better understanding of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park; to, in turn, utilise the knowledge gathered from this research to inform and develop future prevention initiatives directed toward youth violence within the context of the council flats of Eldorado Park and other similar contexts. In addition, the study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge focused on youth and their development in the South African context.

Synopsis of the report

Chapter one has provided an introduction to the pandemic of youth violence on a global as well as national scale. The chapter has focused on the influence of violence prone environments as a contributing factor to youth violence, specifically taking into account the social and physical environmental factors evident in these environments. The chapter also provided a broad understanding of the research and the rationale for the research study conducted, as well as the aims underlying the research study conducted. In this manner, *chapter one* served to provide the groundwork on which the research is built and on which it was developed further.

Chapter two consists of the literature review, which considers literature with regard to youth violence specific to the South African context, as well providing definitions of violence and the most common form of violence likely to occur on the council flats, that youth are exposed to. The literature also covers the 'culture of violence' that has cultivated since the time of Apartheid and has manifested itself particularly within disadvantaged areas within South Africa. Moreover, the chapter provides an understanding of the interaction between the different systemic levels in relation to the development of youth violence drawn from an ecological understanding of human development. The chapter also provides literature that will form the basis to understanding how the physical and social environmental factors influence youth violence. Thus, this chapter provides a basis for understanding the research and discussion of results that follows in later chapters.

Chapter three presents the method section which introduces the research questions to be explored in the research study and the manner in which both analysis and interpretation were conducted. The chapter also provides an overview of the importance and relevance of

the qualitative approach taken. It explores the nature of the qualitative investigation and the specific methods through which the research was analysed. By implication, the chapter also considers the practical components of the research procedure, providing information with regard to the contextual components and the specific details relating to the research participants. The chapter also provides a discussion of the researcher's self-reflexivity and assists in grasping an understanding of the subjective nature of the researcher's contextual position. And lastly, this chapter also provides an overview of the ethical considerations for the research conducted, the participant's rights and the ethical considerations specific to the research study.

Chapter four presents the results of the findings of the research study, highlighting results gathered from the data collection process. Thus, the chapter provides an understanding of resident's experiences of life on the council flats and their perception of how that life contributes to the development of youth violence. Overall, it provides a comprehensive interpretation of resident's perceptions and therefore highlights themes that have arisen from this analysis.

Chapter five provides an overview of the research findings that arose in the results and discussion, in the prior chapter. It also provides the strengths and weaknesses within the research study, as well as recommendations for future research in relation to the youth violence in the South African context. In addition, the knowledge generated from the research fosters practical considerations in relation to interventions and prevention avenues to decrease and prevent youth violence in South Africa.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to understanding the prevalence of youth violence and the importance of addressing this social problem in the South African context. It has also illustrated the significance of the study within the South African context with regard to the research conducted, as well as highlighting the importance of adopting a systemic outlook to the development of youth violence through ecologically directed theoretical frameworks. The chapter also introduced the aims of the research study and the research design through which these aims will be achieved. The chapter to follow provides the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature reviewed in this chapter serves as an overview of the area of study, highlighting the role of physical and social environmental factors in influencing youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. It considers literature that grasps this social pandemic, as well as highlighting prominent topics such as social organisation, a culture of violence in South Africa, exposure to violence, substance abuse, high density housing and poor infrastructure in relation to the magnitude and history of violence evident within South Africa and how it has manifested into different expressions and contributed to the development of youth violence. The literature reviewed also introduces the theoretical framework adopted in the study which is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development. This theory serves to locate youth violence as being the product of multiple levels of influence in society.

The nature of youth violence in South Africa

Youth violence is noted as currently being the most visible form of violence in South Africa with media reports broadcasting daily incidents of gang violence, homicide, death, injury and disability, in which youth are identified as the main victims and perpetrators (Burton, 2007). Burton (2007) states that youth constitute a large portion of the South African population. For instance, CSVR (2007) highlights that youth up to the age of 25 years account for 54.6% of the national population. Research conducted has further shown that the age group 12-21 is often regarded as the peak years for offending and victimisation (Sherman et al., 1998). Thus, it is noted that a large portion of South Africa's population fall within this high risk age group (Burton, 2007).

Therefore, Krug et al (2002) highlights that a survey done in Johannesburg indicated that 3.5% of victims of violence were 13 years old or younger, compared with 21.9% aged 14-21 years and 52.3% aged 22-35 years. In addition, a study done on murder in selected police stations in South Africa indicated that youth were suspects in 75% of murders of children, 83% of murders of other youth and 61% of murders of adults (Graham, Bruce & Perold, 2010).

However, Bruce (2010) highlights that statistics available in South Africa do not provide a true reflection of the extent of the pandemic. Bruce (2010) argues that the release of

the 2009-2010 crime statistics faced much controversy as evidence of non-recording of cases at police stations arose, emphasising the unreliability of the current system used in recording statistics. However, the high murder rates evident in South Africa are noted as superceding those of other countries and this provides a clear indication of the gravity of the problem of violence in South Africa (Louw, 2004). These high rates of violence in South Africa not only affect individuals, but also affect the wellbeing of communities in both rural and urban areas. This has resulted in generations of children in South Africa being exposed to some form of violence in their streets, neighbourhoods and homes (Angles & Shefer, 1997). Therefore, it is noted that exposure to violence at a young age, increases the probability of youth getting caught up in the cycle of violence, both as repeat victims and potential perpetrators of violence (Burton, 2007).

In addition, what makes the problem of youth violence more disturbing is that is not an isolated problem but a problem that encapsulates other problematic behaviours that only serve to fuel it further, problematic behaviours such as truancy, dropping out of school, substance abuse, compulsive lying, reckless driving and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases (Krug et al., 2002).

Furthermore, international research suggest that merely living in a disadvantaged, violence prone environment is on its own an independent risk factor for the development of youth violence (Zagar et al., 1991). This research has also proven true in the context of South Africa, as research conducted by Breetzke (2008) on the socio-geographic profile of offenders in the city of Tswane, found that location and space has an influence on criminal behaviour. Thus, more and more research has began exploring this avenue in relation to the development and maintenance of violence in South Africa.

In addition, Louw (2004) argues that despite continuous media coverage on the latest acts of violence and criminal activities, research into the nature and causes of youth violence in South Africa is lacking. Moore and Tonry (1998) state that although research in this particular area was conducted around the mid 1990s, little insight has been achieved to support effective prevention and intervention programmes. Furthermore statistics have only risen and show insignificant decline. Another argument is that majority of the research conducted has been in the form of statistical trends which have highlighted simple causal relationships (Burton, 2007). Burton (2007) argues for a more personal and in-depth approach to get to the root of the problem to fully explore and recognise the range of factors that impact in the development of youth violence, interacting in various ways to produce various

outcomes such as youth involvement in violence and crime (Burton, 2007).

Therefore, understanding contributing factors that play a role in influencing youth violence and result in youth either being the victims or perpetrators of violence is necessary for the development of effective policies and prevention programmes to prevent youth violence. The following study aimed to address this viewpoint by exploring the role of the surrounding physical and social environment in influencing the development of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park, a majority 'coloured' community situated in Johannesburg. More specifically, residents' perceptions about their living space, social integration and social problems that they face as a result of residency at the council flats, which is famous for high density housing, high rates of violence and gang influence (Terre Blanche, 1993; Swart & Seedat, 1999; Mohamed, 2007), was explored. The literature review that follows addresses the various types of violence, identifying the most common type that is evident on the council flats and investigating the various physical and social environmental factors that play a role in influencing the development of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park.

Theoretical framework

Research conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has revealed that there is no one single causative factor for violence, youth violence included (Krug et al., 2002). International and local research has noted that youth violence is the result of a complex interaction between factors within different societal systems, impacting on the development of individuals, their families, groups, neighbourhoods and the broader socio-political context (Ward, 2007). Therefore, it is noted that everything is inter-related and knowledge of development is bound by context, culture and history (Darling, 2007), this is particularly important in the context of South Africa, due to its history of violence and inequality which contributed to a culture of violence, economic deprivation and historically disadvantaged groups in South Africa (Krug et al., 2002).

The present research study aimed to explore youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park using an ecological perspective that focused primarily on community level contributing factors, with specific emphasis being placed on surrounding social environmental and physical environmental factors. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1979) was adopted as the theoretical framework as it is a suitable framework for investigating the complex and inter-related factors that inform youth violence.

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998, p. 996):

> Child development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interaction between an active child and the persons, objects, and symbols on its immediate environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time.

Thus, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development (1979) theorises that individuals do not exist in vacuums but are embedded within layers of social structures and relationships, with each layer impacting on the other layers interdependently. The systemic layers introduced by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in the ecological model highlights five layers of society that impact on youth development. Namely, the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system and chrono-system. A brief description of each systemic level will be provided to acquire a better understanding of the use of the model in the current research study.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the micro system as the layer in which the individual is situated, that is, within their family and community context. This layer is inclusive of individual youth characteristics such as age, race, gender and temperament. It is also noted as being the level at which interpersonal relations are most prominent and which are noted as influencing how youth interact with others and the influences that those interactions in turn have on youth. Therefore, relationships at this level are noted as being bi-directional (Darling, 2007). For instance, a youth's place of residence may influence the way they think and behave, as youth in turn, also influence beliefs and behaviours in their residential environment. Factors evident on this systemic level were not the key focus of this research, but factors at this level that emerged from the study were incorporated into the analysis and interpretation of data.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the meso system as the layer which often serves an intermediary function between two or more micro systems which the individual is a part of. It can be viewed as a 'system of micro systems' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For instance, relations between the micro system of a family and the micro system of an individual's place of residence constitute a meso system. Meso systems are noted as taking on various forms such as the police, school and the council flats as a residential environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Factors operating on this level are noted as important in this research study as youth are exposed to meso systemic factors on a daily basis on the council flats, which in turn influences the micro system and the development of youth violence.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the exo system as the layer which accounts for community levels factors, does not include direct contact with individuals at the community level but has the ability to influence individuals indirectly in the micro-system through the meso-system. Thus, this layer can be understood as containing the linkages and processes between two or more settings. For instance, poverty and unemployment evident at a local community level or neighbourhood have been found to have an indirect relationship to the development of youth violence (Krug et al., 2002). This layer also consists of numerous organisations and interpersonal relationships such as membership in groups or isolation from groups which also impacts on youth development ultimately. Factors operating on this level are noted as important in this research study as it focuses on the community of the council flats, in which residents have a form of group membership separate from the broader community of Eldorado Park.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the macro system as the overall encompassing layer consisting of large scale societal factors, such as cultural and societal ideologies, that have an impact on the above mentioned systems. It is characterised by values, economics, laws, cultural beliefs, political policies and agendas, customs, educational structures, shared history and symbols, media and religion (Krug et al., 2002). Influences at this level have impacted on the restructuring of the democratic South Africa, integration of racial groups and equal chances for economic development. However, development has been a process which has benefitted some faster than others (Donald, Dawes & Louw, 2000). The council flats' continues to be an environment housing economically disadvantaged individuals. Therefore, high levels of poverty and unemployment evident on the council flats gives rise to high levels of violence and crime as youth and other residents attempt to economically survive and uplift themselves. It is also noted that this layer has a more visible influence as they impact more individuals through various mediums of communication such as television. In this sense factors of the macro system are directly experienced by youth (De Wet, 2007b).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the chrono system as encapsulating time in relation to youth's environment. It reflects the passing of time and developmental changes that occur during this time to youth and the social systems which they interact with. Change is noted as being either internal or external. For instance, internal change can be reflected in physiological changes that occur with age, whereas, external change can be reflected in sociohistorical circumstances such as that of the change from Apartheid to democracy which has impacted on youth violence and the expression of violence (Santrock, 2008). Moreover,

changes can take the form of changes or consistency over the life course in the family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the level of ability or inability in daily life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Taking into account the passing of time is important in this research study as present day violence is noted as being rooted in the history of Apartheid which bred social deprivation, frustration and the potential for violence. Thus, present day violence no longer resides solely in the political arena but has permeated society, evident in high rates of crime (Vogelman & Simpson, 1991). Thus, Vogelman and Simpson (1991) highlight a causal relationship between the scars left behind from Apartheid such as poverty, inadequate housing conditions and a culture of violence and the youth violence evident today.

With regard to this particular study, the emphasis is on exploring community level physical and social environmental factors and their influential role in influencing youth violence. Thus, the main focus is on meso and exo systemic level factors. As Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Kelbanov and Sealand (1993) acknowledge that a place of residence's physical and social characteristics have an influence on an individual's behaviour, attitudes, values and opportunities. Thus, in order to understand the development of violence in youth one has to take into consideration the environmental context within which youth operate. Most research done in these topic areas has focused predominantly on the family and the individual as contributing factors in influencing violence, little attention is paid to the environmental context and its influence (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1993). Moreover, research studies have revealed that of all the systemic levels presented in the ecological model, the least understood and individually investigated is environmental dynamics or community level factors. This may be due to the intersecting dynamics of factors such as the individual, the family and the environment and how they influence each other directly and indirectly, making it a complex task to fully understand each factor and its influence as they are so interlinked (Higson-Smith, 2002a). For instance, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2003) highlight that neighbourhoods or places of residence as a context for youth development is often marginalised in research studies as the impact cannot always be identified, because of various interlinking factors such as the family, the individuals as well as other social related factors. However, quantitative studies that were able to control for unwanted factors have declared that neighbourhoods do matter and should be explored and understood. Thus, various academic fields including sociology, epidemiology, demography and psychology have delved into neighbourhood research, particularly its impact on youth development (Leventhal &

Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

Therefore, the following research study primarily focused on community level factors, and hence the adoption of an ecological approach to investigating youth violence was necessary for the purpose of capturing the interdependence of individuals with their physical (geographical and spatial) and social (peers and groups) environment and its contribution to the development of youth violence (Longres, 1995). However, as indicated by the above theoretical framework, layers constantly interact and influence each other (Visser, 2007). This was noted throughout the study and the presence of other factors which come into play are reflected on in the findings of the study (Visser, 2007).

In addition, the study acknowledges that as much as the above-mentioned systems are influential to youth violence, youth violence in turn also has an influence on these systems (Sampson, 2001). For instance, Sampson (2001) highlights that studies done abroad have found that social problems such as public disorder and crime are highly related to youth violence. Reflecting on South Africa one is aware that the impact of youth violence is multi-fold as it causes human suffering; increased levels of perceived threat and fear amongst individuals living in violence prone environments; health and psycho-social problems such as eating and sleeping disorders, mental health problems, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases; and economic burden to families, communities and countries as there is a significant loss of income due to incarceration (Stevens, Seedat & van Niekerk, 2004).

Thus, violence, and youth violence in particular, is identified as a destructive act which inevitably diminishes quality of life, disrupts development and decreases chances for social cohesion, economic and social improvements (Emmett & Butchart, 2000). Therefore, it is evident that violence permeates multiple levels of society directly and indirectly (Swart, 2007). Therefore, Stevens et al (2004) highlight that violence remains a psycho-social and health priority affecting youth development in South Africa and thus will always remain a topic on the agenda. Hence, definitions of violence has also been noted as evolving over the years in attempts to account for the various expressions of violence and its various outcomes. Widely used definitions of violence will be discussed below.

Defining violence

Violence can simply be defined as the use of physical force to bring about injury or death and encompasses a wide range of acts including child abuse, gang fighting, hate crimes, sexual

assault, domestic abuse and so forth (Fraser, 1996). However, the concept of violence has evolved over the years to be more encompassing of the different expressions of violence and the impact that violence has on human beings. For instance, Bulhan defined violence: "Any relation, process or condition by which any individual or a group violates the physical, social and/or psychological integrity of another person or group" (Bulhan, 1985, p. 135). In 2001, the definition evolved to include, "...threatened or actual physical force or power initiated by an individual that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in physical or psychological injury or death" (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], in Shafii & Shafii, 2001, p. 26).

The above-mentioned definitions both recognise violence as a form of power and forced endeavour that results in physical and psychological injury. Bulhan (1985) also mentions harm to social integrity as one of the consequences of violence; and the CDC (in Shafii & Shafii, 2001) highlights that a major consequence of violence is ultimately death. The definition proposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) World Report on Violence and Health, incorporates elements of the above mentioned definitions as well as elaborating on the consequences of violence. The definition recognises that violence does not only result in injury, death and psychological harm but also contributes to maldevelopment and deprivation (Krug et al., 2002). The definition reads as follows:

> The intentional use of physical forces or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (Krug et al., 2002, p. 5).

In addition, the report divides violence into the following categories: self directed, collective and interpersonal violence. Self directed violence includes suicidal behaviour and self abuse; interpersonal violence occurs between family members, acquainted individuals and strangers; and collective violence includes violent acts related to social, political and economic motives (Krug et al., 2002). Furthermore, the definition explicitly includes intention to cause harm, excluding unintentional harm; includes the concept of 'power' as well as the phrase 'use of physical force' which serves to broaden the definition to include violent acts that may arise out of the misuse of power relationships such as threats and intimidation. Furthermore, although the definition does include neglect; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; and suicide (Ward, 2007). The following research did not focus on violence against oneself, although it is similar in some aspects to violence against others. Moreover, violence against

oneself has unique psychological characteristics (Krug et al., 2002) which was not be focused on in this report. Violence accounts for a broad range of outcomes and acknowledges that even though violence does not result in injury and death, it still has a substantial impact on individuals, families, communities, health care and social systems. Thus, the following research drew on the WHO's (Krug et al., 2002) definition of violence, with the omission of self directed violence.

Violent trends in contemporary South Africa reveal that interpersonal forms of violence are identified as more dominant than other forms of violence (Stevens et al., 2004). This is highlighted in reports made at sentinel health facilities, in which interpersonal forms of violence are most reported (Peden & van der Spuy, 1998). Moreover, Anderson (1998) notes that interpersonal forms of violence and aggression are common features in disadvantaged environments in South Africa. Environments established as 'urban ghettos', which create havoc and unrest amongst many residents and the broader community inevitably result in violent activities finding a way of spilling over from one context into the other (Anderson, 1998). For instance, Anderson (1998) notes that activities such as muggings, burglaries, hijackings and drug related episodes are not exclusive to any particular environment and these activities often results in deaths and legal procedures that bring no closure to surviving victims. Living in such environments increases youth chances of falling victim to aggressive forms of behaviour (Krug et al., 2002).

In addition, the present study also considers the link between the terms violence and youth, with the aim of grasping an understanding of the term 'youth violence'. Moore and Tonry (1998) explain that the term 'youth', can be given a specific meaning by attaching ages to it. Furthermore, Moore and Tonry (1998) state that the idea of a 'youth' means someone who is uninformed and still developing, if this is so, then just and effective responses to violent acts committed by youth are viewed and judged differently from those for a more mature person or adult (Moore & Tonry, 1998). Moreover, youth have a special status in society that serves to reduce their criminal culpability for any given act, and increases interest in the investment in youth development to restore youth on the road to a more healthy developmental process, particularly, free of the influence of violence (Zimring & Hawkins, 1998).

The focus on youth in this study is motivated by research that has found that today's youth are the victims and perpetrators of violence (Krug et al., 2002). However, more alarmingly, their acts of violence are more lethal and often result in serious injury or death, in

comparison to acts of violence committed by other age groups (Elliot, 1994). For instance, Fraser (1996) highlights that youth impulsivity, access to guns and other weapons, bad socioeconomic conditions and the emergence of street subcultures based on gang membership and violence as a means of survival has made youth deadlier than their adult counterparts (Fraser, 1996). In addition, Cook and Laub (1998) highlight that the population of youth on the 'outside' (interacting in society) is balanced by the population of youth on the 'inside' (those facing incarceration), this is a clear indication that youth kill more than they are killed.

For the purpose of this study, 10-24 years will be considered as the ages attached to the term 'youth', as Krug et al (2002) highlights that globally between 1985-1994, youth aged 10-24 years were found accountable for an increase in homicide ratings, this trend is not exclusive of South African youth. Furthermore, trends in youth violence over the last decade have revealed a significant increase in violence victimisation rates for youth within the age group of 12-15 years; an increase in the proportion of youth involved in violent offending; and an increase in youth homicide rates, beginning in 1988 and escalating as the years have gone by (Elliot, 1994). In addition, studies have highlighted that the age of highest risk for the initiation of serious violent behaviour is evident mostly in the 15-16 age group with a slight decrease after age 20 years. These studies also noted that if youth have not engaged in violent or criminal activity at the age of 20, the likelihood of them becoming offenders are unlikely (Elliot, 1994).

A culture of violence

Present day South Africa reveals that the legacy of Apartheid has brought with it a 'culture of violence' which has undoubtedly shaped and influenced the form and expression of violence (Stevens et al., 2004). Hence, Swart (2007, p. 192) mentions that, "many of the more interpersonal and individual forms of violence that we see today are the consequences of the damage inflicted years ago on the fabric of our society". For instance, violence can be viewed as part of a systemic cycle originating from the colonisation of South Africa which in turn gave rise to the Apartheid era, where violence was an everyday occurrence in homes, schools and communities. Thus, both the state led violence against those that resisted the system of Apartheid and the violent struggle of individuals against oppression produced a 'culture of violence' in South Africa, a culture that still persists today (Matthews, Griggs & Caine, 1999).

Furthermore, the demonstration of violence by the government and liberation movements of the time symbolised violence as a powerful means of bringing about change and gaining power. Thus, on the one hand, criminal justice systems enforced discriminatory and oppressive laws under apartheid; and on the other hand, criminalisation of resistance to Apartheid was viewed as official and necessary. The combination of these two spectrums had contributed to the distinction between resistance to oppression and anti-social criminality being blurred through the use of violence from both sides to achieve their objectives (CSVR, 2007). Therefore, Chikane (in Emmett & Butchart, 2000) highlights that the legacy of Apartheid in South Africa has socialised individuals to find violence acceptable and human life cheap.

In addition, the presence of a 'culture of violence' in South Africa, describes a situation whereby individuals are caught within a victim-perpetrator cycle of violence, in which violence is a powerful means of bringing about change and conflict management (Brown & Capozza, 2006). For instance, Foster (2004) mentions that one of the consequences of oppression during Apartheid was 'horizontal hostility' or 'lateral violence', which is explained as the inability to direct violence at the dominant group and in turn direct violence at one's own group. This consequence is still evident today throughout South Africa in the displays of interpersonal forms of violence such as gang violence, hostile criminality and rape. In addition, this was further exacerbated by the socio-economic conditions of historically disadvantaged areas during Apartheid, such as Eldorado Park, which resulted in the creation of environments which allowed for the breeding of criminal activity (Foster, 2004).

Environmental factors affecting youth violence

There are a number of communities, neighbourhoods and townships in South Africa that have been identified as violence prone areas in which crime rates are often high, thus, one has to be aware of and not overlook the role that these environments play in contributing to youth learning and engaging in violence (CSVR, 2008). For instance, the presence of gangs and drug dealers result in youth who reside in these areas being exposed to high levels of violence; experiencing violent role models; and achieving social, personal or material rewards for violent behaviour (Elliot, 1994).

Furthermore, youth are at risk of becoming violent when their environment has an impoverished opportunity structure, inadequate resources to develop their critical social and

cognitive skills, lack support structures to promote prosocial behaviours and perceptions of violence as an appropriate manner to settle disputes or get what you want (Fraser, 1996). In addition, Van der Merwe and Dawes (2000) argue that in South Africa, youth are faced with various environmental factors that influence the development of youth violence. Environmental factors which include poverty; exposure to violence; normalisation of violence at the community, school and family levels; socialisation of youth into violence; easy access to substances, namely drugs and alcohol; and a high percentage of adult involvement in crime (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2000).

These environmental factors serve to increase the probability of youth violence and are important factors to address, as they are viewed as the 'major contextual drivers' in the development of youth violence (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2000). Environments which cause constraints on individual choice; influence behaviour by shaping norms and patterns of social control; and that provide or inhibit opportunities for development (Angles & Shefer, 1997). Berkman and Kawachi (2000) argue that these factors should be taken into account as youths' position within these environmental context, makes them vulnerable to majority of the above mentioned factors highlighted as being influential to the development of youth violence. Thus, Elliot (1994) acknowledges that these environments are well known for their high rates of poverty, high density housing, high rates of violence, crime and substance abuse. In addition, it is often the communities that display an absence of effective social organisation and this gap makes way for the development of a different type of social networking, that is, gangs, which emerge in a community because of the lack of social control to resist these type of formations and because of a need to provide some form of stable social organisation for youth to belong to and to help form a sense of identity (Elliot, 1994).

In addition, Sampson and Groves (1989) note that research on the development of youth violence in a given environment has in previous years focused primarily on macro level structures that are influential and have failed to explore the relationship between environmental structures and violence and the variables that mediate in between (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Thus, the present study aimed at exploring these mediating influences that are evident within an environment and are influential in the development of youth violence. More specifically, the study focused on investigating social and physical environmental factors on the council flats in Eldorado Park in influencing youth violence. Therefore, social environmental factors such as social organisation, exposure to high rates of violence, gang influence and substance abuse were explored. In addition, physical environmental factors

such as high density housing, poor infrastructure and the lack of recreational facilities were also explored. The section that follows elaborates on this further by reviewing existing studies on the physical neighbourhood characteristics that are associated with youth violence.

The Role of the Physical Environment in Youth Violence

A physical environment is identified by Emmett and Butchart (2000) as being inclusive of the following: population transcience, crowding or social isolation, amount of living space, presence or absence of barriers and physical appearance of the environment. Current research in South Africa has begun exploring the relationship between location and space and its influence on violent forms of behaviour (Breetzke, 2008). Duncan (1989) argues that the concept of an influential relationship between space and behaviour was drawn from the fields of spatial determinism which highlights the impact of spatial patterns in causing social behaviour; and behavioural geography which postulates that human beings and their environments are dynamically linked (Warmsley & Lewis, 1993).

This concept is supported by local literature that emphasises that physical environmental factors indeed do play a role in shaping attitudes and behaviours of South African citizens (Ramutsidela, 2007). Thus, the present study explores physical environmental factors such as high density housing, poor infrastructure and the lack of recreational facilities evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park in relation to the development of violence in youth residing there.

High density housing and poor infrastructure

Housing makes reference to a physical structure and components that make up the living environment (Fay, 2005). Adequate housing is characterised by private space, communal space and access to facilities. These characteristics are noted as contributing to healthy living conditions and viewed as essential in the development of physical and psychological health, quality of life and social wellbeing (Fay, 2005). According to the South African government (2008), all citizens have the right to adequate housing. However, majority of South African citizens live in inadequate housing structures, which in turn prohibits their access to human rights such as: adequate standard of living, access to water, education, privacy, security and self determination (Marais, 2000).

Inadequate housing is often a feature of high density housing structures which is a

legacy of colonial, Apartheid and modernist systems in South Africa, as residential areas built during Apartheid served to promote social segregation and economic deprivation (Osman & Herthogs, 2010). Historically, Eldorado Park is highlighted as having featured one of the highest residential densities outside of the Johannesburg city (City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2008).

High density housing is characterised predominantly by overcrowding, as well as bad sanitation; damp, dark and badly ventilated houses; and close living proximity to neighbours (Bridges, 1927). These characteristics are noted as presenting contributing factors to youth violence, as in these environments, frustration, anger and tension brews among youth who are exposed to a living environment which displays deteriorating infrastructure and inadequate housing. Furthermore, it is noted that high density housing leads to the deterioration in infrastructure over time, which further contributes to greater exposure to violence and crime (Krug et al., 2002). For instance, Rarrbo (2002) highlights that a survey done on youth in Algeria found that rapid demographic growth and accelerating urbanisation created conditions of unemployment, inadequate housing which brought about emotions of frustration, anger and aggression in youth who lived in these circumstances and therefore resorted to violence and crime to get by (Krug et al., 2002). In addition, a demographic analysis of young people in Africa done by Lauras-Locah and Lopez-Escartin (1992) found a correlation between increased tension due to the increase in population numbers amongst youth, deteriorating infrastructure and violent behaviour. Furthermore, the impact of high density housing established during Apartheid in residential areas in South Africa is still evident today, noted in their physical appearance and lack of maintenance. The poor infrastructure is thus noted as also playing an influential role in the development of youth violence. This is elaborated on below in relation to the lack of recreational facilities that is often associated with poor infrastructure and overcrowding.

Lack of recreational facilities

Participating in recreational activities is argued as being physiologically, psychologically and sociologically beneficial to sustain growth and development (Asihel, 2005). Moreover, Asihel (2005) highlights that participation in recreational activities reduces adverse behaviour in youth and increases social cohesion and integration of youth in a community. Thus, Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Freysinger (1996) state that participation in recreation holds the greatest potential for human self fulfilment.

The lack of recreational facilities in an environment, such as playground space, clubs or game facilities of some kind, places youth at a higher likelihood of engaging in violence and criminal activities. For instance, research done has shown that youth crimes are often committed when youth's time is not occupied with work, school or an extra activity (Bridges, 1927). Moreover, Bridges (1927) states that in these environments it is found to be typical behaviour for youth to congregate in groups and be subjected to peer group influence. The data presented above highlights the relationship between youth violence and the lack of recreational facilities as a long established observation.

Furthermore, a local study conducted by the Centre for Youth Development (Mogotsi, 2004) on the prevalence of substance abuse among youth of Mogale City found that youth reported starting to experiment with alcohol or drugs due to boredom that was the result of a lack of recreational facilities made available to them. Moreover, it is also noted that the lack of recreational facilities contributes to youth being the victims of violence as well. For instance, local research done on youth in environments that were characterised by high rates of unemployment, high rates of substance abuse and few recreational or sporting facilities made available to them, were at a higher risk of being sexually abused or raped (Mogotsi, 2004).

The Role of the Social Environment in Youth Violence

The disintegration of a social environment is highlighted by Emmett (2003) as breaking down informal forms of social control and weakening the capacity of its members to protect themselves against crime. This inevitably results in rates of violence and crime increasing which leads to increased levels of disintegration and thus the cycle continues (Emmett, 2003). Furthermore, this is noted as creating a social environment that is not conducive to healthy development (Emmett, 2003), and thus is an area explored in the present study in relation to the development of youth violence. Social environmental factors that will be explored in the study include social organisation, exposure to high rates of violence, gang influence and substance abuse.

Social organisation

Social organisation is defined as a sense of belonging, involvement in informal and formal community activities and perceived support (Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan & Henry, 2001). Social organisation is reflected in social support and cohesion among residents, a

sense of community, supervision of children and adolescents by adults in the neighbourhood and participation in neighbourhood activities (Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 1999). Furthermore, the degree of social organisation present in a community and an individual's commitment to their community will determine the wellbeing of that individual and the wellbeing of the community at large (Berkman & Glass, 2000). Thus, low levels of social organisation in a community increases chances for the development of youth violence in that community (Krug et al., 2002).

Within the last decade there has been an acknowledgement that youth belong to communities and social networks, which impact on their development, providing benefits and costs of membership, based on the level of social organisation evident (Pretty, 2002). For instance, a study done abroad by Wilkinson, Kawachi and Kennedy (1998) reported on the relationship between social organisation and crime rates, indicating that social organisation reflecting low levels of social cohesion and high levels of interpersonal mistrust were linked to increased homicide rates and inequality. Thus, when social disorganisation is high, it is likely that violence will follow the same trend (Berkman & Glass, 2000). The findings of this study correlate with local research conducted by Emmett (2003) which found that social disorganisation bred low levels of social control and sense of community, and also increased levels of violence and crime.

Social disorganisation is described by Sampson and Groves (1989) as the inability of a community structure to realise the commonality amongst residents with regard to values and norms and the lack of maintenance of effective forms of social control. In addition, Zagar et al (1991) state that living in a disadvantaged violence prone environment with high levels of social disorganisation contribute greatly to the development of violence in youth. Anderson (1998) elaborates on this statement by highlighting that although there are forces within the community that serve as buffers to this development, such as a strong, supportive family, these factors are often trumped by the development of a way of life in these environments that function to ensure survival on the 'streets' and whose norms do not necessarily correlate with standardised societal norms and ways of being. Thus, Anderson (1998) argues that these two sets of norms has an impact on the co-existence of residents, particularly for youth growing up in these areas, as their homes may be reflections of a strong, supportive and value-based family but the 'streets' calls for a different set of values which will allow for them to take care of themselves. Youth learn the rules at an early age (Anderson, 1998).

In addition, the relationship between violence and social organisation and environmental development is interchangeable. For instance, a study done in Jamaica on poor urban communities by Moser and Holland (1997) found a cyclical relationship between violence and social disorganisation. Violence in this study had a ripple effect which caused physical mobility being restricted, limited employment and educational opportunities, lack of investment in the area because of the crime rates and locals were less interested in improving their living environment because of fear that the infrastructure will only be destroyed. The above ripple effects only served to further create the conditions for violence. Moreover, Anderson (1998) argues that youth involvement in these environmental experiences and socialisation into the ways of the street results in these ways becoming a part of their working conception of their world and as time goes and they mature, the streets norms or ways become the social order for them, affecting the way they live and interact with others.

Local research conducted by Bruce (2007) further argues that in an environment where social disorganisation is evident and positive role models are absent, youth look to those with status and who are respected in the community and idealise their behaviour. Unfortunately, these individuals are often gang members, drug dealers or individuals that have won prestigious positions in the community through the exertion of their power by the means of violence. Thus, violence and crime are looked upon as being the means to achieve status, respect and other basic social and personal needs. Thus, "like money and knowledge, violence is a form of power, and for some youth, it is the only form of power available" (Elliot, 1994, p. 3).

Furthermore, local research has highlighted that interpersonal relations among individuals are often contradictory. On the one hand their shared experiences bring about a sense of coherence, solidarity, empathy and understanding; and on the other hand exists interpersonal mistrust, hostility and aggression which is often directed towards each other (Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004). Moreover, international research by Krohn (1986) further argues that with this comes social disorganisation in which we see the increase of youth hanging out on street corners in peer groups, and formal and informal social controls lose their hold. The influential role of parents and other adults falls away and this role is in turn taken up by peer groups, which in turn, communicate a different set of values, norms and attitudes that may encourage criminal and violent behaviour as these are groups prone to anti-social behaviour (Hare & Hare, 1985). Thus, local literature emphasises that when traditional institutions, such as the family and other authority figures in one's community, no longer take

on or have the responsibility of socialisation of youth, the greater the opportunity for peer group or gang influence to assume the responsibility (Emmett, 2003).

Thus, international research conducted by Anderson (1998) highlights that although youth living in these environments may come from homes which do not condone violent behaviour, the outside environment operates on a different set of rules in which youth must find their way and use violence if necessary to get by. Therefore, lessons of the home can quickly be put aside in order to handle and cope with their social environment. Furthermore, Anderson (1998) notes that their social environment presents them with a hierarchy which is based on survival and those who are tough and able to fend for themselves being placed on the top of that hierarchy, with the ultimate goal of gaining respect. This often leads to achieving respect amongst delinquent peers but also contributes to the manifestation of violence in an individual (Anderson, 1998). And so, Anderson (1998) states that it is important to note that the home or family that youth may come from is influential but not always the determining factor in how that youth may turn out, thus, taking into consideration surrounding physical and especially social environmental contributing factors and how youth adapt to their environment is vital.

Furthermore, Elliot (1994) notes that negotiation of one's environment is faced with challenges which present a great likelihood for the development of youth violence. Challenges such as peer influence; gang activity; substance abuse; exposure to violence; lack of social control, monitoring and supervision (Elliot, 1994). Bearing in mind that there are forces within these communities that function to counteract negative influences and serve as a protective factor, the intensity of the social dynamics at work in these areas operate to develop norms that deviate from mainstream society, a new set of norms is established, one that is in keeping with the way of life which encourages the street code. This in turn has ripple effects for residents, particularly for youth growing up in this environment as they are then socialised into this new found way of life which might not be the most ideal or beneficial (Anderson, 1998).

In addition, Anderson (1998) suggests that in these environments there is a regulation of social interaction that only those residing there are aware of. Knowing who not to mess with, knowing when to walk around at night and when not to, and being prepared for anything. In some way then, abiding by the code of conduct provides some form of social organisation and reduces the probability of random violence as everyone knows their place and knows whose toes not to tramp on. Mr Don Moses, a community member of a black

community in America which has high rates of youth violence said the following about how he viewed life in his community:

> "Keep your eyes and ears open at all times. Walk two steps forward and look back. Watch your back. Prepare yourself verbally and physically. Even if you have a cane, carry something. The older people do carry something, guns in sheaths. They can't physically fight no more so they carry a gun" (Anderson, 1998, p. 75).

In environments such as these residents acknowledge that people get killed here, they get stabbed but it is also a place which one calls home, where one relaxes and has a good time.

Moreover, Anderson (1998) states that living in these 'no-go-zones' has a likelihood of making its residents feel alienated from their broader community. This in turn brings about a stereotypical distinction between youth whom reside in these environments and those who do not. The main distinction being that youth within these environments are labelled and judged as being wild, aggressive, tough and street smart. However, this distinction also serves to contribute to youth internalising these labels, as in their environment being the opposite does not carry as much weight, thus, violent behaviour may provide them with security and communicate to others that they can handle themselves and see little value in doing away with such behaviour (Anderson, 1998). Furthermore, as much as these environments are associated with violence and discord, there are individuals that reside there and who are legitimate, hard working individuals who are simply carrying on with their lives and trying their best to stay out of trouble and harm's way (Anderson, 1998). Thus, Anderson (1998) acknowledges that the street norms originate from a sense of alienation from the broader community, especially felt by youth, and the street norms serve as a cultural adaptation to the way of life promoted by the environment and in which personal safety is one's own responsibility. Police responses are late or not at all and this further drives them to take matters into their own hands and defend themselves. Thus, the social problems combined with the living conditions gives the norms of the 'street' power to dominate the social and physical environmental space (Anderson, 1998).

With regard to the above literature, which is predominantly drawn from international studies on social organisation and its relationship to community and youth development, the lack of local research is noted in these violent prone areas such as Eldorado Park. Furthermore, taking into account that high rates of violence and crime are statistically evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park (City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2008), investigating the levels of social organisation evident within this environment is

crucial and hence has been included in the current research study. Moreover, Emmet (2003) notes that high levels of social disintegration in a community results in high levels of violence and crime, as social disintegration brings about the lack of social control, diminished sense of community and social cohesion, which is noted as further increasing rates of violence. Exposure to these high rates of violence will be discussed in relation to its impact on the development of youth violence.

Exposure to high rates of violence

> The world remains a threatening, often dangerous place for children and youths. And in our country today, the greatest threat to the lives of children and adolescence is not disease or starvation or abandonment, but the terrible reality of violence (Shalala, in Mash & Wolfe, 2005, p.5).

Gorman-Smith and Tolan (1998) highlight that studies done on urban youth in the United States have found that between 50% and 90% have witnessed community violence in their lifetime. In addition, Elliot (1994) highlights that youth who are perpetrators and victims of violence have one common factor, that is, they are often individuals that have been exposed to violence. Furthermore, local literature has noted that surviving the immediate effects of violence which is death, severe injury or disability, does not mean that one remains unscathed by violence which may manifest in other forms (Stevens et al., 2004). For instance, research done on South African youth by Angles and Shefer (1997) revealed that exposure to violence resulted in behavioural disturbances such as assaultive and aggressive behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, drug dealing, prostitution, academic problems and running away from home.

In addition, international literature has highlighted that individuals brought up in an environment in which a history of violence and current high rates of crime and violence are evident, often incorporate the social conditions in which they live, into who they are and specifically into the way they think and feel about the world (Shafii & Shafii, 2001). Thus, in the words of Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004, p. 2-14), "The lenses through which one looks at the world will determine how one understands and responds to that world". Therefore, Anderson (1998) states that living in a violence prone area and being exposed to violence is likely to make one more inclined to the use of violence in one's own interaction and to precipitate violence at any point in time (Anderson, 1998). This viewpoint is supported by local literature which has highlighted that exposure to violence increases the likelihood of youth either becoming victims or perpetrators of violence (Burton, 2007).

Furthermore, the prevalence of violence in an environment, which is often witnessed by youth and who are at times also involved in violent interactions, results in the acceptance of violence by youth and the adoption of violent behaviour in social interactions and institutions. Violence becomes part of their socialisation process (Marks, 1992). Thus, international literature argues that through exposure, socialisation and learned behaviour, youth learn about violence as a means of settling disputes and observe the possible outcomes where the perpetrator is either feared and given respect or faces circumstances such as a charge being laid against him or jail time. In addition, if violence works and the aforementioned outcomes are achieved, for instance, respect is gained, violent behaviour will be reinforced by peers and it is likely that the violent behaviour will be repeated (Anderson, 1998). Therefore, Elliot (1994) highlights that when violence is socialised into youth's behavioural repertoire and when youth are not tied to conventional norms and values that inhibit the use of violence and violent acts do not have serious ramifications, it only serves to make the matter worse and enhance the socialisation process further. This highlights violence as a rational choice in which the individual views the rewards as great and the costs as minimum (Elliot, 1994).

Moreover, individuals living in environments characterised by high rates of violence and experience continuous exposure to violence, may become desensitised and acculturated to violence (Segal, 1998). This in turn results in individuals experiencing an increase in emotional distancing and feelings of helplessness and alienation; decrease in a sense of responsibility for ones actions and choices, concern for others and resistance to group attitudes and peer pressure; and the development of moral atrophy which makes it easier for individuals to commit and ignore acts of violence (McKendrick & Hoffman, 1990). Thus, continuous exposure to violence resulting in desensitisation, affects individuals perceptions of violence and what constitutes a violent act (Shafii & Shafii, 2001).

In addition, Fraser (1996) highlights that youth social development is highly dependent on their interaction with individuals within their community, specifically, their family members, community members and peers (Fraser, 1996). Anderson (1998) argues that the social development of youth occurs in relation to development, which calls for the discovery of the self and a sense of identity. Thus, youth socialise with their peers and other residents in their developmental process, trying on different roles and learning how their environment operates. In a violent environment they learn to watch their backs and to anticipate and negotiate situations that may lead to violent interactions (Anderson, 1998).

Furthermore, adults within these environments groom their youth from an early age to be ready for what lies outside their homes and reinforces the philosophy of survival where youth are taught to be tough and not let others take advantage of them, they are told to 'handle their business' (Anderson, 1998). For instance, Anderson (1998) states that his research on inner city poor black communities found that a child who came home and complained about being beaten, would be instructed not to complain about it, but go back out there and fend for themselves. Thus, in environments where violence is rife, youth are encouraged by adults and parents to stand up for themselves through the use of violence, as the use of violence is motivated for by the need to survive (Anderson, 1998). For instance, the National Survey of Youth in the United States found that youth used violence in retaliation of a previous attack, out of revenge or because of provocation or anger (Krug et al., 2002). This only serves to reinforce the socialisation into violence as necessary and required (Anderson, 1998).

There is no guarantee or 'sure bet' that every individual coming from a violent environment will be a criminal, resort to violence in settling disputes, or be involved in gang activity. There are resilience factors that also play a significant role, shining like fireflies in the darkness (Stevens et al., 2004). The term 'resilience' is explained by Werner (1992) as describing three kinds of phenomenon: good developmental outcomes despite risk factors, sustained competence when under stress; and recovery from trauma. Therefore, not all individuals are vulnerable to environmental characteristics that may pose as a risk factor, such as exposure to violence, some do possess resilience factors that serve to protect them psychologically (Garbarino, 1999). While it is important to acknowledge resilience and a range of outcomes in a high risk neighbourhood, it is more likely that risky conditions will facilitate risky behaviour (Standing, 2003).

Furthermore, it is noted that peer influence has an impact on resilience factors, especially delinquent peers. For instance, Elliot and Mernard (1996) argue that delinquency has the ability to facilitate peer bonding and peer bonding with delinquent peers in turn promote delinquency. This is further explored under gang influence which is also investigated in the current research study as a contributing feature to the development of youth violence.

Gang influence

> The strongest and most immediate cause of the actual onset of serious violent behaviour is involvement with a delinquent peer group. It is here that violence is modeled, encouraged, and rewarded; and justifications for disengaging one's moral obligation to others are taught and reinforced...aggressive behaviour patterns developed in childhood all influence the type of friends one chooses, and the type of friends, in turn, largely determines what behaviour patterns will be modeled, established and reinforced during adolescence (Elliot, 1994, p. 5).

Gangs are defined as a group of youth that 'hang out' together and are commonly known for engaging in violent, illegal or criminal activity. They are often identified by a particular group name, symbol, colour, style or type of clothing (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Centre, 2005). Furthermore, taking into account that many groups of youth may fit this description, the distinguishing factor between youth who are part of a gang and groups of youth who have no affiliation to gangs is their involvement in violent activities (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Centre, 2005).

Furthermore, gangs are identified as a subtype of adolescent peer groups with a formal identity and membership requirements, in which the majority of its members are often delinquent in nature and are often involved in acts of violence or other gang related activities such as drug dealing (Elliot, 1994). Thus, peers are a crucial facet in development as they can exert positive or negative influences. Moreover, Elliot (1994) argues that youth are more likely to join and become a part of a gang if their living environment does not provide them with the support and structure that they need. Belonging to a gang portrays a sense of belonging. Furthermore, Anderson (1998) argues that there is something about these living spaces that attracts a violent element, in which gang membership protects you and if not you are on your own. What then protects you is your ability to be street smart, that is, behave the right way, look as though you can handle yourself and be able to defend yourself if need be.

Moreover, Fraser (1996) argues that in communities in which social structures are seen as weak (underfinanced, poorly trained staff and little community involvement), opportunities for success in conventional activities are faced with obstacles and where gang membership promises alternative social roles and financial rewards, violence may be a suitable option to adopt. Thus, youth converging to violence can be viewed as a product of the social context in which that youth is embedded. This is particularly true of gang membership and violence which is strongly correlated with the above mentioned factors (Fraser, 1996). Therefore, social problems are contagious and are spread through a peer group, this is specifically true with delinquency. For instance, it is highlighted that youth

from poor urban areas develop strong peer subcultures that value violent behaviour, evident in the development of gangs in these areas (Crane, 1991). Thus, cultural transmission theory states that living in a violence prone environment leads to individuals learning crime and delinquency through interaction with other people, such as those who belong to gangs or are involved in acts of violence (DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Stevens & Linder, 1994).

In South Africa, research conducted by CSVR (2007), highlighted that SAPS 2005-2006 annual report indicated that 273 organised crime gangs are evident, specialising in drug related crimes, motor vehicle theft, fraud and corruption. In addition, research indicates that of these 273 gangs, 130 of these gangs originate from the Cape region of South Africa, specifically the Cape flats, with well known gangs such as the 'Americans', 'Hard Livings' and 'Junior Mafia' having a trans-generational presence (CSVR, 2007). Moreover, Krug et al (2002) notes that 90 000 gang members reside in the Cape region alone, this is excluding of other parts of South Africa. Pinnock (1996) states that all urban centres in South Africa are noted as having one form or another of gangs, with similar gangs mentioned above present in Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein. For instance, in Johannesburg, Alexandra township is highlighted as giving rise to youth gangs commonly involved in petty crimes, to more organised criminal groups such as the Msomi group commonly involved in violent acts such as robberies and murder (Gastrow, 1991). Past gangs noted in Eldorado Park by Haffajee (1998) included the Dogs, Tavaras, Matarianas, Bizza Boys, Young Ones and the Cajala Boys.

Krug et al (2002) highlights that youth gangs are common throughout the world, however, their size, nature and purpose may differ. For instance, these range from a social club to an organised crime network. Their commonality is that they all function to provide a haven in which individuals feel they belong and a sense of identity is established. Gang members are primarily male, although female formed gangs are evident. Gang members can range from 7-35 years of age, however, it is more common to find youth in their teens or early twenties who are part of gangs. Gang activity is usually formed and brewed in economically deprived areas, low income and working class environments; environments in which the social order has broken down and a social organisation or a sense of community is lacking (Krug et al., 2002).

Therefore, youth are at risk of falling prey to gang influence when they reside in a environment that is economically deprived; lack social order, sense of community and opportunities for social or economic mobility; lack effective law enforcement; interrupted

schooling; lack guidance from significant others such as parents; victimisation in the home; and engaging with peers already in gangs (Krug et al., 2002). In addition, 'mixed-use neighbourhoods' are identified as another factor which places youth at risk for gang influence, as it presents the ideal set-up for the establishment of gangs, in that individuals are faced with a environment that provides greater opportunities for youth to congregate outside the home with other peers, thus making them more subjective to peer group influence or gang influence (Stark, 1987). Thus, youth who are involved in violence and gangs at this early stage in their lives are more likely to continue this violent behaviour into adulthood. For instance, Shaw and McKay (1969) highlights that a study done on inner city youth in the United States found that over 70% of juveniles in high gang delinquency areas were arrested in adulthood.

In addition, the lack of positive role models in the environment can also be identified as a contributing factor in placing youth at risk of gang influence (Franchi & Swart, 2003). For instance, Franchi and Swart (2003) highlight that in a disadvantaged environment such as Eldorado Park, gang leaders are viewed as potential role models and gang membership introduces a way of life that appears to provide an escape from the material and social constraints which the environment poses, such as poverty, unemployment and family strife, which is coupled with the lack of social and psychological support structures for youth. Thus, gang life may be a viable option for some youth for a number of reasons. These include socioeconomic, community and interpersonal reasons such as lack of social or economic mobility in their environment; decline in law and order; unfinished schooling and the inability to get a good paying job because of the lack of credentials; lack of guidance, support and supervision from family and community members; and being influenced by peers who are gang members (Krug et al., 2002).

Moreover, gang membership is a lifestyle often associated with substance abuse, violence and death (Franchi & Swart, 2003). Thus, youth whom are gang members engage in more violence than other youth and studies have supported this by highlighting that as youth become part of gangs they become more violent and engage in riskier, illegal behaviour. For instance, in Guam, 60% of violent crimes reported by the police are committed by youth belonging to gangs (Krug et al., 2002). In addition, this continuous use of group violence in turn obtains a normative character for the gang and the individuals involved. This in turn causes them to engage in violent acts that they may not have committed if they were not part of the gang (Decker, 1996). Therefore, in a gang context, the power of suggestion is

increased and a sense of responsibility and power of self control is decreased (Bridges, 1927).

In addition, Anderson (1998) highlights that it is common for gang members to follow a code, a code that often articulates violence as a means of getting what you want and maintaining respect. Respect is viewed as an external entity that is hard earned and should be guarded as it can be easily lost. This in turn, causes gang members to be very sensitive and receptive of signals that may indicate to them another person's harmful intentions and serve as a warning to get ready for a physical attack. Therefore, they are always on the alert and always ready to use violence as a means of asserting their power (Anderson, 1998).

Thus, Elliot (1994) states that belonging to a gang increases youth's chances for becoming a violent perpetrator or being the victim of a violent perpetrator. Likewise, an individual's decision to leave a gang decreases the chances. Although the word 'gang' brings with it connotations of violence, delinquency and crime, not all gangs serve a negative purpose. Some gangs are found to have a rather influential and positive role to play in communities, particularly in socially disorganised communities, as they function to provide youth in these communities with a sense of acceptance, belonging, personal worth and seeing to their basic needs such as safety, food, clothing and protection (Elliot, 1994).

Furthermore, gang influence is noted as often featuring substance use, abuse, dependency as well as dealing (Ashdown, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between substance abuse and violence is investigated in this research study as they are so intricately linked. This relationship is elaborated on below.

Substance abuse

Substance abuse and substance related violence is noted as being among one of the greatest concerns in youth development, resulting in growing interest by researchers, public sector workers and government to investigate the relationship between substances and violence, particularly among youth (De la Rosa, Lambert & Gropper, 1990). Longitudinal studies conducted have established that previous violent behaviour and current use of illicit drugs together are noted as being one of the most robust predictors of violent behaviour (Sussman, Skara, Weiner & Dent, 2004). Thus, research has highlighted that youth whom generally have a positive outlook towards the use of substances such as alcohol and drugs are more likely to engage in violent behaviour. This research was further supported by findings that have highlighted that alcohol consumption has a positive relationship with aggression

(Sussman et al., 2004). Furthermore, there appears to be a mutually reinforcing relationship between the development of aggression and the use of alcohol over time during adolescence (Huang, White, Kosterman, Catalano & Hawkins, 2001). In addition, it is stated that a state of intoxication caused by substances affects youth's ability to monitor and regulate behaviour and the use of substances may also expose youth to social environments in which violence is modelled and rewarded (Ward, 2007).

Furthermore, Johnston, O'Malley and Bachman (1993) highlight that research done on youth violence suggests that substance abuse (alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, to name a few) contribute to youth suicide, homicide, robbery, rape and assaults, as substance use in turn becomes substance dependence, where youth find themselves selling drugs in order to satisfy their habit, in turn causing them to turn to crime and violence. For instance, Molosankwe (2008) notes that news reports on Eldorado Park indicate that substance abuse has led to acts of hijacking, robbery and murder, being committed by youth, all in the pursuit of drugs. Thus, De la Rosa et al (1990) emphasise that when it comes to connecting drugs and violence, it is often youth who act as the intermediary link. This is supported by research conducted in the United States, which identifies the intermediary link between drugs, youth and violence. That is, youth becoming 'drug-runners'; delivering drugs and drug money to sellers and buyers; and inevitably being hospitalised for injuries caused by violent acts (De la Rosa et al., 1990).

Furthermore, De la Rosa et al (1990) notes that research also indicates that alcohol is highly correlated to violence. This finding is supported by Gilligan (2002) who highlights that a study done revealed that more than 50% of perpetrators or victims of violent acts had alcohol in their bloodstream at the time the violent act was committed. Therefore, Krug et al (2002) viewed 'drunkenness' as a precipitator of violence. In addition, South African reports (in Parry, 1998) state that alcohol is the most commonly used and abused substance in South Africa, with the proportion of racially categorised 'coloured' drinkers aged 14+ being 59% for males and 27% for females. The report further emphasises that alcohol misuse is prevalent amongst residents of disadvantaged communities where access to alcohol is easy and this often results in binge drinking, especially on weekends (Parry, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The literature review encompassed the nature of the development of youth violence in relation to the influential role that social and physical environmental factors play. The above literature review focused on understanding environmental factors in particular, more

specifically, physical and social environmental factors on the council flats of Eldorado Park to better understand the development of youth violence in this context, as youth violence remains a multi-faceted problem in South Africa and research on the various avenues which function as contributing factors for the development of youth violence is necessary to assist in gathering information to establish prevention and intervention strategies (DuRant et al., 1994).

Moreover, Williams et al (1998) argues that contributing factors to youth violence are multiple and the precise nature of all these contributing factors continues to be debated. Thus, Williams et al (1998) suggests that in order to develop interventions and tackle youth violence, research needs to be conducted on an in-depth level to build the knowledge base with regard to contributing factors associated with youth violence. Only then can we truly be effective in addressing this phenomenon. Thus, the importance of capturing the residents of the council flats in Eldorado Park's local knowledge of life on the council flats is crucial to understanding the social and physical environmental factors, as well as, the multiple threads that make up the inner workings of this community in relation to the complex development of youth violence within this community.

Therefore, the exploration of residents' perceptions with regard to the role of physical and social environmental factors in influencing youth violence on the council flats can assist in the development of knowledge to better understand what is happening to our youth and what the connections are between the context in which they find themselves and the violent behaviours that they display. The chapter that follows describes the manner in which the research study aims to explore resident's perceptions of social and physical environmental factors in influencing youth violence, as well as highlighting the research questions that will be addressed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Introduction

The research conducted sought to explore the social and physical environmental factors evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park in relation to the development of violence, from the perspective of residents. The following chapter presents the research questions that informed the research. It also provides a description of the research design underpinning the study and the process involved in participant selection, gaining access to participants, the sampling process and methods involved in data collection and analysis. The issues of validity and reliability are broached within a qualitative framework. Finally, a note of the researcher's self reflexivity throughout the research process is included, highlighting how the research process was experienced by the researcher and ethical considerations that were taken into account.

Qualitative research design

Creswell (1994) highlights that there are two main research designs used in a research study, namely the qualitative and quantitative research design. Quantitative research design falls within the following paradigms: traditional, positivist, experimental or empiricist paradigm. Whereas, qualitative research design falls within the following paradigms: constructivist, naturalistic, interpretive, post positivist or postmodern paradigm (Patton, 2002). This research study adopted a qualitative research design to understand the phenomenon of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. A qualitative research design is explained as "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of information, and conducted in a natural setting" (Creswell, 1994, p. 2). This research design is also based on the assumption that reality is constructed by individual's interaction with their environment (Merriam, 1998), and hence appeared suitable for the current research study. Furthermore, this research design allowed the researcher to learn how residents experienced life on the council flats in Eldorado Park, as well as the meaning and interpretations they attached to these experiences in relation to the development of youth violence (Morse & Richard, 2002). In addition, in adopting this research design the researcher considered the compatibility of the research design in answering the research question which will be presented below (Morse &

Richard, 2002). And lastly, due to the emphasis placed on requiring residents subjective knowledge and the generation of understanding and meaning from a contextual perspective, this research design appeared to be most suitable. Furthermore, it was noted that this research procedures within this research design were particular and replication was rare, as each participant was treated as an individual with their own subjective experience to share (Greenstein, 2003). Thus, it was noted that this would serve the current study well.

Interpretive phenomenological paradigm

A paradigm is explained as a worldview, in other words, an individual's perception or way of thinking about and making sense of the world, as "the perspective one takes toward a particular phenomenon to a large extent influences ones understanding of and response to the phenomenon" (Ka Sigogo & Modipa, 2004, p. 2-14). The following research adopted an interpretive phenomenological paradigm which is drawn from the qualitative research design and thus was appropriate in terms of addressing the nature and aims of the current research study (Creswell, 1994). This paradigm is concerned with the interpretation, meaning and illumination (Usher, 1996) of how individuals create and maintain their social world (Neuman, 2000). Thus, this paradigm allowed the researcher to understand the phenomena of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park from the perspective of residents, as it assisted the researcher in gaining a rich, insightful and descriptive analysis that resulted in understanding residents subjective meaning, understanding and knowledge of life on the council flats in relation to the development of youth violence (Schultz & Hatch, 1996).

Research questions

The research questions that were addressed in the study are as follows:

1. How do residents' perceive the role of their physical environment in relation to the development of violence in youth, with regard to the following physical factors?
    - High density housing
    - Poor infrastructure
    - Lack of recreational facilities
2. How do residents' perceive the role of their social environment in relation to the development of violence in youth, with regard to the following social factors?
    - Social order

- Exposure to high rates of violence
- Substance abuse

3. In what way are residents' perceptions of environmental factors inter-related with factors at the micro, meso, exo and macro system of ecological development in relation to the development of violence in youth?

Participants

Participants were residents selected from the council flats of Eldorado Park. The sampling process contained elements of purposive and convenience methods of non-probability sampling (Greenstein, 2003). This was achieved by selecting participants who were residents' of the council flats in Eldorado Park and have had experience of life on the council flats and contact with youth living on the council flats. Furthermore, the sample was convenient in that access to participants was easy for the researcher, who had previously worked in the community of Eldorado Park and therefore could identify and have access to key figures, who placed the researcher in contact with possible participants, who were asked to volunteer for the study (Greenstein, 2003). The only necessary requirement in the selection of respondents was that they possess 'local knowledge' of life on the council flats of Eldorado Park. Thus, an inclusive criteria was introduced whereby it was assumed that residents who were adults and had been residing at the council flats over at least a ten year period were able to provide a richer insight with regard to their responses to the research topic.

The study utilised fourteen male and female volunteer participants. Participants varied and provided a mixture of the various personalities and groups residing on the council flats. Participants that were interviewed included residents who were employed as well as those unemployed; residents that were economically stable as well as those that were not; residents that had been gang members in the past as well as residents that were suspected of being current gang members; residents that were integrated into the community of the council flats as well as residents that chose to isolate themselves from other residents. Thus, the variety in participant's characteristics allowed a true exploration of life on the council flats from various subjective experiences.

Data collection tools

As the research study adopted a qualitative research design, which called for a qualitative inquiry of meaning in context drawn from resident's perspectives, the data collection approach was geared towards sensitivity to the underlying meaning which was gathered from data and interpreted (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, in this study the methods of collecting data involved semi-structured interviews and observations.

Semi-structured interviews

Interview questions were drawn from the literature that was researched for the study, presented in chapter two, and the actual interview was guided by the research questions presented in chapter three. Thus, an interview schedule (Appendix A) was developed with a list of open-ended questions. However, the interview schedule was not a rigid outline to the course of the interview process and allowed for areas of interest brought up by participants to be explored (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Thus, semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in the interview structure (Eatough & Smith, 2008). Furthermore, interviews were beneficial to the research process because they allowed for face-to-face communication with respondents (Greenstein, 2003). Thus, allowing the researcher to establish a degree of trust and cooperation and to assist respondents with the interpretation of questions. On the other hand, the disadvantages of using interviews was also taken into consideration, such as, it being time-consuming and an expensive process; data accuracy was dependent on the honesty of respondents; and respondents may have had different characteristics from the rest of the population (Greenstein, 2003). However, this technique was most suitable to the aims of the study, as interviews are identified as a sufficient means of assessing individual's perceptions, meanings and definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch, 2005), in which each interview is considered as providing a unique understanding of the phenomenon in question (Bernard, 2002). Therefore, interviews were conducted with a small number of participants, namely fourteen. However, this allowed for the greater exploration of ideas and issues of interest in the study.

Observations

> We must constantly remind ourselves that the human senses are our 'first-order' measuring instrument. On the basis of our visual, auditory and tactile observations and perceptions we begin to classify responses, people, actions and events. But, because we aim for truthful

> representations of the social world, we must supplement our observations with other instruments (Mouton, 1998, p. 67).

Observations is highlighted as being a fundamental data collection tool in the process of qualitative inquiry as it takes the researcher into the context, which allows the researcher to discover the complexities at work in a given context (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Therefore, the data collection process included observation, which was generally an unstructured process, in which the researcher made observations in a natural and open-ended manner (Normand, 2007). Thus, as the council flats and broader community of Eldorado Park was utilised on several occasions for conducting interviews, it presented a naturalistic setting which allowed for informal observations to be made about the community of the council flats in Eldorado Park and the broader community of Eldorado Park, as well as the social setting and social interactions evident amongst these two groups. Observations were later merged with data gathered from semi-structured interviews in the analysis process of the research (Punch, 2005).

Procedure

The research focused on the conducting of interviews with residents from the council flats of Eldorado Park. Residents were approached with the help of a non-governmental organisation in Eldorado Park called the Eldorado Park Women's Forum. The organisation was identified as a 'key informant' (Normand, 2007) in that the organisation works with individuals from the community of Eldorado Park, especially with individuals residing at the council flats. Therefore, the organisation comprised of local individuals with knowledge about the council flats in Eldorado Park and thus were able to identify possible participants who would be accessible to the researcher and willing to volunteer, as well as initiate the snowball effect, whereby participants were requested to refer the researcher to other participants (Merriam, 1998). The organisation was briefed on the research topic, its aims and objectives, and requested to put the researcher in contact with residents who would potentially be interested in participating in the study. Once participants were accessed, the research project's aims and objectives were printed out and handed to residents with the objective of inviting residents to voluntarily participate in the study. Thus, residents were informed that the study was being conducted for the purpose of obtaining a Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. The aim of the study was to explore residents' perceptions of the role of the

surrounding physical and social environment in influencing youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. To achieve this aim interviews were held with residents who obliged to voluntarily participate in the study. And the requirement for participation was that residents' had been residing at the council flats for a period of ten years. Once participants were selected, the interview process commenced. Interviews were administered for approximately an hour at the council flats in extension one, three and six. It was not anticipated, but if participants experienced distress due to the interview process, free trauma counselling was made available to them at the Eldorado Park Women's Forum. Responses were recorded on tape and recording consent was requested from respondents, as well as informed consent for resident's participation and use of their information in the study. Thereafter, interviews were transcribed. Observation notes were also kept. Recorded tapes that were used in interviews and transcripts were kept in a secure location and will be destroyed once the study has been examined. The research study will be documented in a research report and copies of this report will be made available to the Eldorado Park Women's Forum, as well as a summary of the research findings will be made available to residents of the council flats and community members of Eldorado Park.

Data analysis

Interviews were transcribed and a thematic content analysis was conducted using themes that were addressed in the literature review and themes that arose from the data. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain thematic content analysis as a research method which calls for a subjective interpretation of data acquired during the research process by systemic classification processes of coding and the identification of themes and patterns. Furthermore, inductive and deductive reasoning was also exercised. Berg (2001) explains inductive reasoning as a process in which themes emerge during the research process (concept development) and deductive reasoning as a process in which concepts from theory and previous studies are used within the research process (data collection). In the study, the process of qualitative content analysis occurred in the following steps: step one involved the transformation of data into written format, that is, recorded interviews were transcribed (Patton, 1990); step two involved the determination of a coding unit, 'themes' were adopted as a meaningful unit for analysis expressed in phrases found in the interview transcripts (Weber, 1990); step three involved transforming coding units into developed categories and coding schemes which were derived from the data and theory, thus utilising inductive and

deductive reasoning (Miles & Huberman, 1994): step four involved the coding of all text (Schilling, 2006); and step five involved drawing conclusions from the coded data and making sense of already generated categories (Bradley, 1993).

Thus, the process of analysis involved identifying codes and themes drawn from the data collection process, with the researcher making notes of reflections and remarks that arose. Once this was done, the researcher engaged in sifting through the data to identify similar phrases and themes; relationships between themes; differences between themes; and common patterns in themes, as well as identifying sub themes. The researcher further isolated patterns and processes; commonalities and differences and thereafter took note of consistencies that arose and confronted these consistencies with a formalised body of knowledge drawn from the literature review and theoretical framework (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The researcher identified and grouped common and different themes to provide an expression of voices across residents in the study (Anderson, 2007).

Validity and reliability

Spinelli (1989) highlight's that it has been argued that conclusions drawn from studies which focus on subjective experiences are not considered scientific unless they are objectively tested in some manner. Thus, assessing validity and reliability is crucial. Internal validity is explained as the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question; and external validity is explained as the degree to which findings can be generalised in similar settings as the one under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Furthermore, reliability is explained as the degree to which findings can be replicated by other inquirers (Normand, 2007).

Reliability and validity, better understood in qualitative research by the following concepts: quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002). The research attempted to achieve this through the process of triangulation which is defined by Patton (2002, p. 247) as follows: "Triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods of data." Mouton (1998) argues that the use of more than one method of data collection in a research study increases the reliability of findings, as the methods serve to complement each other and balance respective short comings. This is also an argument taken up by Merriam (2002) who states that it also serves to enhance the validity of findings. Thus, the following research utilised semi-structured interviews and observations as data collection methods.

Furthermore, trustworthiness of data collected was established through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Normand, 2007). Credibility is explained as "conducting inquiry in such a manner as to ensure that participants were identified and described for the study to show that the inquiry is credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 143). In this study, the researcher ensured credibility by selecting residents whom have resided on the council flats of Eldorado Park for a period of ten years or more and thus possessed local knowledge of this environment, as well as, access to youth residing in this environment. The researcher also engaged in constantly inspecting the researcher's personal and observation notes made throughout the research process, converging with other sources of data made available to the researcher such as newspaper articles and informal conversations with community members of Eldorado Park to determine if findings of the study were credible to the individuals under study (Brink, 1990).

Dependability is explained as a construct in which the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon, as well as, changes in the design (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). As the credibility of the findings was secured, no changes were needed. In addition, transcripts and codes were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor as another manner to ensure dependability. Transferability is highlighted as the process of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context. However, in this study transferability is limited, as this is a qualitative study that focuses on a particular context. Lastly, confirmability is highlighted as a criteria used in the evaluation of data quality and occurs when two or more individuals agree that that data is similar, indicating that findings are free from bias (Polit & Hungler, 1995). Confirmability was established by verifying probed participants on responses that were unclear and confirmation was sought with regard to interpretations made.

Furthermore, the researcher made use of extensive quotes drawn from transcripts of the interviews conducted, and the analysis process was reviewed by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor. And lastly, the researcher also reviewed the audio tapes with participant's responses multiple times, as well as, the transcriptions of the audio tapes (Ratcliff, 2005).

Self reflexivity

> ...the human element of qualitative inquiry is both its strength and weakness - its strength is fully using human insight and experience, its weakness is being so heavily dependent on the

> researcher's skill, training, intellect, discipline, and creativity. The researcher is the instrument of qualitative inquiry, so the quality of the research depends heavily on the qualities of that human being (Patton, 1988).

The term 'reflective' is highlighted by Kelly and van der Riet (2001) as the manner in which the research process conducted by the researcher can have an impact on the context of the research. Thus, it is important for the researcher to engage in self reflection regarding their role and behaviour in the research setting. For instance, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2004) state that the researcher should be aware of their personal world-views, values, social position and belief systems compared to the community in which the research is being conducted, as this can shape the collection and interpretation of data.

Considering my role as the researcher, I viewed it as important to the research process to acknowledge my indirect impact on the context of the research, thus embracing my involvement and role within the research (Winter, 2000). I was rather accustomed to the community of Eldorado Park as I had spent a considerable amount of time in this community due to family relations and work commitments. I viewed this as an advantage, as I was familiar with the council flats and security or access was not a major concern. I was aware that in accordance with many residents' from the council flats I was considered as coming from a middle class background. However, I recognised that my 'racial category' worked in my favour in the research process, as I was considered by residents as being 'coloured', a racial category in which people were identified under the Apartheid regime in South Africa, and thus this made it easier to establish rapport with interviewees. In addition, my familiarity to the context was advantageous in that it provided me with insight into the meaning of participant responses. However, I acknowledged that my familiarity with the context may have affected how I collected and interpreted data, and therefore made a conscious effort to guard against preconceived ideas. I attempted to be consciously aware of personal biases throughout the process. This awareness was facilitated by the use of a reflexive journal which documented my own thoughts and experiences in the process of conducting the research.

With regard to the process of data collection, interviews proved time consuming, as a portion of the interviews were conducted with residents within their homes and thus there was much disturbance caused by other residents living within the home. This was combated by extending the time spent interviewing participants. The researcher was thus patient and accommodated participants as best as possible. Furthermore, responses were dependent on

participant's honesty and reflection of their surroundings which was then interpreted by the researcher. Thus, misinterpretation was a possibility, although efforts were made to combat biases such as consulting a supervisor and clarifying interpretations with participants and other community members.

Moreover, participants' reactions and responses to the researcher varied, from interest and cooperation, to distrust which led to vague responses. However, this was interpreted as an element of the context in which residents found themselves, one in which distrust was rife and thus was incorporated into observational notes to be included in the data analysis. Furthermore, the distrust was noted as not necessarily being in the researcher but in the procedure, as participants appeared anxious when they were aware that they were being audio recorded, but after the interview was completed they spoke freely to the interviewer. Hence, to capture this information, field notes were taken. Furthermore, it was interesting to note that despite the male and female participants, there was no blame placed on either sex as being the cause of social disorganisation or violence on the council flats, no gender inequality was noted either.

In addition, the researcher acknowledged the differences between levels of education, specifically the researcher's level of education in relation to participants and its impacts on the interviewing process. For instance, it was noted that some participants were well educated, whereas others were not. Thus, research questions were phrased appropriately and led to participants answering with ease and in their own terms. Overall, the process was efficient and the researcher tried her best to accommodate research participants.

Ethics appraisal

In the conducting of the research, the following guidelines were carried out, as highlighted by Greenstein (2003) to ensure the psychological, physical and legal wellbeing of participants. Firstly, the purpose of the study was made clear to participants. Thereafter, the principle of informed consent was upheld and the confidentiality of participant information was guaranteed. Participants were informed that anonymity could not be guaranteed because of the face-to-face nature of interviews. Informed consent included an explanation of risks and benefits even if none were noted. Participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any given time. Participants were allowed to not answer any question they chose not to and provided the researcher with permission to use direct quotations in the study. In

addition, participant's signatures were a requirement on the informed consent form (Appendix C) in order for it to be viable. Furthermore, the principle of recording consent was upheld to ensure the identity of participants was protected as access to tapes used in the study was restricted, safe keeping of tapes was ensured and tapes will be destroyed once the study has been examined. In addition, participant's signature was a requirement on the recorded consent form (Appendix D) in order for it to be viable. Information gathered was only viewed by the researcher and the researcher's supervisor (Greenstein, 2003). Furthermore, participants were ensured that no harm would come to them during the collection of data and sensitive issues would be addressed with caution. Participants who may have experienced distress due to the interview process were provided with free trauma counselling at the Eldorado Park Women's Forum, whom provided free counselling services to men and women. Most importantly, participants were treated with respect.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the research questions and practical components of the research study, such as the participants involved in the research and the procedure involved in obtaining both the participants and the data. It also explained the manner in which data was obtained, as well as the method adopted to complete this task and the rationale behind method choice, as well as the self reflexivity of the researcher. It also provides an overview of the ethical implications and procedures that were adopted to ensure the safety of participants who part took in the research study. The chapter to follow provides the results and discussion drawn from the data collection, which had undergone thematic content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research study gathered from the data collection process, highlighting themes that emerged from the thematic content analysis that was conducted. Three major themes were introduced and discussed in relation to how residents perceive them as contributing to the development of youth violence. Themes incorporated the social and physical environmental contributors to youth violence noted by residents.

The first major theme is that of social disorder evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park. Social disorder in this study makes reference to the breakdown of traditional roles, morality and societal norms which has contributed to youth violence (Durkheim, 1933), and led to the formation of a new social order on the council flats. The study further explored this theme in relation to three sub themes that serve to highlight how social disorder came about and is maintained on the council flats. These sub themes included social organisation which made reference to the formation of social relationships amongst individuals based on a sense of belonging, sense of community and social support (Tolan et al., 1999). This sub theme also incorporated the concept of social cohesion, which is explained as the glue that holds society together (Durkheim, 1933). Secondly, the sub theme of socialisation is introduced, which involves the process whereby youth are socialised into life on the council flats and the new social order through their interaction with others and observations through exposure as a consequence of their physical environment. Lastly, poor social control which has led to community activities such as supervision and monitoring of youth falling away or being ineffective is highlighted.

The second major theme is the power of violence evident on the council flats, which explores exposure to various forms of violence and the increase of youth gangs due to the exposure to gang influence on the council flats. The last theme is the catalystic element of violence, which is substance abuse. This theme, explores the epidemic of substance abuse on the council flats and its relationship to violence on various levels.

Social disorder

The first major theme that was identified was that of social disorder evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park. According to Durkheim (1933), social disorder is explained as the breakdown in morality, whereby crime is the number one indicator of that breakdown; and lack of social control, whereby community members avoid their duties and obligations to the state and themselves. Furthermore, Durkheim (in Giddens, 1972) highlights that social disorder results in a state of anomie or normlessness where the community is described as being in a critical or chronic state, near collapse, which leaves its members living in an environment where solidarity and objectivity is absent and members are unable to find their ambitions subject to effective social discipline. From the findings this state of social disorder was noted as being present on the council flats of Eldorado Park. However, findings also highlighted that a unique form of social order operated on the council flats, that although did not fit the conventional understanding of the concept, fit the lifestyle adopted by youth and residents for survival.

Thus, this theme consisted of three sub themes which encompassed the concept of social disorder and described the unique form of social order evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park. The first sub theme is social organisation, which is explained by Sheidow et al (2001) as an individual's sense of belonging, involvement in informal and formal community activities and perceived community support. The second sub theme is socialisation, which is explained by Marshall (1998) as the process whereby individuals learn to become members of their society through the incorporation of societal norms and appropriate forms of behaviour obtained from the social level into the psychological level. The third sub theme is social control, which in this context is explained by Tolan et al (1999) as the ability of community members to supervise and monitor youth development.

Social organisation

Social organisation proved to be a significant sub theme, which emerged from the data. This theme expanded beyond the council flats in Eldorado Park to include forms of social organisation evident on three distinct levels: between community members of the broader community of Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats in Eldorado Park; between residents of the different council flats within Eldorado Park, as there are council flats situated within various extensions in Eldorado Park; and between residents residing at the same council flats. The forms of social organisation at these three levels are crucial to understand,

as they impact on the development of violence in youth on the council flats of Eldorado Park, which in turn impacts on the development and wellbeing of the community of Eldorado Park and the council flats in Eldorado Park. This assumption correlates with research done by Berkman and Glass (2000) which has stated that levels of social organisation between communities and within communities are determinants of individual commitment to their community and the wellbeing of the individual and their community respectively. Therefore, the dynamics of social organisation evident on these three levels in relation to the council flats are explored from the perspective of residents from the council flats in Eldorado Park.

Social organisation between the Eldorado Park community and residents of the council flats

Firstly, exploring the social organisation evident between community members of the broader community of Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats, resident's state:

> Hulles al gewoon, die mense buitekant sal se,' oh Eldorado Park is baie rof, hie by die flats die kinders is so en so'. Ek glo dis nie net hie by die flats nie, elke kind is stout in die hele omgewing
>
> (Participant 2)

> So people that are looking in from outside, just see all the crime and all the negativity
>
> (Participant 8)

> They've got a bad perspective of people that live on the flats, because, I think due to the past history relating to flats people
>
> (Participant 4)

> People on the outside, living in their houses, knows about the information but they will not share it with the flats people. Because there's this thing, that the flats, they just going to waste your time. Those people, they, they fine with the way they live
>
> (Participant 7)

> They've got everything and we've got nothing and we are stuck all on top of each other
>
> (Participant 10)

From the above responses a sense of belonging to the broader community of Eldorado Park seems to be diminished by labels, categories and distinctions that serve to marginalise residents from the council flats from the broader community of Eldorado Park. Residents perceive that although Eldorado Park as a whole is viewed as a *'rof'* (rough) and a *'crime'* infested community by outsiders, it is outsiders and community members of the broader Eldorado Park that view the council flats in particular as being the hub of that violence. This is noted in labels such as *'rof'* (rough), *'negative'* and *'bad'* that are imposed onto residents from the council flats by outsiders and community members of the broader Eldorado Park. This correlates with research done by Anderson (1998) on violence prone areas, who

highlights that the reputation of these areas in the broader community has the likelihood of alienating residents. Anderson (1998) further states that stereotypical distinctions arise and residents of these areas are automatically labelled and judged due to their place of residence.

However, residents in turn contest these stereotypical distinctions, labels and the viewpoint of the council flats being the hub of Eldorado Park violence, as one of the residents perceived the labels imposed onto youth in particular of the council flats, as being inclusive of majority of youth throughout the community of Eldorado Park and not only confined to the council flats. This perception was supported by another resident who perceived the *'past history'* of the council flats, which featured brutal acts of violence and notorious gangs such as the 'majimbos', as contributing to these viewpoints, but did not necessarily apply in the present day. News reports by the Mail and Guardian in 1998, commented on this *'past history'*, in which Eldorado Park was established as the notorious gangs turf, the gang was symbolised by a flying bird and engaged in activities such as drug running and car hijacking (Haffajee, 1998).

Furthermore, it was perceived that residents of the council flats were marginalised from the broader community of Eldorado Park not only due to the labels imposed on them but also due to their economic status (*'they've got everything and we've got nothing'*), as high rates of poverty and unemployment are also evident on the council flats in contrast to the broader community of Eldorado Park whose members were viewed by residents as being *'middle class'*. Research conducted by Louw (2004) confirms that poverty and unemployment have been two major areas of concern in the community of Eldorado Park. Moreover, a developmental report by the Presidency (2008) highlights that unemployment has been a national concern with over a third of South Africa's population being unemployed. Moreover, Palmary and Moat (2002) state that youth who experience these conditions of poverty are more likely to feel marginalised and excluded from their community.

In addition, this process of marginalisation also includes derogatory terms placed onto youth residing on the council flats. For instance, resident's state:

> They make a distinction between children from the flats and those that are not from the flats
>
> (Participant 3)

> They give them a bad reputation, you know, they make themselves separate from the flats. When they talk they'll say, 'the flats children', or, 'the people from the flats'. They won't involve themselves, so everything that happens...everything that's bad in the community, they'll say mostly the flats, the children from the flats
>
> (Participant 5)

> You meet a guy and you ask him, 'where are you coming from?', 'extension one flats', or 'ext so and so flats', to a person that has not heard about that flats, he already has a wrong impression that, 'oh, he must be a hooligan', not thinking that all the people from the flats are not like that
>
> (Participant 6)

> Perceived as dangerous and they are perceived as desperate and desperate youth will do anything to survive
>
> (Participant 13)

From the above responses it is highlighted that this process of marginalisation and 'othering' through labelling and stereotyping was noted as being more explicitly directed to youth coming out of the council flats, who are distinguished by derogatory terms such as *'flat children'* and identified as separate from youth in the broader community of Eldorado Park, as youth from the council flats are labelled as *'bad'*, *'hooligans'*, *'dangerous'* and *'desperate'*, due to their residence and association with the reputation of the council flats.

This process of marginalisation, which brings about a diminished sense of belonging, highlights the lack of social organisation and barriers in the formation of social cohesion between community members of the broader community of Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats in Eldorado Park. Thus, drawing from Sampson and Groves (1989) explanation of social disorganisation which is explained as the inability of community structures to acknowledge commonality amongst all members in terms of values and norms. Social disorganisation is noted as being evident between community members of the broader Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats of Eldorado Park.

Moreover, residents highlight that youth from the council flats are marginalised by the broader community of Eldorado Park, highlighting that they are viewed as poor; having less access to resources; dangerous; desperate; and motivated to survive by any means. Resident's also perceive that this view informs the broader communities understanding of youth on the council flats who they perceive as being less developed, constrained by less social rules and therefore, less formal forms of social organisation. This correlates with local research conducted by Emmett (2003) who found that social disorganisation was the product and maintainer of low levels of social control and a lacking sense of community which inevitably increased levels of violence and crime, thus a cycle of violence is apparent in these settings. In addition, in a context such as this, complexities of poverty which bring about a position of disadvantage and increase violence cannot be ignored, as Matthews et al (1999) confirm that poverty and unemployment help to fuel violence. Residents also perceive these complexities

as hampering the formation of social organisation between community members of the broader Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats.

In addition, the physical appearance of the council flats is also noted as marginalising the youth and the council flats as a whole from the broader community of Eldorado Park, as this environment is a stark contrast to other areas in Eldorado Park. For instance, resident's state:

> Kyk ons se flats kraak al, ons se stairs val uit mekaar uit. Meeste van die mense het al uit getrek al
>
> (Participant 1)

> The stair cases are broken, the painting of the flats are not done, so that's why when you approach the flats they look so dull and that's why you actually get the wrong perception of the flats because of the appearance, the outer appearance that it shows to the community
>
> (Participant 4)

> Just the whole flat structure you know it's wrong, they were suppose to...I don't know...maybe build houses or something. But the whole thing is just messed up, it just gives us the whole...what do they call it...a ghetto thing. That's what they call it, a ghetto
>
> (Participant 8)

> Totally neglected
>
> (Participant 13)

From the above responses it is noted that residents highlight the physical environment of the council flats as deteriorating and neglected, which impacts on how they are socially viewed by the broader community of Eldorado Park. Therefore, residents perceive that the physical appearance of the council flats impacts on how outsiders and the broader community of Eldorado Park view the flats, with one resident perceiving that the council flats must be viewed by outsiders as a 'ghetto', a term which carries a negative connotations and is commonly used to refer to areas that are economically impoverished, lack social control, have high rates of violence and poor living conditions (Standing, 2003).

Thus, the marginalisation of youth due to labels, their economic status and the residency on the council flats is also noted as hampering social integration of youth residing on the council flats into the broader community of Eldorado Park. For instance, resident's state:

> Within schools, I would say...when it comes to the feeding scheme, I know with that mostly, they ask the children from the flats first, 'Does your parents work?'. Because most parents by the flats don't work, so they would rather ask a child, 'does their parents work?'. To get that child on the feeding scheme. But I mean now, that's the child being classed already. You just get into school, from grade one you classed already as being disadvantaged or poor, one of the two

(Participant 7)

> And also our primary schools, it's a lot of extension one children so the teachers also have this attitude, 'extension one mummy's drink, they never come to parents meetings
>
> (Participant 8)

The above responses highlight that residents perceive that youth are labelled and categorised as being *'disadvantaged'* and *'poor'* by institutions within the broader community of Eldorado Park such as the school when youth are incorporated into the feeding scheme as a result of their parent's unemployment status. Although this appears to be a beneficial intervention for youth who will receive a form of nourishment in contrast to going hungry, it is viewed by residents as categorising youth as being *'disadvantaged'* or *'poor'* and is rejected by residents as it is perceived as influencing the way that youth look at themselves and others look at them. It may also be perceived by residents as yet another form of 'othering'. Thus, Anderson (1998) argues that in circumstances such as these youth may internalise labels thrust upon them, and this is feared by residents. Furthermore, social integration is also perceived as being hampered by stereotypical thinking, noted in the assumptions that educators have about the parents of youth coming from the council flats as being substance abusers. This assumption is viewed in relation to local research conducted on educator's perceptions of factors that contribute to school violence which found that educators perceived that parents of youth from the council flats have no concern for their children and are often substance abusers (Mohamed, 2007). Furthermore, in relation to the impact that these labels have on youth, the study found that youth were indeed affected. For instance, residents stated:

> It breaks them. I would say it breaks them...to be judged just on where you stay or where you coming from, it breaks a person
>
> (Participant 8)

> The impact is basically negative. You start getting...you feeling low...and anything can happen when you influenced and you all low. It can affect your school work. It happened to me...it's just real hard, things could have been easier without hearing such comments. But I don't know...I guess it's just society and life
>
> (Participant 3)

> That child wants to get out of that environment. And how is that child going to get out of it? Going to get friends outside and rather stay away from the flats
>
> (Participant 7)

As highlighted above, residents perceive that these labels and categories that youth are placed in due to their residence on the council flats, have an influence on how youth view

themselves. Anderson (1998) highlights that as a result of the environment that youth are placed in, labels such as aggressive and tough are internalised and accepted by youth, who indulge in these labels as it facilitates their survival in these violence prone areas. However, residents disagree and highlights that these labels impact on youth's self concept in a negative manner, contributing to expressions of low self esteem, vulnerability to peer pressure, distraction, desensitisation and a sense of detachment from the council flats. This is supported by Durkheim's (in Hardy, 2009) conceptualisation of social integration, whereby he posits that the inability to socially integrate and establish a sense of connection brings about feelings of depression, isolation, physical illness and apathy.

On the other hand, other residents state that outsiders merely have a misconception of the council flats in Eldorado Park. For instance, resident's state:

> Give themselves time to know flats people, they just the same as them. There's not actually much of a difference when it comes to society and morals and respect. Integrity and things like that
>
> (Participant 4)

> Because some people living on the flats that is without culture and without morals, but that doesn't mean all the people in the flats are without morals or culture
>
> (Participant 9)

> At first they will see that it is a little bit unreliable, you can't trust this place. But once you get in here, the same people that was fearful, adjust very quickly to it
>
> (Participant 3)

From the above responses it is noted that participants highlighted that residents from the council flats are similar to community members of Eldorado Park in terms of *'morals'*, *'respect'* and *'integrity'*. Further, noting that the physical appearance of the council flats does scare outsiders off, as it is characterised by infrastructural deterioration, graffiti walls and high density housing. But outsiders that have entered the council flats have found it easy to *'adjust'* and socially integrate into the council flats. However, a paradox is noted in the last quote which contradicts the previous two quotes in that it suggests an adjustment or re-socialisation to an unpredictable environment. Or perhaps, the perception of these residents can be related to outsiders being socially integrated into the council flats because of their economic status and the benefits that brings, whereby residents may go out of their way to accommodate outsiders. For instance, residents' state:

> The people of the flats, all of them are not economically stable, so they come in there with their flashy cars and they buying the beers and they having the fun

(Participant 9)

> We all poor people and we placed into one block, all of us are hopeless, we looking for help. But how are we going to help one another if we all looking for help. But at least if there's these middle class in between us, we can go and ask, 'can I do some chores for you'. So in between the coloured community there was those who would go out and do chores for the next person

(Participant 7)

From the above responses it appears that social integration of youth from the broader community of Eldorado Park into the council flats is a much more welcomed and easy process in comparison to social integration of youth from the council flats into the broader community of Eldorado Park. Furthermore, this process of social integration appears easier for outsiders who can provide economic benefits. Thus, labels such as *'middle class'*, *'economically stable'* and *'flashy cars'* that has been placed on youth from the broader community of Eldorado Park by residents, explains this smooth transition, as these youth enter an environment which is premised on labels such as *'working class'*, *'economically unstable'* and *'poverty stricken'*. Therefore, they are welcomed and viewed as a 'helping hand' or sponsor for a good time, in relation to buying alcohol and other substances.

Thus, marginalisation of residents and youth from the council flats from the broader community of Eldorado Park is noted as being due to the council flats being viewed as the hub of violence which breeds violent youth. This in turn is noted as impacting on the development of social organisation between these two groups and on the social integration of residents of the council flats into the broader community of Eldorado Park, as residents are rejected because of their residency at the council flats. Thus, social organisation between community members of the broader Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats is defined by residents and outsiders according to geographical areas, which in turn becomes the organising principal or commonality between residents. This view of the establishment of a community based on geographical areas is supported by Gusfield (1975), who stated that territorial and geographical locality was one notion of defining a community.

Furthermore, this inability to socially integrate into the broader community of Eldorado Park, leads residents to seek social integration within their own immediate environment, that is, with other residents on the council flats. Here they are socially integrated and form a network of social organisation which operates according to a different set of social norms. Social norms that require residents to adjust to a new set of social codes defined by the insiders instead of outsiders. This form of social organisation is elaborated on below.

Social organisation between residents of different council flats

Secondly, the sub theme social organisation explored the social organisation evident between residents of the different council flats' in Eldorado Park. Taking into account that residents from the council flats' are marginalised and experience difficulty in integrating socially into the broader community of Eldorado Park. The study found that residents had established their own sense of community and social organisation within their particular council flats. This sense of community was noted as being separate from the broader community of Eldorado Park but also separate from other residents that did not reside within the same council flats. For instance, resident's state:

> We use to have this thing that people from extension one flats were not wanted. So we use to divide ourselves via the flats, extension, one, two and three. These extensions, those flats, it was like a marked territory. You not suppose to go there if you not from those flats
>
> (Participant 7)

> You see the flat goes in categories. Extension three, down, that is called 'Westgate'. Extension three, on the top, by the shops, that is called 'Dallas'...and then you get the flats in extension four, which is called 'California', and then you get the flats in 'Varkie Yard'
>
> (Participant 9)

> And you would find that there is a norm within the flat environment as well...there they are into drugs, there they are more into car stealing...so there's different environments when you enter into the flats, not all the flats are the same. That's definitely one thing, it's not the same
>
> (Participant 7)

Thus, taking into account the above responses, it is noted that the lack of a sense of belonging and difficulty experienced by residents in socially integrating into the broader community of Eldorado Park has resulted in resident's establishing that sense of belonging and social integration by banding together with other residents on the council flat in which they reside, who have been subjected to the same marginalisation. Thus, research conducted by Sampson and Groves (1989) which suggests that social organisation is drawn partly from commonality amongst residents may apply here.

However, it is also noted that despite the similarities such as poverty, high density housing and high rates of violence and substance abuse, evident among all council flats in Eldorado Park, residents of the different council flats do not identify themselves as similar or band together, but identify themselves as distinct and separate entities. This is noted in the use of street terms such as *'Dallas'*, *'California'*, *'Westgate'* and *'Varkie Yard'* to identify certain council flats. These street terms originated out of American popular culture which was introduced to residents of the council flats through the media. For example, the television

soap opera titled 'Dallas' which was based in Texas, USA, promoted the ideology of 'cowboys and robbers' and the 'draw of the gun'. The council flats referred to as 'Dallas' was therefore termed this, because of its association with gun violence that was apparent in the past. Furthermore, the council flats referred to as 'California' was termed this, because of its relation to gang violence, promoted by the 'East side/West side' feud spurred on by gangs in that area. It is also acknowledged that the East and West coast feuds that occurred in the United States also established territory based on geography (Smith, 2006) and this reflects similar distinctions between feuds that occur between the different council flats, which are distinguished by their names and geographical location.

Moreover, one resident stated, that the council flats are also identified by the activity most prevalent on that council flat such as gang violence, gun violence, drug dealing or car theft. Thus, it is noted that a sense of community is established amongst residents of a particular council flats which is embedded in the identities that they form and self define. Identities, which also serve to keep others out and this is noted in *'marked territory'*, shared characteristics and involvement in crime. This is supported by research conducted by Erikson (1966) which highlights that groups use deviance to establish boundaries.

Residents also highlight that within specific council flats, alongside the sense of identity and belonging that has been established, a sense of community has also developed. This sense of community is noted as bringing about a unique form of informal social organisation within specific council flats. For instance, one resident stated:

> The lifestyle of extension one is not the same as extension three, extension four and extension five. There's a different lingo that they are using...they will understand each other in a different way. There is a code that they are using. If you go to another extension, they will know exactly that you are not from there and if you are around there at night, if you survive its God's given, but most of the time you will get hurt. Unless you know lots of people around there
>
> (Participant 6)

> The code, is this name tags, you know...if I'm using this word, this is the person from extension four. And lingo, is a form, or type of language, you know...where you hear the boys say...it's a mix, its zulu, its Afrikaans, its English. They say it is the lingo. There is nothing that is being named properly there. They using words that you don't know. If you leading a good life, always indoors, you not there, you won't know those words and they will look at you like, 'ay, you not one of them
>
> (Participant 6)

Therefore, it is perceived that this unique form of informal social organisation that is evident on specific council flats has arisen out of the establishment of a sense of community amongst these residents. A sense of community that is characterised by the commonality of residents

lifestyle, the sense of belonging found in residents understanding of each other and most importantly the use of a common 'lingo' or 'code' that serves to identify membership to specific council flats. Individuals from the outside, broader community of Eldorado Park or other council flats in Eldorado Park who do not meet the above 'criteria' are identified as intruders and who may be at risk as a result of this. This is supported by research conducted by McMillan and Chavis (1986) which highlights that a sense of community is based on the commonality that members share and commitment to one another, which fosters a feeling of belonging and shared relatedness. Moreover, Wood (1971) note that membership has boundaries, which serve to identify those who belong and those who do not. These boundaries are firmly established by the use of a common symbol system, evident in language, dress and rituals, which functions to create and maintain the sense of community and group boundaries (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). An example of how intruders are dealt with was described by one resident, who stated:

> I had my brother with me now for the holidays and what happened is, because he's from Ennerdale he wasn't part of a crew, so I didn't really know there's different groupings at the flats, but then I found out there's the 'cheeseboy' groups, and I don't know the 'punga' group and what group and what group. So they have different categories. So you not suppose to go to the far right hand side of the flats because that is now the 'cheeseboys' side, you can't go to the far left and there's another group, if you...and our flats is like circled, it's like palisades around it, so as soon as you go like outside the palisade then you in somebody else territory. Soon as you pass the street you go through a passage you get to extension three and there you find there's another group. So the groups come, they meet right across the street or extension three would come, extension one would come, Harlem would come and there's like a whole big fight. He was actually caught in a fight where somebody beat him up
>
> (Participant 8)

Therefore, it is further noted that the formulation of a sense of identity and community is further extended to the use of street terms to identify youth residing on a specific council flat such as the *'cheeseboys'* and *'harlem'* group, who also establish territories on the council flats in which they reside, which serve to form boundaries of their established community, whereby trespassers face consequences, as those highlighted by the above example. In addition, it is noted that territories are competed for and defended as they have a connection to social identity for residents. This is supported by research conducted by McMillan and Chavis (1986) which found that boundaries have a number of functions in communities. They serve to protect personal space, protect against possible threat and separate 'us' from 'them', which reduces anxiety as individuals trust those within their boundaries and not those beyond their borders.

Thus, specific council flats are perceived by residents as formulating their own sense of community and identity separate from the broader community of Eldorado Park, but also separate from other council flats in Eldorado Park. Furthermore, the introduction and use of 'lingos', 'codes', 'territorial markings' and violence serves to further solidify boundaries and make clear distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. This in turn impacts on the social organisation between residents on the different council flats, as residents are marginalised by the larger community, but also from the communities of specific council flats with whom they can more easily identify with due to the afore mentioned circumstances, but for some reason do not. However, establishing a sense of social integration does not necessarily imply social organisation will follow. This is evident in the exploration of social organisation evident between residents residing on the same council flats.

Social organisation between residents residing on the same council flats

Lastly, exploring the social organisation evident between residents residing within the same council flats in Eldorado Park, resident's state:

> The community is very disorientated, there is lots of different groups, different people, people don't stand together or like you know stand as one
>
> (Participant 11)

> People that you live with will live with you and people that don't know you won't. They interested in their own lives...they occupied with their own presence and hassles in life. So they don't have time to like bother with the next person
>
> (Participant 9)

> If there's a problem next door, that is not my problem. Or a problem at the next block that I feel has nothing to do with me. The community in itself will say...'it's not my problem and it's going to cost me something if I get involved but it will cost me nothing if I don't'
>
> (Participant 10)

> We are not going to sell anyone out because we don't want to get involved, that is not my problem...so why should I include myself, as long as it's not happening to me and my children. That's the life we are living, it's a big illusion
>
> (Participant 10)

> Each one for themselves and God for us all
>
> (Participant 9)

> It's like everybody is for themselves on the flats. In order to survive you have to stand your ground
>
> (Participant 7)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that residents residing on the same council flats lack a sense of community and poor social bonds are evident. This is evident in residents' focus on their own individual needs as taking precedence over the needs of the council flats

community, in which they reside, as a whole. This is further supported by local research conducted by Emmett (2003), which revealed that low levels of social cohesion and high levels of individual isolation from the community context resulted in an increase in social disorganisation, which is noted by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as contributing further to the lack of a sense of belonging and investment in the community. Thus, residents' focus on individual needs has resulted in the development of a 'disorientated' community, which lacks community support and involvement by residents in informal and formal community activities such as reporting acts of violence occurring 'at the next block', reporting substance abuse evident on the council flats or intervening in violent disputes that occur between residents of the council flats. For instance, one resident stated:

> There was a car that was stolen that they actually dropped in front of the flats, everybody saw who got out of the car, but all they did is, one women ran in the house, threw a skipper at this guy, said, 'change your skipper', he was standing in the crowd and it was like okay fine, they all watching to see whose the guy that came here with the stolen car, but yet the community stood together to protect this guy, but they don't know what he did, now whether die persoon wat hy gehijack het dood is or what happened, so hulle cover dit op
>
> (Participant 8)

> We had teenage girls in extension one for two months that was basically kidnapped. They were drugged at some club, they were white girls and the girls were brought to extension one flats, right, and it was kept quiet for two months and then this white girls father actually was...he had a high rank in the police station. They actually managed to hire a maid to cook for this girls and to clean the house. But they were like in chains and constantly drugged. So people came in and people came out and the women were trafficked, they were exploited, whatever happened. And then just one person felt, you know what...he also had his fair share, he enjoyed what was going on, but then it got too much for him and he told somebody else and it ended up by the police station. But it was kept quiet for more than two months
>
> (Participant 8)

Thus, from the above quote, the focus on individual needs and lack of community support is once again highlighted. Furthermore, residents perceive that other residents do not get involved in disputes on the council flats', that does not personally affect them, and so a culture of silence is adopted instead. This culture of silence is understood by residents to be a result of residents' fear of possibly being the next victim of violence or crime. This is supported by research conducted by Griggs (1997) on youth school based violence which found that youth and educators often adopted a culture of violence, as a response to fear of intimidation from gangs or criminals. In addition, with regard to violence that affects residents personally, residents stated:

> The only time you find there's friction by the flats is if it touches you personally, if it's my child that's involved and your child that's involved, now we gona like not stand together because jou kind het my kind gesteek of geskiet
>
> (Participant 8)

> Miskien, ek baklei met my neighbours, is dit tussen ons, hy kan hom broers gaan haal, gaan haal ek my broers...so sal dit aangaan...ma die flatse sal hulle nie involve in seke goede
>
> (Participant 1)

From the above response, it is also noted that the lack of community support is combated by residents looking for support from family members, whom are viewed as a more reliable source of support. Hence, the statement 'blood is thicker than water' provides a metaphorical explanation that illustrates the relationship between residents on the council flats. Furthermore, it was also highlighted by residents that although residents relatively turned a 'blind eye' and isolate themselves from the violence and crime within the council flats that did not personally involve them, violence and crime from the outside that posed a threat to any resident on the council flats in Eldorado Park generated a powerful sense of social cohesion and mobilised community involvement among residents. For instance, residents stated:

> Ons almal staan saam, as jy 'n kind steek, of as jy iemand roof hie by die flats, of as jy iemand slaan, ons sal almal saam staan
>
> (Participant 1)

> People work together when one is like attacked
>
> (Participant 3)

> When it's like people on the outside, come high or hell waters, yes, we together, nothing and no one will stop us
>
> (Participant 11)

> The people of the flats are like one, for example, if you come from...if they don't know you and you are harassing someone at the flats, everybody in that vicinity is going to go for you. That is how they are
>
> (Participant 10)

Thus, from the above responses an immediate contrast is noted in comparison to the division, lack of involvement and community support that was highlighted as being evident among residents of the council flats. Threats to residents of the council flats from the outside appears to push residents into a defensive position, whereby they are able to mobilise community support against this threat. Social cohesion also becomes evident as residents identify themselves as *'one'* and a sense of community also becomes evident in the *'working together'* against a common problem, which in most cases was highlighted by residents as being acts of violence such as stabbing, robbery, abuse and assault that was directed at

residents of the council flats by outsiders. This spontaneous sense of community can be understood in light of local research conducted by Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004) that has highlighted the contradictory nature of interpersonal relationships. This research states that individuals come together based on their shared experiences and are able to generate social cohesion, solidarity and empathy for one another; however, despite these shared experiences interpersonal mistrust and hostility may still be evident. The above finding can also be understood in relation to Myer's (1962) shared event hypothesis that postulates that the more important a shared event is to those involved, the greater the community bond, especially when a crisis is experienced as a collective.

On the other hand, other residents disagreed with the aforementioned responses by residents which highlighted a lack of social cohesion and community on the council flats. These residents stated:

> The flats are like one family living in one big yard
>
> (Participant 9)
>
> We understand each other, we've been living together for a long time
>
> (Participant 2)
>
> They are united. They a community
>
> (Participant 9)

These responses describe the council flats as a home environment where residents are referred to as the family that resides within this home and thus a sense of belonging and cohesion seems to be expressed in these responses. However, residents that have supported this argument have also contradicted themselves. These implicit contradictions are highlighted in the following responses:

> There is a sense of togetherness now lately...If I need to put it in percentages, seventy percent work together and the other thirty percent just breaks off that good work
>
> (Participant 4)
>
> Community leaders that are in place and the elders...seventy percent of elders that do take on the responsibility of the community
>
> (Participant 4)

Thus, these responses highlight involvement of residents such as 'community leaders' in informal community activities. But division, lack of social cohesion and sense of community is still evident amongst residents as a whole on the council flats, which is also noted as

influencing the disorientation and lack of social organisation on the council flats as the *'good work'* gets broken off. Therefore, Anderson (1998) argues that in disadvantaged violence prone areas, reside legitimate individuals that are striving for the betterment of themselves, their family and their community.

Furthermore, these responses are countered by other residents who have acknowledged the 'cohesion' among residents and have highlighted this cohesion and sense of belonging as being related to residents sharing the experience of being caught up in a 'vicious circle' of violence that life on the council flats seems to provide. These residents state:

> Community, well maybe it was the wrong word I used...Community in the sense that there's just people and that's why they call it a community
>
> (Participant 10)

> There is a sense of togetherness, yes, because we all trapped in this vicious circle and there is only a few that escapes it
>
> (Participant 13)

Thus, a negative sense of community seems to be established, as residents view their sense of 'togetherness' as being tied to their disadvantaged circumstances. This sense of community is noted as bringing about a shared emotional connection, which McMillan and Chavis (1986) highlight is based on a shared history, common places, time together and similar experiences. It is also noted that this 'togetherness' falls away when individual survival has to be ensued. Thus, residents identify distrust as being a key feature among residents of the council flats. It also highlighted that trust comes in the way of residents establishing social organisation and developing social cohesion and a sense of community. For instance, resident's state:

> Jy sien die ding is by ons flatse, jy ken almal by die flatse, jys jare met die mense. Ma more as jy gaan by daai flat, jy staan, daar loop iemand verby, 'sorry wa bly daai persoon?', 'Is my neighbour', 'Hoe lank bly daai persoon daar?', 'two months', wane het hulle in getrek?', 'overnight'. Daai is wat ons kan nie verstaan hie by die flatse nie
>
> (Participant 1)

> It's very scary, because you know what when you walk past people, it's like, 'you my neighbour, I know you, but yet I don't know you, you could even end up mugging me, or raping me, or killing me'. That's how you live, so we live in a lot of fear. You must see we got burglars and there's a lock and a hatch and a thing and a thing, you can't even leave your car outside
>
> (Participant 8)

> If somebody goes to Checkers and goes and buys this whole bags of shopping, everybody seeing you carry that bags up, soon people will be knocking on your door, maybe they have, maybe they don't or maybe they testing you, to see if you'll give or not. So...everybody just wants to live their own life and not share

(Participant 10)

If you don't have a packet, no one will come to the door and ask, they are users

(Participant 6)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that the degree of distrust evident among residents generates feelings of fear and suspicion among residents which results in residents isolating themselves from other residents for fear of being harmed, losing their possessions or being taken advantage of. Furthermore, residents perceive that other residents test their loyalty as trust and loyalty are not a given amongst residents on the council flats. This correlates with research conducted by Emmett (2003), which found high levels of interpersonal mistrust led to high levels of social disorganisation as residents were unable to come together. Furthermore, rapid social mobility on the council flats is also noted as contributing to the lack of trust evident among residents, as social mobility makes it difficult for residents to establish rapport with one another and develop trust. This is supported by Allan and Allan's (1971) contact hypothesis which postulates that the more people are interacting with one another, the more likely they will develop meaningful social bonds.

Therefore, it can be deduced that the distrust which breeds fear and suspicion results in residents isolating themselves from other residents which illustrates reasons for the lack of social organisation, social cohesion, sense of community and the notion of *'each one for themselves'*, as well as the reliance on family members instead of other residents for forms of support. This is supported by local research conducted by Emmett (2003), which found that distrust amongst community members hindered the development of a sense of community or social organisation, decreased investment of individuals into the collective and increased isolation from others. In addition, the focus on individual needs and the pursuit of individual survival is also noted as primary drivers which hinder the development of a sense of community among residents on the council flats. Furthermore, this lack of a sense of community and social organisation results in youth being socialised into this environment, which promotes individuality and survival.

Socialisation

The process of socialisation of youth on the council flats is highlighted by residents as occurring through the family system; authority figures on the council flat; as well as through observation and exposure to the environment of the council flats. For instance, resident's state:

> There's a lot of motivational speakers, schools...churches. Those kind of organisations
>
> (Participant 3)

> You learn things not only from your parents but also from the community
>
> (Participant 5)

> Flat life is not just being there with your parents. You, yourself and your parents and whoever, no it is a community, so therefore it is something that children are seeing around them
>
> (Participant 10)

> Basically everyone knows every ones business, if you screaming next door, your neighbour will definitely know what's going on...this affects the youth and how they grow up
>
> (Participant 11)

From the above responses it is noted that the process of 'learning' societal norms and appropriate forms of behaviour is viewed as the responsibility of organisations outside of the council flat, which also highlights residents' perceptions of the social structures within the council flat as being unable to fulfil this responsibility. This in turn relates back to the lack of social organisation evident on the council flat, which is characterised by residents' lack of involvement in formal and informal community activities of which responsibility of socialisation would fall under. In relation to this, Emmett (2003) argues that when traditional systems such as the family or the elderly in the community abdicate the responsibility of socialisation of youth, the greater the vulnerability for youth to be socialised by peers and other sources.

Furthermore, it is noted that the 'learning' of societal norms and appropriate forms of behaviour that occur on the council flat through observation and exposure to the environment is also viewed as a result of the high density housing and overcrowding evident on the council flat and which is noted by residents as overpowering the influence of the family system in the socialisation process of youth. For instance, residents stated:

> I came from a background where we were brought up in a Christian belief, right, so you teach your child, 'you know it's wrong to play with your body, don't get involved in sex before marriage, stay away from drugs and alcohol and now the child is growing up, you teaching your child one thing in the house, when she goes out and she mix with friends, her age group and then she gets something else. So it's actually very difficult to tell your daughter or your son, 'you know you don't have to drink, don't get involved with drugs', but yet the friends are doing it and the neighbours is saying something else. So at the end of the day, dan se jou kind, 'you know everybody's doing it, so hoekom moet ek dit nie doen nie?My ma bly neel, sy like nag, don't do this, don't do that, but at the end of the day my chomie kan dit dan buite doen
>
> (Participant 8)

> Children grow up very fast. They learn things very fast. Because you can try and teach your child something in the house, but outside she's going to learn about things that you don't

> teach them. Like the swearing, the drinking, the smoking, the drugs, the gangsterism...outside. So by the age of say nine or ten, they already in that kind of vibe. This is the way life goes
>
> (Participant 5)

> If you a parent that don't believe your child should be messing around, in the street late and stuff like that and they, see now these other people, children doing stuff like that, it has an impact
>
> (Participant 10)

From the above responses it is noted that morals and values such as *'stay away from drugs and alcohol'*, which is promoted by the family system is countered by peer influences and the influence of other authority figures that youth are exposed to on the council flats, as peers on the council flats and *'neighbours'* promote a different set of societal morals, values and appropriate forms of behaviour such as swearing and drinking for instance which is viewed by residents as negative forms of socialisation. This correlates with research conducted by Anderson (1998) which argues that the family is not the only influential factor in youth development and socialisation may occur through various avenues. Furthermore, residents' perceptions are confirmed by Krug et al (2002) who agrees that the close proximity living caused by high density housing results in youth being more exposed to their outside environment.

Hence, it is noted that peer influence on the council flats is stronger due to the high density housing, overcrowding and lack of recreational resources, as youth are often idle and find company in each other. For instance, one resident stated:

> You know there's nothing else they can do, just sit around on the corners, and you know play their own games. But children of today, don't play games anymore
>
> (Participant 5)

From the above response it is noted that the lack of recreational facilities on the council flats results in youth finding ways to entertain themselves during their leisure time. Residents further perceive that the activities that youth engage in during this leisure time is no longer games, like in the past, but activities such as experimenting in groups with substances. This correlates with local research conducted by Mogotsi (2004) which found that the lack of recreational facilities brought about a state of boredom in youth that was countered by experimenting with substances.

Thus, the family system is perceived by residents as being overpowered, as youth conform from an early age to the dominant norms evident on the council flats. This also serves to diminish the role of the family system in youth's development. On the other hand,

one resident perceived the family system as having the ability to overpower the environmental influences on youth development. This resident stated:

> So for them it's an advantage, and if you rear your children in a proper manner, in a area like that they grow up with their eyes open and they have to strive to get out of that environment because why, they can see that this environment is not right
>
> (Participant 9)

Thus, this resident viewed socialisation of youth, as being solely the role of the family system. Highlighting that if this role is effectively executed, youth will be empowered enough to adopt an offensive position to negative environmental influences. However, another resident argued that life on the council flat, which is plagued by poverty and unemployment, has resulted in the family system failing in their role as a crucial instrument of youth development. This is supported by local research conducted by Mosoetsa (2005) on the impact of urban livelihoods on the family system, which found that poverty and unemployment were major contributors in straining household resources and family system relationships. Inevitably, resulting in the collapse of the family system who is unable to fulfil its roles to children within the family system and other members. In light of this argument, one resident stated:

> He won't ask money for bread, the mother will say why don't you go spin or do a piece job. That's how youth develop that mentality of, 'okay, you said I must go spin outside'. Then if I go rob people in order to survive, or steal in order to survive because his no more getting nothing from his parents, his father says, 'go spin'...Now if he says, 'go spin', the child thinks okay I must go steal, I have been given the permission
>
> (Participant 6)

From the above response, it is noted that residents perceive that the disempowerment of authority figures such as the 'mother' and the 'father' in the family system, due to their circumstances of poverty and unemployment, has resulted in their inability to positively empower their youth. They in turn negatively empower them by socialising them into developing a 'mentality' that promotes survival by any cost, which youth interpret as exercising violence if needed *('rob people in order to survive' or 'steal in order to survive')*. Thus, Anderson (1998) states that protective buffers such as an encouraging family are present and they are taken into account. However, Anderson (1998) further notes that individuals are often overpowered by the environment in which they find themselves, an environment in which poverty is rife and street norms have to be abided by in order to survive, as survival takes precedence for the young and old on the council flats.

In addition, other residents also highlight individual choice and initiative as being an avenue through which youth can resist the negative socialisation effects of the council flats. These residents state:

> Look for a child to be very different on the flats, it will take all the might that youth has got, to want to rise above. A lot of things are going on in the flats, you must have the strength
>
> (Participant 10)

> It depends on the individual, basically, to get out of it
>
> (Participant 13)

> It's not where you live, it's how you live
>
> (Participant 9)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that individual resilience is perceived by residents as an area for youth to tap into and combat the negative socialisation that they are exposed to on the council flats. In addition, residents note this as being a difficult task for youth, as the environment of the council flats counters youth development, diminishes youth sense of self and tears away at resilience. This is supported by local research conducted by Normand (2007), which emphasised that South African youth from previously disadvantaged communities face a number of challenges, such as poverty, limited resources, overcrowded unhealthy living conditions, lack of recreational facilities, high rates of violence and substance abuse. Normand (2007) further emphasises that these challenges in turn pose significant challenges to youth's physical, social and emotional development.

Furthermore, residents highlight the lack of positive role models on the council flats as contributing to the negative socialisation occurring on the council flat. For instance, resident's state:

> Ek glo nie daars role models hie nie
>
> (Participant 2)

> Half the youth that stay here they don't really have proper role models
>
> (Participant 4)

> They don't have direction. They don't have that one that like encourage, because they look at life like it's failing, because why should I go to school and have education, but you the one with education, you are nowhere
>
> (Participant 5)

> There's no example what so ever...there's like no one actually showing you right from wrong, because everyone is doing wrong
>
> (Participant 11)

> Looking at the grown ups that stay here you can see them kindly walking in those grown ups footsteps. You can actually see where they going to end up. So it has a bad effect on their

> structure and you can see... it's actually sad that you can see how things are going to end up at the end, because by the paths that they are walking
>
> (Participant 4)

> You will get these drug lords they will become like sort of uh a hero to this youth and they want to try and be like them and they will follow basically into their footsteps and so the circle carries on
>
> (Participant 13)

From the above responses it is perceived by residents that the lack of positive role models on the council flats has resulted in youth lacking guidance and direction. This in turn is noted by residents as resulting in youth following the direction of others on the council flats. These include drug lords who residents note are viewed as heroes to youth , who aspire to walk in their *'footsteps'*, *'footsteps'* that residents perceive as heading in the wrong direction. This is supported by research conducted by Elliot (1994), which highlighted that a community in which social disorganisation was apparent often lacked positive role models for youth to idealise, youth thus idealised individuals who had power, in the form of money or social status.

Furthermore, it is perceived by residents that the environmental circumstances at the council flats further serves to dishearten youth who are demotivated by these circumstances. This is also noted as contributing to the high rate of school dropout on the council flats. For instance, one resident stated:

> Youth basically drop out of school, because they feel like their parents don't have enough money to send them and then they will start joining gangs and this leads to a lot of violence amongst the youth
>
> (Participant 11)

From the above response, residents highlight that youth drop out of school due to financial difficulties faced by their family system and exposure to negative role models on the council flats, resulting in youth joining gangs for economic gain. This correlates with local research conducted by Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla and Ratele (2009) which highlights poverty as blocking access to status, wellbeing and respect for youth, who in turn feel ashamed, humiliated and develop low self esteem. Thus, joining a gang which is perceived to provide them with economic resources also provides them with status, wellbeing and respect.

Thus, it is noted that socialisation of youth on the council flats occurs through a number of sources such as the family, other residents, peers and exposure to the life on the council flats. Furthermore, it is noted that circumstances of poverty on the council flats

influences the socialisation process of youth. Youth appear to be demotivated by their circumstances and thus are not socialised into prosocial ways of bettering them. Instead they are socialised into activities that often involve youth resorting to violence and crime. Ultimately, the goal is survival for youth and residents alike on the council flats. Moreover, there appears to be a complex way in which survival needs are negotiated, noted as arising out of the hostile nature of youth's environment at the council flats. Residents' view youth's ability to negotiate their survival on the council flats as an accomplishment and socially integrate other youth into doing the same.

Survival, the goal of socialisation

Survival, is noted by residents as being a major component of life on the council flats. Therefore, the process of socialisation of residents on the council flat, highlights learning to survive on the council flat as being a 'must' for all residents. For instance, residents stated:

> Firstly, you have to know how to communicate with other people, you must know how to get along with people, because if you don't get along with people, you won't be able to survive by the flats
>
> (Participant 5)

> You know people have to get along with one another. If you think you better then the next person it's going to cause like a grudge, people are going to say, 'you don't belong here, go to the suburbs, this is now by us'. People start fighting with you or they won't notice you because you not one of them. You have to get along with them. The thing that they do, you have to do it, what they like, you know...everything is like one
>
> (Participant 5)

From the above responses, residents perceive that individual survival is tied to conformity, highlighted in statements such as *'get along'*, *'the thing they do, you have to do'* and *'everything is like one'*. Thus, individuality on the council flats is perceived as being discarded and residents have no choice but to be a part of the collective, as not conforming symbolises not belonging. This corresponds with research conducted by Newcomb (1961) on principals that make up a sense of community, which highlighted group pressure on the individual to validate the group's world view as the primary force behind conformity. Kelley and Woodruff (1956) further note that this conformity often results in the loss of individual freedom and individuality.

Furthermore, if a resident is viewed as *'not one of us'* and is rejected, labelled as the 'other' by residents of the council flats, their survival is placed under threat as residents may retaliate against them through the use of violence. This correlates with research conducted by

Anderson (1998) which highlights social conformity to the ways of the street as being key to survival. Therefore, another resident highlighted that to avoid being considered the 'other', youth on the council flats may even seek out the companionship of those in the know to obtain the knowledge needed to conform and belong, and ultimately gain the knowledge that is needed to survive. This resident stated:

> The life they are living, it makes them to be inquisitive to know that, so much they even become a friend of the person that is doing wrong things. So that they must know more about these things
>
> (Participant 6)

Thus, it is noted that residents perceive youth as being motivated to associate with violent and criminal peers on the council flats to obtain the knowledge required to survive on the council flats. This correlates with research conducted by Anderson (1998) which confirms that youth have to make an effort to know the way of the streets, particularly, with regard to whose running the show. Furthermore, not only do youth have to have the knowledge but also the skill to survive on the council flats. Skill, which may come in the form of being able to execute violent acts in order to survive. For instance, residents stated:

> As a child you basically feel like this is actually the life. You have to you know, you have to go out there, steal do whatever you need to
>
> (Participant 11)

> That's their way of life, they adapt to it and that's how they survive
>
> (Participant 13)

> I think at the flats, it is used to make a statement, so you making an example, so that if one does it the next one must know they mustn't even try it. So they resort to violence just to prove something
>
> (Participant 7)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive life on the council flats as calling for the process of socialisation to include violence as a means of exerting power, getting what you want and need and ensuring survival. This is supported by research conducted by Anderson (1998) which highlights that youth exposure to the outcomes of violence, which is often survival, in turn teaches youth that the route to survival on the council flats is through the execution of violence. Furthermore, residents highlight violence as already being used by youth on the council flats, who are literally fighting for their survival when under threat, as a means of empowering themselves. In addition, residents note that youth may even form

gangs to ensure survival on the council flats, premised on the concept of 'power in numbers'. For instance, one resident stated:

> A gang is a group of youngsters, it can be good, it can be bad. So basically a gang will be, they will be like, to survive they will form gangs and the more they are the stronger they are and that's how they tend to survive the slums
>
> (Participant 13)

Thus, from this resident's response it is noted that gangs formed on the council flats can be formed for a negative or positive purpose, but in essence their purpose is always to survive their environmental circumstances. Circumstances in which residents perceive youth's chances of survival are increased when they belong to a gang who in turn will provide them with some form of protection. This is supported by research conducted by Miller (1992) which states that youth form gangs based on mutual interest to achieve specific purposes.

Moreover, one resident perceived youth observation and exposure to the environment of the council flats as being beneficial to youth development in that it provided examples which awakened youth to the consequences of drugs and violence on their development. This resident stated:

> I think for them growing up in an area like that, it is good in the sense that they...they are street wise, they live in the area, they grow up in the area and they can with immediate effect notice the effects of drugs and violence and what it leads to. At a very young age they know that...because they can point out to me, 'that people are drinking, look at what that one is doing, his stupid'
>
> (Participant 9)

Thus, this resident recognises the benefits of being exposed to the environment of the council flats and perceives it as ultimately promoting individual survival. For instance, the resident perceives that due to exposure, youth are aware of the consequences of drugs and violence, such as death and incarceration. The resident also perceived that awareness of these consequences will steer youth clear from these activities which inevitably increases their chances of survival. Furthermore, the resident also stated that due to exposure, youth become *'street wise'* at a young age, another aspect which serves to increase youth's chances of survival on the council flats. This is noted as once again, encouraging youth to be aware of and gain the knowledge required to know the way of the streets, as highlighted by Anderson (1998), which inevitably increases their exposure to violence and substance abuse occurring on the council flats and places them in a position of vulnerability.

Moreover, residents highlight that the physical environment of the council flats which is characterised by high density housing, overcrowding and poor infrastructure is also a contributing aspect to the use of violence as a means of survival on the council flats, as residents have to fight for basic amenities in communal areas. For instance, resident's state:

> Today I want to hang my washing and I was feeling sick and I couldn't do it, so I'll do it tomorrow but I can't, why, someone else wants to do it tomorrow. So it is a problem
>
> (Participant 10)

> People use to fight for nitty gritty things. Lines that were booked, people use to fight over washing lines
>
> (Participant 4)

> Washing lines get shared the...place where the children plays on gets shared, everything is like a share, nothing is your own
>
> (Participant 10)

> I think when it comes to the boundaries mainly I think its...hoe kan ek dit nou explain...it's like people just do what they want, when they want to, so for me the boundaries comes in with like music, they play music whenever they feel like playing it on the high level that they want to play it
>
> (Participant 8)

From the above responses it is noted that shared commodities on the council flats such as washing lines are often sources of conflict as residents attempt to dominate that space for their needs and will resort to violent means if needed. Furthermore, no individual freedom or sense of ownership is provided to residents on the council flats. Thus, residents perceive that the priority on the council flats is to put one's needs before others. Furthermore, it is noted that these living conditions on the council flats that residents endure results in feelings of frustration and disempowerment arising. This correlates with research conducted by Krug et al (2002) which highlights that overcrowding and inadequate housing has been noted to bring about aggressive emotions which people act upon as their levels of frustration increase.

Therefore, it is noted that residents are socialised into various behaviours that ultimately serve to increase their chances of survival on the council flats. These behaviours include conforming to the norms of their environment and learning quickly how to operate and be accepted within the environment of the council flats; utilising violence as a means of exerting power, especially with regard to the shared living space and defending against threat. Other residents viewed survival of youth as being premised on understanding how the use of drugs and violence serve to decrease chances of survival and hence to avoid interaction with either. A difficult task when the physical structure of one's environment exposes one to various forms of violence, substance abuse and where peer pressure is even greater.

Thus, with the focus being on individual survival for both the young and old on the council flats and the notion of each one for themselves being promoted a gap is discovered in residents' role in exerting social control on the council flats, in terms of monitoring and supervising youth development on the council flats. This will be elaborated on below.

Poor social control

Drawing from the lack of social cohesion evident among residents of the council flats; the inability of residents to prevent negative forms of socialisation from impacting on youth development; and the disempowerment felt by the family system and other residents of the council flats in Eldorado Park, it was perceived by residents that youth development has spiralled out of their control and that youth have become products of the environment they were born into. An environment characterised by poverty, high density housing, exposure to violence and high rates of substance abuse. Therefore, poor social control arose as a sub theme under social order, as a concern that contributed to the development of violence in youth. Furthermore, the residents highlight the lack of social control over youth as stemming from the family system's inability to supervise and monitor their youth. For instance, residents stated:

> Because parents at the flats, I don't know is it because, we come from...I don't know, is it because we were poor, it is because we were not educated? I don't know, but there's really something wrong with our parents. So like I said, If I can go back, parents who don't really worry about where their children are, they growing up knowing, 'my mother don't worry, she's not gonna look for me'
>
> (Participant 8)

> The top of the pyramid is bad as well, so therefore, the bottom would be the same
>
> (Participant 4)

> The mothers are even scared of the children
>
> (Participant 12)

> The problem starts at home so if they can't keep control of the kids in the home, it gets exposed to the rest of us. So based on that I think the structures at home needs to be worked on. That's where the problem can be sorted out
>
> (Participant 4)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that residents perceive the family system as failing in their role of executing social control over youth. Youth, in turn, take advantage of this free reign that they are provided with as they know that their actions will not be faced with severe consequences from parental figures for instance. This is supported by local research conducted by Mosoetsa (2005) which argued that poverty, unemployment and unhealthy

living conditions contributed greatly to the breakdown of the family system, in which social control over youth is often neglected. Some residents also perceive that the family system provides negative role models who lack the capacity to execute social control and predict that youth in turn are reflections of these negative role models. For instance, resident's state:

> Abusive father to mother and the mother accepts what the children bring
>
> (Participant 10)

> Because of the poverty, unemployment...Their parent will take to drugs, to liquor and they will be bad examples for them, and they will sort of get consumed in that way of life and it will be more difficult than to break free from it
>
> (Participant 13)

From the above responses, residents highlight negative role models in the family system, as being key authority figures such as the parents, at times. Explaining that fathers may be abusive, as well as, abusing substances; and explaining mothers as accepting money from youth even if they are aware that the money was obtained through violent and criminal means such as theft or drug dealing. This can be viewed as reinforcing violent and criminal behaviours of youth, exercising denial or simply fostering survival. Furthermore, the display of these forms of behaviour are perceived by residents as being due to the consequences of poverty and unemployment. This is supported by local research conducted by Seedat et al (2009) that found a relationship between poverty, violence and substance abuse, which inevitably increases the lack of social control.

Therefore, residents perceive that the lack of social control, unsupervised and unmonitored youth from various blocks on the council flats are the youth that filter into the broader community of the council flats. Furthermore, residents perceive that youth expect the lack of social control exerted on them by the family system to extend to the community of the council flats. This correlates with research conducted by Pratt, Turner and Piquero (2004) which found that ineffective child rearing at the level of the family system contributes to youth behaviour not being monitored. Thus, deviant behaviour is not being recognised when it occurs, and youth are not reprimanded. Furthermore, this is noted as resulting in youth developing low levels of self control and the inability of the community to take up the role of social monitor and supervisor decreases social control over youth.

Thus, residents also note that youth get accustomed to the lack of social control and thus retaliate against forms of social control when they are exercised against youth. For

instance, residents voiced numerous complaints, with regard to youth disrespecting residents who have attempted to execute some form of social control. Residents state thus:

> Die ding is, ken as jou ma nie met jou neighbour praat nie, so gaan die kind groot raak met die selde gedagte. Dan het hy nie respect vir die grootc mens nie
>
> (Participant 1)

> We use to have respect, that is something that the youngsters haven't got today
>
> (Participant 9)

> Because if this children of this flats could respect any big people, it couldn't have been like this, but they don't. Daars nie order nie
>
> (Participant 2)

> It's like people just do what they want, when they want to
>
> (Participant 8)

Thus, from the above responses a lack of respect for elderly residents on the council flats by youth is noted, which in turn can be understood as youth retaliating against being 'controlled' by these elders. These elders in turn refrain from supervising or monitoring youth behaviour, as youth threaten elders with violence if they try to intervene. This is noted as leaving elderly residents feeling disempowered. For instance, resident's state:

> They don't do anything because they don't actually have control over them and they can't stop the fights...it's like if you jump in the middle, you will get hurt
>
> (Participant 12)

> This is wrong, but they have fears, you know, because this people they seem to be powerful in the community
>
> (Participant 6)

> There's nothing that you can do about it, you can't break it down or stop it
>
> (Participant 5)

> Obviously, they older so they know like the mothers, fathers, grandparents, they hate the fact of different flats different gangs because it's like when their kids go to the other flats, they don't know whether their kids is going to come back with... whether their kids are going to come back being stabbed, shot because it is that serious in the community, and they have tried like on youth day, they will have like you know metro police, concerts in the park to try and enhance kids to live together, to do what's right but they just, it's to no avail
>
> (Participant 11)

Thus, from the above responses it is evident that residents acknowledge not executing social control among youth on the council flats further adds to the mayhem. This is supported by research conducted by Tolan et al (1999) which found that ineffective discipline and poor monitoring of youth served to increase youth involvement in violence and crime. Hence, residents note that the mayhem has also extended to the physical structure of the council flats. For instance, resident's state:

> The youth, they actually the ones that damages the present infrastructure that we have. That breaks the stairs, chips the plaster form the walls. Write graffiti on the walls, because the youth actually create the slum. They create the slum that they are living in. They are the creators of the slum, so the impact it has on their lives, is the impact that they create. That is the place actually that they create, that they want to live in
>
> (Participant 9)

> Die geskrywe op die mure, die lelike worde, dis groot jonkie kinders wat die goete skryf, klein kinders leer wat is daar geskryf, nou noem hulle ook daai woorde. Hulle leer ook van daai
>
> (Participant 2)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that residents perceive their inability to exercise social control as allowing youth to create a *'slum'*, as they vandalise the property of the council flats through acts such as graffiti on the walls. Residents perceive themselves as having no control over youth behaviour and development on the council flats. Furthermore, they perceive the problematic behaviour of youth on the council flats as an overpowering element which cannot be broken down or stopped. This disempowerment is also noted as arising out of fear of being victimised by retaliatory actions of youth, actions which commonly involve the use of violence. Furthermore, residents are further disempowered by the presence of powerful individuals such as drug lords on the council flats. For instance, one resident stated:

> A teenage girl that got involved with this married guy and he was a drug lord and he ended up threatening the mother...there's nothing you can do, you can't stand up to the drug lords, you can't beat up your child because they going to them, is hulle choice ook op die einde van die dag ook, so if they wana go just for you to be safe and alive, because you need to take care of your other children, you just leave her to go
>
> (Participant 8)

From the above response it is noted that this resident felt disempowered against the drug lord on the council flats who exerted power through acts of violence. This disempowerment placed the resident in a position where she was unable to exert any social control. Residents further highlight that at times they have to abandon their youth to the mercy of these powerful individuals in view of saving themselves and their younger offspring. In addition, residents' feeling of disempowerment is further exacerbated by the lack of support from police authorities in Eldorado Park. For instance, residents' state:

> At the flats where I am, the police doesn't actually like to come there. The grown ups will fight rather with the police, because they have their own time, when you need them they not there. You know, they don't assist you with anything, so they rather like, they don't rely on the police a lot

(Participant 5)

> Even the police is tired of extension one. I mean even when you phone, you phone to report domestic violence next door, the police doesn't even bother to pitch. They don't even come the same night, they don't come the next day, they don't even come the next week. So you have to go down, you have to stand there, make a noise and fight, and then make sure you get into a van and then you must come

(Participant 8)

> If you are a drug lord and they know you are the person providing the drugs. The day of the raid they collect the stuff and arrest the drug dealers, they take 'cho-cho' what they call bribe's, they take bribes, two days after they are back. The case, we don't know what happened to the case

(Participant 6)

> Every day there are things happening around the youth, the drugs, the violence. It affects the youth because often police are working with the merchants, bringing the merchandise in, it's how it operates, how it happens

(Participant 2)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive the police as bias, unsupportive, unreliable and disinterested in the council flats and its happenings. This in turn causes a strain in the relationship between residents and police. The strain in this relationship is further aggravated by the perceived police affiliation and cooperation with drug lords. Thus, this serves to further increase the feeling of disempowerment felt by these residents. This is supported by local research conducted by Motsei (1998) in Alexandra, which found that criminals formed the basis of role models available to youth and police involvement with these individuals gave residents the idea that everyone in the community was involved in crime, which served to further disempower residents looking for some form of social control.

Although residents do not take action to execute social control among youth which brings about a degree of disempowerment, the lack of action in itself is a form of action taken by residents. That is, refraining from executing social control among youth on the council flats ensures individual survival of residents. In addition, this disempowerment and lack of social control is noted as also bringing about a feeling of desperation among residents. This desperation was noted in one resident's statement:

> Ek sal like as hulle die army force in bring...Because they have rules. If they can tell these children, by 8 o clock, if we see you outside, ons gaan julle slaan, of iets van die aarde, die kinders sal maniere het

(Participant 2)

From the above response it is noted that this resident perceived elderly residents as unable to introduce and implement rules on the council flats. Further perceiving the only means of

doing this as being through the use of violence. Another resident elaborated on this perception:

> Today there's no respect, there's no culture. You know why? Because of the new laws of this government, where a child can take his mother and father to court and you can't discipline your children. Children that are being disciplined, like the old people use to say, 'wat getik gewees het', those are children with culture and respect and that are somebody today. Because not all children you can talk to and they listen, but the best of the best children today was the children that had corporal punishment
>
> (Participant 9)

The above response once again calls for a violent approach to exercising social control, gaining youth's respect and promoting positive youth development. This is an interesting perception in comparison to residents who highlighted that youth have similar concepts, evident in their retaliatory forms of violence that youth exercise against residents attempting to exert social control over them. Thus, residents and youth alike perceive violence as a means of gaining control over others and each other, which is also an indication of frustrated power relations evident between youth and older residents on the council flats.

Thus, it is noted that residents acknowledge that there is a lack of social order on the council flats, highlighting that this lack of social order affects youth development, as well as, the social and physical environment of the council flats. Inevitably serving to maintain the current lifestyle of the flats, which is one characterised by a lack of social organisation, socialisation into a lifestyle that ensures survival and is dominated by a lack of social control. This in turn leaves residents feeling disempowered as they are unable to exert forms of social control among youth. Residents are further disempowered in this task as they face obstacles such as the threat of being victimised by violent youth and drug lords, as well as, receiving limited support from police authorities in Eldorado Park. Therefore, the position taken by residents to refrain from monitoring and supervising youth safeguards them, but also serves to only increase the social disorder on the council flats. Thus, their protective actions can be viewed as ultimately contributing to a cycle of continuous violence and victimisation.

The themes that follow: high rates of violence and substance abuse, provide indications of the consequences of this lack of social order on the council flats and its impact on youth development and ultimately its contribution to influencing youth violence on the council flats.

The power of violence

The second major theme identified was the power of violence evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park. Violence has been noted as having a chronological history in Eldorado Park, particularly on the council flats, and thus generations and generations of youth residing on the council flats have been exposed to some form of violence at some point in their lives. This correlates with research conducted by Angles and Shefer (1997) that has explored the development of youth in historically disadvantaged communities, which premised violence as being a key feature. The theme highlights various forms of violence that youth have been exposed to on the council flat, from the perspective of residents; residents view of violence within the present day context of the council flats, of which gang influence is prominent and the impact that exposure to violence has had on youth. Thus, this theme consisted of two sub themes: exposure to violence and gang influence.

Exposure to violence

Violence in various forms appears to be a constant feature on the council flats. Furthermore, due to the high density housing, overcrowding and poor infrastructure the likelihood of youth being exposed to these various forms of violence is greater. For instance, resident's state:

> There was this one incident that was actually really, really bad, where one boy was actually stabbed in his neck. I just got down the stairs and the boy was stabbed in his neck...And that was just youngsters, I'm talking about standard six, standard seven. That's your 14-15 year olds
>
> (Participant 7)

> Another drug lord was shot and we all saw it, we were standing, it was daylight. He just took out the gun and was shooting at this guy
>
> (Participant 8)

> It is congested. Crime is more frequent, cause escape routes is much more easier. Raping is also much more easier....so it sort of just breeds more crime basically
>
> (Participant 13)

Thus, from the above responses it is noted that acts of violence such as stabbing and shooting are evident on the council flats. Youth are exposed to these acts of violence due to the physical environment in which they occur. Therefore, residents perceive shared community spaces such as the stairs and the physical space situated outside individual flats as contributing to exposure to violence. Residents also perceive that the physical environment contributes to high rates of violence and crime on the council flat, highlighting overcrowding and poor infrastructure as contributing to acts of violence such as rape. This correlates with

research that has found that high density housing increases exposure to violence, as overcrowding found in these housing structures make it easier for youth to observe others (Fay, 2005). Furthermore, with regard to other forms of violence that youth are exposed to on the council flats, resident's state:

> Raids often take place, when houses are searched, youth are exposed to this brutality
> (Participant 1)

> When you look at the flats, the flat's has got lot of different violence's, abuse amongst parents, abuse amongst children. Look there's...sort of everything going on at the flats
> (Participant 10)

> Youth see big people fighting and they can never express their anger in a good way by talking it out, they always like to fight, stab each other in front of the youth
> (Participant 12)

From the above responses, the following forms of violence was identified as playing out on the council flats by residents: brutal police raids, which occurred from time to time on the council flats due to the high rates of crime and substance abuse on the council flats; domestic and child abuse; and physical assaults, which was viewed as a means through which anger is expressed. Furthermore, it was noted that being within the confines of one's individual flat did not safeguard against exposure to violence, especially with regard to brutal police raids, as flats are identified as clusters of council flats and not individually, and police raids targeted all blocks of council flats. This exposure to violence correlates with studies done on urban disadvantaged communities in the United States which found that between 50% to 90% of community members' had witnessed some form of violence in their lifetime due to residence in these communities (Gorman-Smith & Tolan, 1998).

In addition, one resident highlighted that the expression of violence has changed on the council flats. Initially physical form's of violence, such as hitting with one's bare hands, was apparent. However, in recent years there has been a shift to the introduction of weaponry, such as knives and guns. This has altered the expression of violence as well. For instance, one resident stated:

> Well in the beginning it was hitting one another physically, attacking one another with fists and afterwards...they started stabbing and now guns are freely available, we just gun you down and that's it
> (Participant 10)

From this response, it is noted that this resident perceive the absence of weaponry as bringing about a specific expression of violence that did not necessarily make it easy for one to engage

in violence. In contrast, the presence of weaponry has brought about a new expression of violence that is physically easier to engage in and promoted by easy access to knives and guns. In addition, it is noted that this increases the severity of possible consequences that such expressions of violence may bring about. This correlates with local research that has revealed that access to guns have been particularly easy in South Africa, as there is easy access to unlicensed or stolen guns, an increased possession of hand guns for the purpose of self defence and the loss of a reported 3700 SAPS and Metropolitan Police firearms per year, which have contributed to an increase in violence (Keegan, 2004). Thus, it is acknowledged by residents that the expression of violence on the council flats has evolved over the years and contributed to the increase in rates of violence on the council flats. However, not all residents agree, some have argued for the complete opposite, claiming that violence on the council flats has decreased. These residents state:

> Like stabbing and stuff like that, it doesn't happen often. It's more like verbal violence, but not physical
>
> (Participant 3)

> Yes, it was a big problem, but it's currently gone down a bit. It was a big problem
>
> (Participant 4)

> I live in one of the worst areas, the area that in my time that they said like, 'it's one of the worst to live in'. But basically it's calmed down to where people are too engrossed with their own lives and their own problems
>
> (Participant 9)

> Most of the people that were responsible for the fighting have become old, so the younger generation...know how to deal better with certain issues when they come their way
>
> (Participant 4)

From the above responses, a contrast is noted between residents who argued that the expression of violence has taken the form of physical violence with the introduction of weaponry; and residents that argued that the expression of violence has calmed down in recent years and more verbal forms of violence are evident such as bickering and screaming. Furthermore, these residents view violence as a problem on the council flats as being a thing of the past as older generations of residents who developed the reputation of the council flats as being violent, was perceived by these residents as being too old to maintain that reputation and youth were perceived as not contributing to the maintenance of the reputation of the council flats as violent. Moreover, residents perceived that violence had calmed down due to residents being more engrossed in their own lives. With regard to this perception, it is noted

that perhaps more open forms of violence are absent from the council flats but discreet forms of violence are still present and thus gone unnoticed by some residents.

Furthermore, it is noted that these residents' responses may be related to processes of desensitisation as a result of continuous exposure to violence or processes of reduced cognitive dissonance. Baron and Byrne (2004) explain cognitive dissonance as a protective mechanism which suppresses emotions and rationalises violent behaviour to protect one's self image.

In addition, Shafii and Shafii (2001) note that exposure to violence is also noted as having an impact on those exposed and is specifically noted as having an impact on how youth view acts of violence and make sense of them. With regard to the impact of violence evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park and which youth are exposed to, residents stated:

> Well generally speaking, it will affect any child negatively. It can be worse out there, but I don't know they seem to get by...You see them today and the next day you see them go to school, they come from school and they pass. So it's like a cycle that keeps on happening...I don't know how they do it, but they seem to get by
>
> (Participant 3)

> They adapt to it and that actually makes it worse
>
> (Participant 13)

> They don't see that what they doing is wrong, it is just about entertainment. Entertaining themselves
>
> (Participant 8)

> They don't want change, they soaked in that lifestyle. They don't want change and now they passing it on to their children and their children is passing it on to their children
>
> (Participant 8)

From the above responses, it is noted that residents perceive youth as being desensitised to the violence that they are exposed to. This is noted in resident's perceptions that youth emotionally distance themselves from the violence that they are exposed to on a daily basis. This response can be viewed as functioning as a defence mechanism in that it allows youth to still go to school, concentrate and academically excel. It is also noted in resident's perception that youth have a decreased sense of consciousness, which contributes to their view of violence as entertaining. This correlates with research conducted by McKendrick and Hoffman (1990) which showed that continuous exposure to violence brought about a state of desensitisation which increased emotional distancing, feelings of helplessness and alienation; decreased responsibility for actions as well as concern for others; and moral atrophy which made committing acts of violence easier or more likely to be ignored.

Moreover, residents also perceive that youth have become acculturated to the violence they are exposed to on the council flats, adapting to it as a normal occurrence on the council flats and disempowered to eradicate the continuity of its occurrence on the council flats. This can be viewed in relation to the effects of desensitisation highlighted above by McKendrick and Hoffman (1990), as youth who are unable to consciously engage with the violence taking place around them, will not be able to bring about change in themselves or their environment.

Thus, it is noted that youth are exposed to various expressions of violence on the council flats, as a consequence of social and physical environmental factors found there. Furthermore, the availability and easy access to forms of weaponry such as knives and guns has made acts of violence easier to engage in. Moreover, the effects of exposure to violence among youth was explored, which revealed desensitisation, normalisation and a sense of disempowerment as being the end result. In addition, a disagreement was noted in resident's perceptions of the high rates of violence on the council flats, with some residents stating that high rates of violence are still evident on the council flats and other residents stating that violence has calmed down in recent years. This is interesting as recent years has shown an increase in youth violence, particularly, youth gang violence on the council flats (Molosankwe, 2008). This phenomenon is further discussed below.

Gang influence

From residents responses it can be deduced that gang influence and activities are still evident on the council flats. However, it is also noted from responses that this form of violence has also to some extent changed in expression. Thus, some residents have argued that gang violence no longer exists on the council flats and gangs were a thing of the past, as present gangs are compared to gangs of old and according to residents the gangs of old were serious gangs in comparison to present day council flats youth. For instance, resident's state:

> In the past it was worse than right now though. So I don't know, gangs, it's been a long time since I heard about gangs
>
> (Participant 3)

> There is groups of boys that will come together and start a thing, but it never gets into anything serious
>
> (Participant 9)

> Like extension one before, they had the 'outlawz' which was a gang. Extension three, our flats, they had the 'young skollies' and...those were gangsters in their time, serious gangsters. The youngsters of today, you get the clan coming together and they will walk together and just make noise and that...but nothing serious
>
> (Participant 9)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive gang violence as a thing of the past, youth as being harmless in groups and the degree of youth violence in groups as low when compared to the past. Thus, a contradiction is noted in resident's perceptions, as they deny the existence of gang influence and activity on the council flats but highlight groups of youth as coming together and *'starting something'*. Perhaps, residents perceive that as these youth don't make waves on the council flats, compared to gangs of the past they are relatively ignored by residents. From these responses, it is also noted that residents may be distancing themselves from the reality of gang influence on the council flats and this illusion serves as a defence to actually living in an environment riddled with various forms of gang influence. This sense of disillusionment is noted by Howell and Decker (1999) as arising out of the lack of social control within a community over its violent youth and thus disillusionment assists in dealing with the social disorder and living in such an environment. On the other hand, residents who acknowledge the presence of gang influence, state:

> From the gangsters that was in extension one, gangsterism is something that doesn't die, it doesn't die at all. You just get a new leader
>
> (Participant 8)

> There's the cheese boy groups, and I don't know the punga group and what group and what group
>
> (Participant 8)

> These youngsters they really serious about their gangs and about these groups and they really take it to another level and obviously they grew up with maybe whoever was in and around them set this example of a gang or I belong to this one or I belong to that one and that's why kids, the youth take it so seriously
>
> (Participant 11)

> We got individual's that is still involved with the 'majimbos' and stealing cars and selling these cars but these guys are like...how can I say...they are on a high level. They are into wheeling and dealing with cars and drugs
>
> (Participant 9)

From the above responses, it is noted that these residents perceive gang influence as having a chronological history on the council flats, which similarly contributes to the chronological history of high rates of violence on the council flats, as gang leadership passes from one member to the next. Thus, youth are socialised into gangs and serve to maintain the status quo on the council flats. Residents perceive this as being particularly true with regard to the well known gang, the *'Majimbos'* in Eldorado Park, whose members also reside on the council flats and are still operative today (Haffajee, 1998). This gang is also noted as being a more advanced and organised gang in comparison to recently developed gangs such as the

'Cheeseboys', whose gang name stems from their love for money and material gains and the *'Pungaboys'*, whose gang name stems from their choice of weapon. Thus, Elliot (1994) highlights that gangs can be understood as a subtype of adolescent peer groups whom develop a formal identity through the establishment of a name and membership requirements.

However, other residents note that underestimating these youth gangs would be a mistake and that despite their lack of organisation and formality, these youth gangs are just as dangerous as any more developed gang. This correlates with international research that has highlighted the prevalence of guns in youth gangs, which has alternatively been linked to a significant increase in murders (Howell, 1998). An example of youth gang violence was highlighted by one resident:

> All the different flats in Eldo's and there is quiet a few, have a different gang. Like the one in extension four, they the Afghans and the ones in old Eldo's they uhm... jikkers, so basically all these different flats have different gangs and say maybe when you come together to a party, all the youth come together uhm there's music, alcohol, drinking, drugs, they get drunk. The one gang starts fighting with the other gang and this was known in Bushkoppies there was a party a year ago where this one gang member, where this boy was 14 years old, he was from the Afghan group and he went and he stabbed this boy that was from another group, it was his birthday, he went and he stabbed this boy, this boy was in hospital for two months in a coma
>
> (Participant 11)

From the above responses, the seriousness of youth gang violence is highlighted and the severe consequences that follow. Furthermore, it is also noted that with the existence of numerous youth gangs coming out of the various council flats in Eldorado Park, gang violence is being penetrated into the broader community of Eldorado Park as well. As clashes between gangs do not take place within territorial boundaries of either gang, established by the geographical location of the council flats in which gangs reside, but within a no man's land which is an area unclaimed and beyond territorial markings. In this manner, not only residents of the council flats but also the broader community of Eldorado Park is exposed to gang influence. Furthermore, the above reason may also account for why some resident responded that gang influence was no longer evident on the council flats.

Thus, residents perceive the exposure to gang influence on the council flats as contributing to youth joining gangs and engaging in violence. Furthermore, it is noted that this violence not only penetrates the realm of the council flats but also the broader community of Eldorado Park. This contributes to negative perceptions held by outsiders of the council flats and youth coming from the council flats. It also contributes to obstacles

established in developing a sense of social organisation between residents of the council flats and the broader community of Eldorado Park and limits social integration subsequently. Therefore, gang membership is also noted as countering that rejection, as youth seek social integration and a sense of belonging within gangs. A belonging which provides three distinct benefits: a sense of identity, power and status and economic gain which youth on the council flats desire. This is supported by research conducted by McMillan and Chavis (1986) which highlights that individuals are drawn to groups who possess the resources to fulfil their needs. These three reasons that motivate youth's desire for gang membership will be elaborated on in the discussion that follows.

Sense of identity

Residents highlight that one of the reasons gang influence appeals to youth is that it provides youth with a sense of identity. A sense of identity that the social environment of the council flats does not provide due to the lack of social cohesion among residents of the council flats and marginalisation from the broader community of Eldorado Park, which only makes youth's search for identity a more complex process. Thus, youth search within their own boundaries for others whom they can identify with and in whom they can find a sense of belonging. Residents highlight these 'others' as being fellow gang members and thus state:

> That's how the gangs start, you start giving yourself a name, like okay we the 'flat boys', like by us that's what we would say, 'flat boys in control', others would say 'spoilers' or what ever. But each and every flat group of youngsters have names...they create an identity for themselves because of the environment that they are living in
>
> (Participant 7)

> Basically to fit in and not to feel excluded, to be a part of something or someone... these gangs in a way make these kids feel like they, they feel like they belong when in actual fact they don't, their lives are just going down the drain
>
> (Participant 11)

> You basically have to do certain things to fit in or be recognized as a cheese boy or a cheese girl and if you don't really do that once again, same like the gangs, same like the other children that start becoming violent and start doing drugs and that, they all just want to fit in, be noticed be like you know, seen by everybody
>
> (Participant 11)

From these responses, it is noted that residents perceive the ineffectiveness of social structures on the council flats as a driving force in youth's search for a sense of identity, which is often in gangs, who fulfil youth's need of being part of something and obtaining a sense of identity. This is done by youth of similar circumstances coming together and creating an identity whereby they refer to themselves as a collective by a particular name

such as *'flat boys in control'* and *'spoilers'* and engaging in particular activities that is considered the norm in their particular gang. This correlates with literature provided by Elliot (1994), in which it is argued that the likelihood of youth joining gangs is increased when their living environment is found to be lacking in providing them with the support and structure they need. In addition, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) further state the formation and maintenance of youth gangs arise out of shared experiences of estrangement from traditional social systems. Thus, the inability of youth from the council flats to socially integrate with the broader community of Eldorado Park and the poor social control evident on the council flats may be viewed as contributors to the development of youth gangs on the council flats.

Furthermore, residents also perceive that other youth on the council flats are exposed to this and therefore join existing youth gangs to also gain a sense of identity found through affiliation to gangs. However, residents also acknowledge that youth's sense of belonging established through gang affiliation is an illusion, as gang membership inevitably poses dire consequences for youth and their development, noting that gang membership increases the risk of youth being perpetrators and victims of violence. This correlates with research done by Elliot (1994) who further states that membership in a gang pressurises youth to conform and when youth decide to leave gangs their chances of survival increase.

Thus, it is noted that youth search within the council flats for a sense of identity, and achieve this identity through the establishment of gangs. However, it is also noted that gang membership comes with a hazard and that is the increased involvement in violence. Furthermore, it is also noted that despite this youth gangs have increased on the council flats, one of the reasons for this is due to the sense of power and social status that youth gain as a result of membership.

Power and status

Residents also highlight the achievement of power and social status on the council flats as being another reason why gang influence appeals to youth, as gang members are feared and so respected by other residents on the council flats. Therefore, residents note that youth on the council flats want to possess that power and social status. Power and status is achieved through gang membership, as violence displayed by gangs results in other residents fearing them. This provides them with respect and reverence for fear of being the next victim of their violence. For instance, resident's state:

> Especially in extension one, there's this thing of being a 'majimbo', being a 'spinner'. So my cousins, cousins or my brother's sister or somebody was married to a 'majimbo' and children see what the adults do. And they pick the wrong people to be role models. So now you grow up with this person and you think it's normal...the normal becomes the abnormal with them. So now they see, 'okay this is what John do, so now fine I'm going to be like John'. So you end up becoming like John. Because John was 'n gesiende man. John had money, he had the girls, he didn't finish school. If he can do it I can do it
>
> (Participant 8)

> I've been with the worse criminals on the flats, where I use to be with murderers, rapists and killers. My father always told me, 'why, is he not your friend if his not a raper, he doesn't rape, he doesn't kill, he doesn't steal, why is it not your friend, why must people like that be your friends, cant you choose proper friends?'. But that people had respect, if we go up the flat and we inside the flat, nobody will know when we come down there and when we come down there we use to greet people
>
> (Participant 9)

> Youth today have no respect, a young child will come up to you and be disrespectful, like 'ya what can you do me', because he has a gun or is part of a gang
>
> (Participant 1)

> Gangs on the flats is very dangerous, because today, like I said the gun, they have a lot of guns, there's no more people that like really physically abuse one another, if you have got a problem, we call our gangsters in and they will sort you out, so therefore a lot of youth on the flats would rather get involved with these people
>
> (Participant 10)

From the above responses, residents perceive that the reputation of being a gangster, murderer, rapist and killer on the council flats carries weight among residents. Youth in turn acknowledge this from a young age and aspire to take on these reputations to gain residents respect on the council flats, as well as the power and status the reputation wields. This correlates with local research conducted by Ward (2007), which highlights that youth observe their environment and the outcomes that violent behaviour produces. Amongst outcomes that are viewed as favourable being feared and so respected is noted as being a positive outcome which is sought by those who are the observers and who will also likely indulge in violent forms of behaviour to obtain the same desired outcome. Furthermore, residents also perceive that gang membership and the possession of guns is viewed by youth as symbols of their power which gives them a right to disrespect other residents, a symbol of power to youth but the source of fear for residents. This is supported by research conducted by Keegan (2004) on gun violence in South Africa. Thus, it is also noted that gangs are deluded by the respect they receive from residents, which in essence truly is fear.

Therefore, it is noted that youth desire respect and recognition from others and view gang membership as an avenue to achieve this. Residents' responses highlight that gang members have a high social status on the council flats and are respected and feared by other

residents. This social status has been obtained through their exercise of violence on the council flats, with symbols of their power being expressed through their possession of guns. Furthermore, it is also noted that gang member's power and social status on the council flats is further enhanced by their economic gain. This is elaborated on below.

Economic gain

Residents highlight that with gang involvement power and social status arise, which flourishes further on the council flats due to gangs' access to economic gain established through gang activities such as drug dealing, car theft and robbery. Furthermore, residents note that the poverty and unemployment that youth are surrounded by on the council flats make them easy prey to gang influence, as they are faced with economic needs and no viable alternatives to earning a living. Thus, economic gain is noted as being another reason gang influence appeals to youth. For instance, resident's state:

> You know our youth, they are surrounded by these ugly people, gangsters that are stealing cars and they tend to drive nice cars at the end of the day... go to parties and they buy things and all that. That, it gives our youth the wrong ideas...let me be that guy that's stealing cars, at the end of the day I will have money, I will have and drive this kind of a car... let me be a gangster I will be having lots of girls. Forgetting that education is number one. So it will be...children are falling in the same hole, all of them, because he grows up he thinks, 'I want to be like that, I want to be
>
> (Participant 6)

> What I would say about the criminals is, you go to work every day, you don't get recognised, because by the time you go to work kids are already...some are still asleep and some are gone to school already. So they get to see you coming back from work, sitting...you in doors they hardly get time to see you. But then these guys go around putting up a show...because they the whole day up and downing but they always got money, drinking each and every day. Kids tell themselves, 'I like to be like that, just to sit around and just enjoy myself'. That's all they get to see basically. So for them that is like the ideal side of life, that this is life
>
> (Participant 7)

> So the thing that contributes is the lack of funds in the house, there's no food, lack of resources for school. There's no money for those things, so that would contribute...to say, 'the only way I'm going to get these things if I join one of these groups, because at least they have a way of making something each and every day. So at least if I can make that 30-40 rand a day, I can cover myself. So that contributes towards that
>
> (Participant 7)

> The drug lords, they've got chains, massive gold chains around their necks and drive nice cars, go to parties and they buy things and all that. That, it gives our youth the wrong ideas... Let me sell drugs I will be this and that and that
>
> (Participant 6)

> They idolise that person, wants to be closer to that person. At the end of the day, he ends up selling drugs for that person and says, 'one day I'm going to buy for you a nice car', whereas there is no such thing, he is using the boy. Affecting the mentality of the boy. Sometimes they even force these boys to sell these things for smokes

(Participant 6)

From the above responses, it is noted that residents perceive the circumstance of poverty on the council flats as being a driving force toward gang membership for youth, as youth are exposed to the lifestyle of gangs on the council flats. A lifestyle characterised by nice cars, easy money and a social life in which partying is the key feature. This exposure influences youth perceptions, ideologies and attitudes, as they begin to desire that lifestyle which provides immediate economic gain. Matthews et al (1999) highlights that these perceptions, ideologies and attitudes are also influenced by youth exposure to media which promote gangsterism and 'thug living' as a desired lifestyles.

Furthermore, residents perceive this here and now focus as also decreasing youth's desire to finish school which is viewed as unable to provide them with immediate economic gain in their present circumstance and thus high rates of school dropout are also evident on the council flats. This is supported by trends discovered through research conducted by Franchi and Swart (2003) which found that poor socioeconomic circumstances increased youth's chances of joining gangs, as gang membership provided an escape from material constraints and satisfied economic needs. In addition, it is also noted by residents that these naive youth are also at the risk of being taken advantage of by gang leaders, particularly drug dealers, who may exploit youth with the promise of economic gain.

Thus, it is noted that circumstances of poverty that youth find themselves in makes gang life look more than appealing, and has been noted as contributing to the high rates of school drop out on the council flats. Furthermore, although gang membership brings economic gains, these gains are made through violent means such as robbery, theft, hijacking and drug dealing. Drug dealing which promotes substance abuse and violence on the council flats has also been identified as a major theme and a discussion on this theme follows.

The catalystic element of violence: substance abuse

The third major theme identified was the catalystic element of violence, substance abuse, which is evident on the council flats of Eldorado Park. Residents highlight hat similar to high rates of violence and gang influence on the council flats, substance abuse has also had a long standing history on the council flats. Thus, it is noted by residents that youth are exposed to weekend alcoholic binges and dagga smoking which has became somewhat of a norm on the council flats. Furthermore, the theme highlights the relationship between substance abuse and

violence, as youth who are dependent on substances execute violent means to satisfy their dependency. In addition, the theme takes note of the intricate relationship between poverty, substance abuse and violence that plays out on the council flats and in which youth have come to play a vital role. Thus, this theme consists of two sub themes: the epidemic of substance abuse on the council flats; and the relationship between substance abuse and violence which explores the relationship between youth involvement in substance use, abuse and dealing and its influence on youth behaviour.

The epidemic

Residents note that the epidemic of substance abuse on the council flats has been a constant feature, with residents and youth being fully aware of who drug lords are and where drugs are being sold on the council flats. For instance, resident's state:

> We have a drug dealer right on top of me, still on the top level of the flats the drug dealer, then next to him we have this guy that is involved in cars, he steals cars for a living and then we have the house shop and then at the back of me we have another drug house and then two flats from me there's another shebeen going on
>
> (Participant 8)

> Even drug dealers at the moment at the flats, you'll find extension one drug dealers, they selling cocaine, cat, there's dagga
>
> (Participant 9)

> Growing up at the flats you exposed to your neighbour whose a drug dealer
>
> (Participant 11)

From the above responses, residents highlight that there are a number of drug dealers operating on the council flats, as well as shebeens, where alcohol is sold. Thus, access to substances on the council flats is made easy for youth who are provided with a variety of substances from drug dealers such as cocaine, cat or dagga. Moreover, international research conducted by Lambert, Brown, Phillips and Ialongo (2004) highlight that the visibility of drug sales in a neighbourhood, which recognises the presence of drug lords, may be associated with less negative perceptions of the harmfulness of drug use, which has a great likelihood of increasing youth's use of substances. In addition, it is also noted that older residents despise the presence of these individuals on the council flats but little is done to counter their influence on youth. For instance, resident's state:

> This is wrong, but they have fears, you know, because this people they seem to be powerful in the community
>
> (Participant 6)

> I think when it comes to drugs, people have that fear in them...you see, in the flats, like I said, there's no privacy, so you come talk to me, tell me, 'hey that one is selling drugs, what-what, this is nonsense', same time afterwards the person gets caught, that person gets killed because of talking about it, just because of being heard talking that, that person is doing something bad, people start suspecting that you the one that actually went to call the cops for the person. And drug dealers have some hold over the flats
>
> (Participant 7)

From the above responses it is noted that older residents perceive drug lords as powerful because of the threat of violence that they pose against residents who retaliate against them. This is supported by local research conducted by Matthews et al (1999) which highlights that individuals refrain from taking social control into their hands for fear of intimidation from criminals. Furthermore, it is noted that this fear disempowers residents to execute any form of action against drug lords, but it is also noted that the physical structure of the council flats serves to work against residents in this regard. Thus, the high density housing and overcrowding poses a threat to those residents that speak against drug lords, as news spreads faster in these settings and danger associated with this is in close proximity. This finding correlates with international research conducted by Saxe and colleagues (2001) which highlights that the visibility of drug lords and drug sales is greatest in disadvantaged and densely populated neighbourhoods in which social disorganisation and poor social control is evident.

Furthermore, residents highlight that not only has substance abuse been a constant feature on the council flats due to the presence of drug lords and shebeens, but it has also been a feature that has penetrated all spheres of life on the council flats. Firstly, residents highlight that it impacts on the family system in that parents are found abusing substances and thus unable to fulfil their roles within the family system. For instance, resident's state:

> Also of drinking rotten when they get last month money through grants and things like that. The first thing they start with is liquor, drinking liquor. You will find that children are not getting what they suppose to be getting from their parents
>
> (Participant 6)

> Hulle's gewoon om te se, my broer is 'n jaar ouer of jonger as ek, hulle sit saam, gebruik drugs saam, hulle rook saam, hulle drink saam
>
> (Participant 1)

> Smoking cigarettes, dagga, that is also known as zol and they even drink alcohol with their parents
>
> (Participant 12)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive authority figures within the family system, such as parents, as using their income to support their habits such as drinking.

Thus, youth are not viewed as first priority and often go neglected. Furthermore, substance use is viewed as a normal activity in households on the council flats, with residents highlighting that siblings even smoke dagga together despite age differences and youth even consume alcohol with their parents. Therefore, it is noted that some family systems also promote substance abuse amongst youth on the flats through their actions.

Secondly, substance abuse is also noted as impacting the community of the council flats in that it is a common community activity on the council flats, which is indulged in by residents in open spaces. Thus, youth are more easily exposed to it. For instance, resident's state:

> There's lot of drinking, they drink on top, wherever they sitting, the bottles end up by your door, they fight...it's just messy and you can't say anything, because dis niemand se plek nie, die nie jou yard nie, it's not their yard, the people just do what they feel like doing and when they feel like doing it
>
> (Participant 8)

> Well right on the corner like from the flats there is a park and in this park, if you go, it's all these children that's in high schools, some in primary schools drinking, smoking zol, fighting, bickering and you know here they put this park there thinking it's for the smaller children then to basically play and adapt but there is more like grown ups then anything else and obviously these small children that do go to the park see this and then they grow up feeling that you know what this is right, its fine. So wherever you go, whatever you do basically, whatever the community wants to do good and feels like this is recreation and this is what we can do play innocent and it doesn't pan out, it always turns out bad
>
> (Participant 11)

> Generally, if you hear a car outside, people being drunk at times, a lot of alcohol is being consumed here at the flats, so stuff like that makes it tense. And the okay part, is that you can actually making a living out of it
>
> (Participant 3)

> I came down my stairs, they sitting and drinking, I go, I came back after two hours, now they drinking on the stairs and they even drinking on the other side
>
> (Participant 9)

From the above responses it is noted that open spaces such as the park; the area outside individual flats; the stairs; and *'die blad'* is noted as the main areas where residents engage in drinking. *'Die blad'* is described by residents as being the space situated at the centre of most council flats, it is covered by concrete and identified as the area where most social gatherings and youth activities occur. These areas are also noted as being shared spaces and thus youth are exposed to the activities occurring on these shared spaces.

It is also noted by residents that substance abuse contributes to the deterioration of the council flats, as empty alcohol bottles are left in the open and not disposed of. This abuse of the physical environment of the council flats by youth are noted as markers for social

behaviour, that others in turn adopt. Furthermore, residents highlight that a lack of recreational facilities for youth are noted on the council flats, but certain council flats are afforded recreational facilities such as parks. However, these facilities are used by older youth as drinking and smoking spots. Younger youth playing in these spaces are thus exposed to this behaviour and from a young age grow into the view of this behaviour as being a norm for adolescence. Furthermore, this is noted as contradicting recent local research conducted by Mogotsi (2004) on youth, which highlighted that the lack of recreational facilities encouraged youth involvement in substance abuse.

Thus, it is noted that substance abuse is a common feature on the council flats and a problematic feature, in that it contributes to the lack of social control, deterioration of the physical environment of the council flats and socialises youth into finding substance use and abuse as a norm among the young and old. Furthermore, the presence of drug lords on the council flats makes access to substances easier for youth and residents alike, in turn contributing to this growing epidemic on the council flats. Moreover, a relationship is noted between substance abuse and violence on the council flats, this will be discussed below.

Relationship between substance abuse and violence

Residents highlight youth involvement in substances in the form of substance use, abuse or drug dealing as increasing their chances of engaging in violence and crime. This perception is supported by Sussman et al (2004) who states that longitudinal studies conducted abroad have revealed that substance abuse has been noted as a robust predictor for youth violence. Residents highlight that the relationship between substances and violence on the council flats among youth as being three fold. Firstly, excessive drinking is noted as bringing about violent forms of behaviour in youth. Secondly, substance dependence is noted as driving youth to adopt violent means to satisfy their addiction. Lastly, circumstances of poverty and unemployment has resulted in youth engaging in drug dealing, of which violence is a given in that form of occupation. These three aspects will be explained in more detail below:

Under the influence

Residents highlight excessive alcohol consumption by youth as contributing to displays of violent behaviour by these youth. For instance, resident's state:

> Dan begin hulle drink, as hulle beginner dronk raak en hulle huis toe gaan, hom ma gaan slaan, hom pa gaan slaan, die hulle familie word geslaan. Deur alcohol and drugs hie by ons se flatse
>
> (Participant 1)

> They mostly under the influence, because the very same people when they sober they don't behave in the same manner then they would when they are under the influence
>
> (Participant 4)

> You see lots of people in the community love their alcohol and normally they get drunk and it leads to violence
>
> (Participant 11)

> When they drunk then they tend to fight
>
> (Participant 6)

From the above responses, it is noted that residents perceive excessive alcohol consumption as leading to violent behaviour in youth who do not display the same violent behaviour when not under the influence. This correlates with research conducted by Krug et al (2002) which identified 'drunkenness' as a precipitator of violence. Thus, concluding that excessive alcohol consumption is a proven contributor to the development of violence in youth. Furthermore, residents note that the object of youth violence in this state is often members of the family system such as the mother and father. This can be viewed in relation to the breakdown of the family structure in which poor social control and a weak family system is evident. In which parents fear youth who in turn take advantage of that fear.

Therefore, it is noted that residents derive a clear relationship between substance use and violence, highlighting that a state of intoxication alters behaviour and gives way to the display of more violent forms of behaviour among youth, violence that is often directed to those closest to youth, such as members of the family system. Moreover, research conducted by Gantner and Taylor (1992) highlight a consistent relationship between alcohol use and aggressive behaviour, noting this relationship as being stronger when an individual resides in an area where certain social cues elicit aggressive responses. Thus, this altercation in behaviour is noted as bringing about more severe forms of violence, especially when youth have developed a dependence on substances, this is elaborated on further below.

Substance dependence

Substance dependence is highlighted in contrast to residents' earlier perceptions which highlighted the benefits of youth exposure to life on the council flats as a means of preventing substance abuse and ultimately promoting survival of youth, as residents' report that a majority of youth on the council flats engage in some form of substance use. In view of this,

residents highlight that youth who abuse substances and have become dependent are viewed as dangerous, as these youth are driven by their addiction and thus exercise violent means to satisfy that addiction. For instance, resident's state:

> They want money to smoke, buy drugs and stuff like that. Drugs has another influence on these boys. If you don't go into gangsterism, or rob or be a thief, he'll steal in his own house from his parents, his sisters, to buy the drugs. Nothing will survive if there's one doing drugs in the house
>
> (Participant 6)

> I think the big contributor would be drugs. Firstly, it starts with the dealer, the dealer makes a lot of money. He sells something that the user wants, so the user is obviously going to turn to whatever to get drugs, if they unemployed. And where else but within his own community or maybe just around the community where he lives
>
> (Participant 7)

> A child gets up in the morning and he has no work, he go stand on the corner of the flats, someone will come along and he's got maybe a little bit drugs, a little drinking and, than that sometimes becomes the way of life and we start stealing and, like I say life on the flats is just not, it's not, I don't think parents should raise their children up on the flats
>
> (Participant 10)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive youth whom are dependent on substances such as drugs in particular, as desperate and dangerous individuals. Highlighting that their desperation and addiction influences the way they think and behave. Thus, residents note that to satisfy their addiction youth take violent avenues to obtain money needed to buy drugs and therefore engage in gansterism, robbery and theft. This correlates with research conducted by Johnston et al (1993) which found that acts of robbery, rape and assault by youth were linked to substance dependence in youth. Furthermore, residents note that youth's dependence also has a great impact on the family and community context on the council flats, as these are areas targeted by youth to obtain economic and material possession to trade for drugs. For instance, one resident stated:

> Steal somebody's things from the lines, washing lines, because the washing lines are open, you don't have your private line. Everybody uses the same washing lines. You steal, maybe my trousers or something. I get to know who it is, who did it. Obviously I will resort to violence, because if it is a drug user, talking won't help
>
> (Participant 7)

From the above response it is noted that not only do substance dependent youth steal from other residents on the council flats, but also that the poor infrastructure and high density housing on the council flats make it easier for youth to steal from other residents, due to shared communal spaces. Furthermore, it is further noted that the relationship between substance dependence and violence on the council flats is a two way street, as residents also

exercise violence in their retaliation against losing their possession to substance abusing youth. Moreover, it is noted that residents perceive violence as the only means through which they can retaliate and they have no other choice in the matter.

Thus, it is noted that youth who are dependent on substances engage in violence to achieve the economic means to support their addiction. Economic means that they achieve from the family system and community of the council flats, and thus, the violence that they used to achieve their ends is also directed at family members and other residents. This is supported by research conducted by Johnson et al (1993) which confirms that youth turn to crime and violence to satisfy addictive habits such as substance dependence. Furthermore, it is noted that not only are these youth dangerous but they are also in danger, as retaliatory forms of violence from residents who they have stolen from, increases the chances of these youth being victims of violence. Moreover, another area in which residents highlighted that substance dependent youth found themselves being the victim of violence was noted in their encounters with drug dealers, this is discussed below.

Drug dealing

Residents note that circumstances of poverty on the council flats and unemployment in South Africa have led youth to seek employment from drug dealers who are also occupants on the council flats. These youth become drug dealers who resort to violence to get their money from drug users and are often also at the risk of becoming users themselves. For instance, resident's state:

> Where the violence comes in with the drugs is when users don't pay the dealers and then users start taking the dealers stuff to sell it and don't pay them, that's where the violence comes in but the drugs basically...drug addicts are confused people, highly confused
>
> (Participant 9)

> Maybe a worker for the dealer, start selling for the dealer maybe to get some money or does dirty work for the dealer just to get that, to actually resolve that craving
>
> (Participant 7)

> They turn to easy money, which is drugs, some girls even go into prostitution and drugs leads to crime and crime leads to high rise in house breaking, leads to rape in the communities, it's a total downward syndrome
>
> (Participant 13)

From the above responses it is noted that residents perceive that youth seek employment from drug dealers on the council flats. Thus, their occupation is to sell drugs of which they get paid for. Another aspect of their occupation is getting the payment from drug user's which is at

times a difficult task as users are not always able to pay. This is supported by research conducted by Howell and Deck (1999) which suggests that high levels of unemployment, increase employment opportunities in the drug market for the unemployed and uneducated and the growing popularity of drugs has opened an economic opportunity for individuals to earn. Hence, to the unemployed and down trodden, drug trafficking is appealing. Residents highlight that this in turn leads to drug dealers exercising various forms of violence. Residents have also suspected that forms of prostitution may also be occurring on the council flats, as female drug user's offer their bodies as payment to drug dealers who take advantage of them. Furthermore, residents also note that drug dealers also become users and those that become dependent find themselves in a conflictual relationship with drug lords on the council flats and this contributes to more violence. For instance, residents' state:

> They knock each other with the nonsense that they are doing and they end up shooting each other, killing each other. They do these things together, than when they have to share the money, they disagree. Once they can't resolve the argument the only other option is to kill
>
> (Participant 6)

> A fight broke out and this other guy, also another drug lord was shot and we all saw it, we were standing it was daylight, he just took out the gun and was shooting at this guy
>
> (Participant 8)

From the above responses, residents note that disagreements between drug lords and their dealers are resolved through violence. This further highlights that the access to guns makes the expression of this violence deadly, as motivation comes from the attitude which portrays the message of 'kill of be killed', with the one who survives being viewed as more powerful, feared and revered by residents on the council flats and other drug lords on the council flats.

Thus, it is noted that circumstances of poverty drive youth to seek employment from drug lords on the council flats, in which their occupation is to sell drugs and obtain payment from customers. The hazard of the occupation comes in when violent means have to be exercised to gain that payment. Furthermore, it is noted that in the realm of drug lords and drug dealing, violence is often the only means through which conflicts are settled. This correlates with research conducted by Klein (1995) which highlights the relationship between gangs, drugs and violent crimes. Moreover, Howell and Deck (1999) argue that involvement in drug dealing results in increased involvement in violence.

Conclusion

This chapter provided results and a brief discussion of the findings of the research study conducted. The chapter introduced themes that emerged as a result of resident's perception of contributing social and physical environmental factors to the development of youth violence. Thus, three major themes were highlighted and discussed. The first major theme was that of social order which took into account three sub themes: social organisation, socialisation and social control. The second major theme was high rates of violence which took into account two sub themes: exposure to violence and gang influence. Lastly, the third major theme was substance abuse which took into account two sub themes: the epidemic of substance abuse and the relationship between substance abuse and violence. The chapter to follow presents an overview of the research findings and the strengths and limitations of the research study. The next chapter also provides an overview of the results, recommendations for future research and implications of the current research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This concluding chapter presents an overview of the research findings, as well as, a theoretical understanding of the research from an ecological perspective. In order to facilitate this, research findings that were presented in chapter four will be related to literature, offering a discussion and conclusion of the results of the study. The chapter also provides an overview of the strengths and limitations noted in the research and future directions that can be explored for future research endeavours in relation to youth violence.

Overview of research findings

The purpose of the study was to gain a contextual understanding of resident's perceptions of the surrounding physical and social environmental factors that influence youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. From the research findings three major categories emerged from the data in relation to answering the research questions highlighted in chapter three. These categories include a discussion on physical environmental factors, social environmental factors and the interaction of these factors at the micro, meso, exo, macro and chrono level of the ecological system, as it is noted that multiple ecological levels operate in relation to each other to shape youth development. This in turn is associated with youth violence. Thus, an interdependent relationship is taken account of between physical and social environmental factors and other ecologically related factors, such as the distribution of resources on the council flats and adaptation to changes in the physical and social environment in relation to the development of youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park.

Physical environmental factors

The study found that physical environmental factors contributed to youth violence in that they increased youth exposure to various forms of violence occurring on the council flats, increased gang influence through proximity of territorial conflict, increased the relationship between substance abuse and violence and increased social disorder.

The study highlighted that high density housing and poor infrastructure contributed to youth violence in a number of ways. Firstly, the poor infrastructure of the flats was noted as contributing to the marginalisation process of youth from the broader community of Eldorado Park, which ultimately contributed to social disorganisation between these two community groups and a lack of cohesion and sense of community. It also contributed to youth having difficulty being socially integrated into the broader community which served to confine youth more to the council flats. Thus, retreating into a smaller territory, which contributed to the overcrowding, limited resources and communal spaces, another contributing source of conflict among residents and youth on the council flats.

This confinement and high density housing which is characterised predominantly by overcrowding and close proximity living is noted as impacting on the socialisation process of youth, as the study found that youth were exposed to negative role models such as drug lords and gang members which youth observed and viewed as an escape from current circumstances of poverty and the road to easy money. High density housing also exposed youth to violence and crimes committed on the council flats, as well as substance abuse. Thus, it was noted that the lack of social order operating at the community level was fuelled by resident's fear of themselves being violated if they supervised or monitored youth behaviour; in turn, resulting in youth indulging in violent behaviours with no one reprimanding them.

Moreover, high density housing is noted as resulting in environmental influences as overpowering familial influences. As morals developed within the family system are countered at the community level with a new set of morals, influenced by peers. Peer influence is noted as being stronger in areas with high density housing as contact is increased in comparison to individuals not living in mixed neighbourhoods, and thus peer influence makes abiding to these community based morals more appealing. This is supported by research conducted by Anderson (1998) which revealed that youth conformed to norms that dominated the community context in settings where peer influence is high and disregard norms provided by the family system.

In addition, poor infrastructure is highlighted in the study as giving rise to aggressive emotions, as resources on the council flats are limited and often have to be shared by residents. However, the overcrowding makes this problematic and thus violence is adopted as a means of dominating space. This is supported by research conducted on high density housing and poor infrastructure by Krug et al (2002) which noted that emotions such as

tension, frustration and anxiety brewed as a result of close proximity living and inadequate resources.

The study also found that the lack of recreational facilities on the council flats contributed to youth violence in that youth were often found to be inactive during their leisure time and thus would engage with other peers and experiment with substances. However, the study also revealed that in the presence of even minor recreational facilities such as parks, youth would not engage with this form of recreation but utilise it as a place to deal in and consume drugs. Thus, the expression of violence on the council flats adapts to changes made to the physical and social environmental structures, as socialisation into these forms of behaviour and into the new social order established on the flats feeds the cycle of violence. Behaviours are adapted appropriately to survive in this cycle.

Social environmental factors

The study found that social environmental factors contributed to youth violence in that the lack of social cohesion was evident amongst residents of the council flats. This in turn brought about social disorganisation and a state of social disorder in which levels of social control were absent. The escalation of these events is noted as contributing to youth violence on the council flats in Eldorado Park.

Social organisation

The study found that levels of social organisation were relatively low throughout the three communal levels which were explored, that is, social organisation between community members of the broader Eldorado Park and residents of the council flats; residents of the different council flats; and residents residing at the same council flats. The study found that this resulted in marginalisation of residents of the council flats from the broader community of Eldorado Park, which impacted on the social integration of residents into institutional settings such as the school which was situated in the broader community of Eldorado Park. Thus, it is noted that high levels of interpersonal mistrust and low levels of social cohesion increased the division between the various community groups (Wilkinson et al, 1998).

Moreover, low levels of social organisation was also evident among residents of the different council flats in Eldorado Park. The study found that although residents of the different council flats experienced the same marginalisation, residents established themselves

as separate from other residents. This was noted in the establishment of council flats identities and requirements for membership, that served to isolate others. This inability to recognise commonality amongst each other is noted by Sampson and Groves (1989) as contributing to social disorganisation.

And lastly, a wavering social organisation among residents residing on the same council flats was evident, in which, residents would mobilise together when under external threat but remained relatively isolated from each other due to high levels of mistrust. This correlates with research done by Ka Sigogo and Modipa (2004) which highlights the contradictory nature of interpersonal relationships in disadvantaged violence prone communities, which is characterised by a sense of togetherness and aggression toward each other. This can be viewed in relation to the ability of members of a community to come together in times of crisis, when similar interests are threatened (Myers, 1962).

Therefore, social disorder is noted as arising from social disorganisation and resident's inability to control the process of socialisation, supervision and monitoring of youth behaviour. Thus, the study highlighted that the process of socialisation was a role taken on by many sources on the council flats. Not only were youth socialised by the family system but also by the community of the council flats, either through interaction or observation. The study also highlighted the socialisation of youth being overpowered by the community context, with the family system being less influential in this regard. Moreover, the lack of positive role models on the council flats is noted as contributing to negative socialisation of youth, as role models on the council flats, adopted by youth, are notably drug lords and gang members. Furthermore, through all sources socialisation promotes survival of youth on the council flats. This is supported by local research conducted by Ward (2007) which acknowledged that youth acquire knowledge from a variety of social experiences, exposure to models of behaviour, parents, authority figures and exposure. From these sources they form internal and mental representations of behaviours and how they work.

Thus, youth are socialised from a young age by the family system, peers, community and through exposure to community functions to conform to the norm, seek out knowledge needed to know the codes and the language of one's environment, associate with violent peers who are respected in the community because of their status, use of violence to empower oneself and to fend against threats and fight for living space.

Moreover, the study also revealed that residents are already socialised in that way, as they, indicate not engaging in exerting forms of social control as it places their own lives in danger and view youth's exposure to high rates of violence and substance abuse as educating youth to not engage in these activities and understand the impact that these activities have in their development. Once again, socialising youth into the concept of survival.

Thus, with high levels of social disorganisation being evident and socialisation being a process that goes unsupervised and unmonitored, social control is lacking within the environment and hence youth development towards youth violence is noted as occurring with no limited supportive structures in place to prevent this.

High rates of violence

The study revealed that violence was noted as being a constant feature on the council flats, with youth being exposed to various forms of violence. Furthermore, the study found that residents perceived the expression of violence as intensifying with the introduction of guns and knives, which has also increased incidents of violence on the council flats.

The study found that exposure to violence impacted on youth and residents in two ways. Firstly, desensitisation in which residents perceived that youth emotionally distanced themselves from the violence that occurred around them. This sense of emotional detachment was noted as also occurring amongst residents as residents responses were contradictory to each other, with some arguing that violence was still a major concern on the council flats; and others arguing that violence was a thing of the past on the council flats. However, looking back at local police reports it is highlighted that violence, youth violence in particular is still a problem on the council flats.

Secondly, disempowerment was noted as residents felt disempowered by other youth who belonged to gangs and who possessed guns. This disempowerment arose out of fear of being victimised by these individuals. Disempowerment was not only felt by residents but also by youth who joined gangs to achieve social status whereby they were feared and respected. This contributed to the development of youth gangs, which served to further disempower residents who were now overpowered by the presence of these individuals on the council flats. Gangs were also noted as being appealing to youth as they had economic benefits, social status and provided a sense of belonging which youth lacked on the council flats. This motivation to join gangs is supported by local research conducted by Ward (2007)

which found that youth engage in behaviours that serve to resolve their problems, provide them with pleasure and give them a sense of worth. On the other hand youth steer clear from engaging in behaviours that do not solve their problems, give them pain and bring about feelings of worthlessness, guilt and shame. Drawing from Ward's (2007) research and taking into account the findings of the study, it can be argued that youth on the council flats find gang membership appealing as it provides a sense of belonging and identity, it provides financial benefits which youth view as a means of solving their poverty problem and being respected by other residents provides them with a sense of self worth. Moreover, desensitisation to violence, blocks feelings such as guilt and shame from coming to the forefront.

In addition, the study found that exposure of youth to the lifestyle that drug lords and gangs members live on the council flats and their use of violence to achieve this lifestyle is noted and incorporated into youth's worldview. A world in which poverty overcomes their ambition and gang membership provides them with an escape from constraints placed on them by poverty and a way of empowering themselves.

Substance abuse

The study revealed that substance abuse was a major problem on the council flats among youth, with many residents claiming that it is the main cause of youth violence. The relationship of substance abuse to violence on the council flats revealed a complex relationship between poverty, substance abuse and violence. Thus, the study found that the easy access to substances such as various drugs and alcohol on the council flats, presence of drug lords and high rates of unemployment contributed to a mixture of youth involvement in substances. Firstly, youth were found to be dependent on substances and would adopt violent means to obtain substances. Furthermore, substance dependent youth were noted to be a vulnerable group on the council flats as they were at a high risk of being assaulted through retaliatory forms of violence from residents who they stole from or violated for economic or material gains to in turn trade for substances.

Secondly, youth were found to be employed as drug dealers in order to earn an income, this was viewed as being motivated by the high unemployment rates on a national level and poverty on the council flats in Eldorado Park. Moreover, this behaviour was found to be condoned by some households within the family system as it provided a means of

income. And lastly, youth consumption of alcohol was noted as bringing forth their violent nature.

Therefore, the intricate relationship between youth, violence and substance abuse was noted as contributing to youth violence as throughout these endeavours violence was adopted as a means of getting what they want. These findings were supported by research conducted by De La Rosa et al (1990) which highlighted that drugs are intrinsically related to violent crime owing to conflicts over drug sales, drug usage and changes in behaviour.

Poverty

A factor not considered in the research came up in the study results and was highlighted as being a driving force for youth involvement in violent activities such as drug dealing, gang membership for economic gains and survival. Poverty is noted as contributing on a national scale to South Africa's problem of violence (Seedat et al, 2009). It is suggested by Seedat et al (2009) as producing barriers to access to traditional sources of wellbeing, status and respect. Furthermore, it is argued that the lack of these characteristics results in feelings of shame, humiliation and loss of self respect. Thus, the study found that this inequality and the feelings that it brought about was countered by youth using violence to gain resources, power and influence (Seedat et al, 2009).

Family system

The family was another area that was not considered in the research but had arisen in the results of the research. Families are argued to be the key socialisation mechanisms in youth development (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). However, the role of the family was overpowered by environmental factors in the study and was also noted as at times contributing and encouraging violent and criminal forms of behaviour in youth. This was related to levels of poverty in families on the council flats which socialised youth into doing what it takes to survive and thus youth were encouraged to *'spin'*, a form of hustling, by which an individual cons another through directly or indirectly stealing from them. The position of poverty and disadvantage that family systems find themselves in on the council flats is noted as stemming from economic deprivation which came with the advent of Apartheid and has contributed to parents being placed in a disadvantaged position which in turn has placed their youth in a disadvantaged position. This is supported by local research conducted by Burton (2007) which highlights that fundamental dislocation of society under

the Apartheid era gave rise to generations of parents who were products of an abnormal society and fragmented family structure. This abnormality and fragmentation was in turn carried over to these individual's offspring as they lacked in skills required to raise children due to their own position of disadvantage.

Thus, from the findings gathered in this study it is highlighted that the council flats represents a world in which violence is a common practice, social status is gained through carrying a gun, belonging to a gang and having material possessions and through it all, youth who lack self esteem and personal confidence are trapped, disempowered by their social and physical surroundings in which positive role models are few and far between and where negative images and despair make crime more and more attractive.

Strengths and limitations of the study

The noted strength of the study is its specific focus on environmental factors contributing to youth violence, an approach that that has not been concentrated on sufficiently in other research studies. However, with regard to this focus, the researcher acknowledges that other factors such as the individual and family system do play a significant role and inevitably influenced resident's perceptions. Hence, attempts have been made to accommodate these and other factors whilst still keeping the factors under investigation as the priority.

Furthermore, the research allowed an exploration of life on the flats for residents and youth alike, an investigation which is interesting as this particular area, that is the council flats of Eldorado Park, had not undergone significant research interest before, although in many ways resembling the much documented Cape flats in the Western Cape. On the other hand, the complexities of this 'lifestyle' requires exploration from various angles, taking into account various factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of life on the flats, as the current research study focused primarily on the contribution of life on the flats in influencing youth violence.

With regard to limitations of the study social disorganisation as an exploration of delinquency downplays the importance of ethnic and cultural factors, as some cultures may encourage criminal activity. Furthermore, the theoretical framework adopted called for the exploration of multiple levels of the ecological system. However, the current research only focused on community level factors, social and environmental factors in particular on the council flats in Eldorado Park. Therefore, it is noted that the research acknowledges that a

variety of complex factors came together to contribute to the development of youth violence and it is also noted that exploring neighbourhood factors cannot be isolated from the exploration of other factors such as the family system which may influence the neighbourhood factors or vice versa.

Future directions

With regard to future direction in terms of research, exploring youth's perceptions of life on the council flats would assist greatly in developing a wider understanding of the development of youth violence within this context. Furthermore, research studies can also explore the unique dynamics evident amongst new and upcoming youth gangs that have rapidly arisen among council flats in Eldorado Park.

Another area of interest that arose as a result of the research was the role of drug dealers within the council flats and the power that they wield, despite destroying the lives of many youth. This is a national phenomenon and not restricted solely to the council flats, as substance use and abuse is increasingly becoming one of South Africa's major social dilemmas facing youth. Furthermore, an area of interest would be the exploration of non delinquent youth in violence prone areas; and community level factors that influence parenting behaviours on the council flats of Eldorado Park in relation to its impact on youth violence.

Implications in relation to youth violence prevention and potential interventions

The research highlights that social disorder in the older generation of the council flats and larger community of Eldorado Park, that is amongst the older community members, filters downward to the youth, who in turn take up the approach of 'each one for themselves' and carry it forward. Thus, interventions focused on building a sense of community should be introduced, as well as the principles of community psychology which fosters the concept of 'teaching individuals how to fish and not providing them with fish', thus empowering residents and youth of the council flats to empower themselves. However, it is noted from residents' responses that interventions executed at the council flats are often unsuccessful, especially if they hamper productivity of drug dealers. Thus, the cooperation and partnership of reliable sources in departments such as the South African police services and other

governmental departments may assist residents in breaking the existing social order on the council flats and rebuilding a new order, one that is conducive to youth development.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the research findings, highlighting social disorganisation on the council flats of Eldorado Park as contributing to social disorder which inevitably contributes to high levels of violence and criminal activities such as substance abuse among youth. The chapter also provided a description of the strengths and limitations of the study, as well as the implications of the research and recommendations for future research with regard to youth violence in South Africa.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

1. How would you describe the community of Eldorado Park?
2. How would you describe the council flats in Eldorado Park?
3. Do you feel that violence is a problem among youth residing on the council flats?
4. How would you define violence?
5. What is your perception of youth violence on the council flats with regard to the following physical environmental factors that contribute to youth violence:

   5.1.High density housing/ overcrowding

   5.2.Lack of recreational facilities

   5.3.Poor infrastructure
6. What is your perception of youth violence on the council flats with regard to the following social environmental factors that contribute to youth violence:

   6.1.Social organisation

   6.2.Exposure to high rates of violence

   6.3.Gang influence

   6.4.Substance abuse
7. Are there any other factors that you think influence youth violence on the council flats?

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet (Qualitative/Interview Based Research)



UNIVERSITY
OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559
Email: 018lucy@muse.wits.ac.za

Dear Residents

My name is Sumaiya Mohamed, and I am conducting research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters at the University of the Witwatersrand. My area of focus is that of the role of the physical and social environment in youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park. South Africa is a country with a high crime rate in which we find youth violence rife in many communities, affecting youth development and the overall wellbeing of communities. The research aims to develop information on youth violence, specifically the role of the surrounding physical and social environment in influencing youth violence on the council flats of Eldorado Park, from the perspective of residents, to assist in the development of information to tackle youth violence. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Participation in this study will entail being interviewed by myself, at the council flats (Ext 1,3,6), at a time that is convenient for you. The interview will last for approximately one hour. With your permission this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Participation is voluntary, and no person will be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way for choosing to participate or not participate in the study. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you would be included in the research report. The interview material (tapes and transcripts) will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by myself and my supervisor. You may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any point. Tapes used for recording purposes in the study, will be kept securely throughout the research process at the University of the Witwatersrand and will be destroyed on completion of the research project.

If you choose to participate in the study please contact the researcher telephonically at 079 753 1036 or via e-mail at sumaiya017@gmail.com. My supervisor, Mrs Tanya Swart, can be contacted telephonically at (011) 717 8330 or via e-mail at tanya.swart@wits.ac.za.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. Participating in this study does not have any individual benefits and neither are any direct risks involved. It is not anticipated, but should you experience distress as a result of the interview process free trauma counselling will be provided at the Eldorado Park Women's Forum, whom provide free counselling services for men and women. The organisation can be contacted telephonically at (011) 945 5599. Furthermore, your participation in this study will contribute both to a larger body of knowledge on youth violence and contributing factors which may in turn aid in the development of interventions to decrease youth violence.

Kind Regards
Sumaiya Mohamed

Appendix C: Consent Form (Interview)

I _____ consent to being interviewed by _____ for her study on _____. I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- I will allow the use of direct quotes
- I acknowledge that there are no anticipated risks and benefits involved in the participation in this study, if I am at psychological risk, provisions have been put into place to minimise that risk.
- I acknowledge that the research data will only be seen by the researcher and the researchers supervisor
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- I acknowledge that anonymity cannot be guaranteed in the study because of the face-to-face nature of interviews.

Signed _____

Appendix D: Consent Form (Recording)

I _____ consent to my interview with _____ for her study on _____ being tape-recorded. I understand that:

- The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person at the University of the Witwatersrand at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher and the researchers supervisor.
- I will allow for the use of direct quotes.
- All tape recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No information that will indentify me will be included in the research and my responses will remain confidential.
- I acknowledge that anonymity cannot be guaranteed in the study because of the face-to-face nature of interviews.

Signed _____

Appendix E

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MACC/10/003 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	Physical environment and violence
INVESTIGATORS	Sumaiya Mohamed
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	23/03/10
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 05 May 2010

CHAIRPERSON K. Cockcroft
(Professor K. Cockcroft)

cc Supervisor:

Dr Tanya Graham
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one** copy returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2012

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES